

Crossing the Current

Analyze how a story shapes meaning through perspective, structure, archetypes, and symbols.

12.T.T.1.a "Evaluate how different authors develop and use narrative techniques (including archetypes, multiple perspectives, plot structure, and symbolism) across texts, using textual evidence. (1)"

NAME _____

DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK _____ Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline one detail showing the perspective of Mara, Tomas, and Inez, circle each reference to the compass, and number the details that establish the crisis, shift to the past, and resolve the conflict as 1, 2, and 3.

The Glass Compass

- ① At dawn, Mara stood on the flooded footbridge with the town's brass compass in her fist. Below, the river pushed branches against the railings, and the evacuation siren sounded from the hill. Her father had carried the compass during every storm, but he had vanished the previous winter. Mara thought of herself as an impostor wearing his old raincoat. When a child called from the far bank, she stepped onto the shaking boards anyway. The compass needle spun, uselessly, while its cracked glass caught the first strip of sunlight.
- ② From the hill, Tomas Reed watched Mara enter the bridge and cursed his own silence. He was the retired ferryman who had taught her father to read the river, yet he had hidden the compass after the disappearance, hoping no one would ask him to lead again. To Tomas, Mara was not an impostor but the challenger he had been waiting for, stubborn enough to force an old guardian back into service. He remembered, then, the night before the flood, when Mara had asked why the compass glass was cracked. He had answered, "Directions are easy. Choosing a crossing is not."
- ③ On the far bank, twelve-year-old Inez saw neither a hero nor a guardian. She saw two frightened adults and the rope Tomas finally tied around his waist. When he reached the bridge, Mara handed him the compass. Together they used its metal case to reflect sunlight toward the rescue crew upstream, then guided Inez and her grandmother across one at a time. Only after the river fell did Mara notice that the needle had stopped spinning. It pointed north, toward the abandoned ferry dock. She understood that the compass had never promised safety. It had asked each person to choose whom to carry.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE _____ Use the passage

1 How does the story's structure, beginning during the flood and then moving to Tomas's memory, shape your understanding of the conflict? Use details from both sections.

2 Compare Mara's view of herself with Tomas's and Inez's views of her. How do these perspectives develop or complicate the hero and guardian archetypes?

3 What does the compass symbolize? Explain your answer with two specific details from the passage.

4 Evaluate how the final paragraph resolves both the external and internal conflicts. How does the compass's changed needle support that resolution?

3 YOUR TURN _____ Your own words

Choose this passage and another literary text you know. In exactly five sentences, evaluate how both authors use either archetypes, perspectives, plot structure, or symbolism, include one specific detail from each text, and judge which use more effectively develops conflict.

PART 1 • READ AND MARK

Underline one detail showing the perspective of Mara, Tomas, and Inez, circle each reference to the compass, and number the details that establish the crisis, shift to the past, and resolve the conflict as 1, 2, and 3. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 • ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	How does the story's structure, beginning during the flood and then moving to Tomas's memory, shape your understanding of the conflict? Use details from both sections.	The opening creates immediate danger as Mara crosses the flooded bridge. Tomas's memory supplies earlier context, showing that he hid the compass and believes choosing a crossing requires judgment, not just directions.
2	Compare Mara's view of herself with Tomas's and Inez's views of her. How do these perspectives develop or complicate the hero and guardian archetypes?	Mara sees herself as an impostor, Tomas sees her as a challenger, and Inez sees both Mara and Tomas as frightened adults. These perspectives make Mara an emerging hero and Tomas a returning guardian, while showing that neither is fearless.
3	What does the compass symbolize? Explain your answer with two specific details from the passage.	The compass symbolizes responsibility and moral choice. Its needle spins uselessly during danger, its case helps signal rescuers, and Mara concludes that it asks people to choose whom to carry rather than promising safety.
4	Evaluate how the final paragraph resolves both the external and internal conflicts. How does the compass's changed needle support that resolution?	Externally, Tomas and Mara help Inez and her grandmother cross safely. Internally, Mara moves beyond seeing herself as an impostor and understands responsibility; the steady northward needle reflects this new clarity.

PART 3 • YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

In "The Glass Compass," the author uses the compass as a symbol of responsibility rather than a magical solution. Its spinning needle during the flood shows uncertainty, while its final northward point follows Mara's decision to help Inez and her grandmother. In Homer's *Odyssey*, Odysseus's bow symbolizes his identity and authority when he strings it in Ithaca. Both symbols connect an object to a character's role in a conflict. The compass is more effective because its meaning changes as Mara moves from self-doubt to deliberate action.

Accept equivalent claims when students support them with accurate details from the passage. For Part 3, accept any appropriate literary text, provided the response has exactly five sentences, compares one technique, cites a specific detail from both texts, and makes a supported judgment.