

Journey, Storm, Seed

Analyze how an epic hero, a quest structure, and a theme work together.

ELA.9.R.1.4 “Analyze the characters, structures, and themes of epic poetry.”

NAME _____

DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK _____ Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline two details that reveal Asha’s character, circle two features of epic-poetry structure, and write T beside two details that develop an important message. These marks will help you analyze how the poem builds character, structure, and theme.

Song of the Seed Jar

- ① Sing, Memory, of Asha, runner of the drought-struck plain, who was already three days from her city when the bronze gate behind her fell. She carried no sword, only a clay jar sealed with wax and the map her grandmother had sewn inside her cloak. Beyond the Red Hills lay the spring of Namar, guarded, people said, by a lion with a woman’s voice. Asha ran because the city wells had sunk to mud. Yet each mile reminded her that her younger brother had begged her to stay. Like a hawk tugged between two winds, she faced the hills and did not turn.
- ② At sunset, Asha reached a ravine where caravans had once crossed on stone bridges. The bridges were broken, and below them a black river struck the rocks. Then Ilyra, keeper of the western wind, rose from the river mist. “Give me the jar,” the spirit commanded, “and your city will forget your brother’s name.” Asha gripped the vessel until wax pressed into her palm. She refused, though Ilyra promised safe passage. The wind goddess hurled a storm across the ravine, but Asha tied her cloak to a cedar and climbed down, hand over hand, while thunder counted her steps.
- ③ Near dawn, Asha entered Namar’s cave. The lion waited beside the spring, its mane bright as coals, and spoke in her grandmother’s voice: “A ruler saves no one by carrying every burden alone.” Asha understood that the jar held not water but seeds, kept through generations for a new well garden. She poured them into the spring, and clear water surged along channels toward the plain. When she returned, the city did not praise her as a lone conqueror. Its people opened the bronze gate together, carrying shovels, jars, and seedlings. Thus Asha’s journey changed her from a runner escaping loss into a leader who trusted her community to rebuild.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE _____ Use the passage

- 1** How does Asha change from the first paragraph to the last paragraph? Use one action from each paragraph to support your answer.

- 2** How do the opening invocation to "Memory" and the fact that Asha is already three days into her trip shape the poem's structure?

- 3** How do Ilyra's offer and storm function as an epic obstacle, and what does Asha's response reveal about her character?

- 4** What theme is developed by the lion's statement and the ending of the poem? Use one detail from the ending in your answer.

3 YOUR TURN _____ Your own words

Write a 5-sentence epic episode about a hero who faces a supernatural obstacle. Include a detail that reveals the hero's character and an epic structural feature, such as an invocation, a simile, or divine intervention, then add 1 sentence that states a theme developed by the episode.

PART 1 • READ AND MARK

Underline two details that reveal Asha's character, circle two features of epic-poetry structure, and write T beside two details that develop an important message. These marks will help you analyze how the poem builds character, structure, and theme. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 • ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	How does Asha change from the first paragraph to the last paragraph? Use one action from each paragraph to support your answer.	At first, Asha acts alone and continues toward the hills despite her brother's plea. By the end, she becomes a leader who trusts the people of her city to rebuild together.
2	How do the opening invocation to "Memory" and the fact that Asha is already three days into her trip shape the poem's structure?	The invocation gives the poem an epic storytelling voice, and beginning after Asha has left home starts the action in the middle of a dangerous quest. This creates urgency.
3	How do Ilyra's offer and storm function as an epic obstacle, and what does Asha's response reveal about her character?	Ilyra creates a supernatural test that blocks Asha's journey and tempts her to give up the jar. Asha refuses and climbs through the storm, revealing courage and determination.
4	What theme is developed by the lion's statement and the ending of the poem? Use one detail from the ending in your answer.	A theme is that strong leaders do not carry every burden alone. At the end, the city's people carry tools and seedlings together, showing that rebuilding requires a community.

PART 3 • YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

Sing, Echo, of Miro, keeper of the mountain beacon. When a sea spirit covered the harbor with fog, Miro climbed the cliff instead of waiting safely below. His lantern swung like a small sun against the gray waves. At the summit, the spirit offered him gold to darken the light, but Miro cast the gold into a crevice and lit the beacon with his own cloak. Ships followed the beam home, and Miro returned to find the fishers repairing the pier together. This episode suggests that courage can protect a community when it rejects selfish rewards.

Accept supported interpretations of Asha's character, the quest structure, and the theme. For the open response, look for a supernatural obstacle, a clear epic feature, a character-revealing action, and a theme that matches the events.