Floodlines and Footsteps

Compare how narrative craft shapes a crisis.

12.T.T.1.b "Compare and evaluate how multiple authors use plot structures, conflict, narrative devices, word choice, and other craft techniques to impact audiences and create purpose. (I)"

NAME _____ DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline one clue to each excerpt's structure, circle one word or image that shapes the flood, and box a detail that reveals a central conflict. Use your marks to compare how the authors guide readers' feelings and attention.

Three Ways Through the Storm

1. Elena Moreno's "The Last Bus" follows Mara during the final minutes before a coastal flood closes the highway. I watched the bus's headlights shiver through rain, then disappear behind a wall of spray. At 9:14, my father was still on the pier, untangling ropes while the evacuation siren counted its thin, metallic notes. "One more minute," he called. One more minute became the phrase that kept time as water climbed the steps, swallowed the parking lot, and pressed cold fingers through my shoes. When he finally ran toward me, I did not move until his hand closed around mine.

2. Darius Chen's "Waterline" opens after the storm, with Luis scraping mud from the library's stone lion. He finds a red mitten lodged in its mouth, and the sight pulls him backward to the night before. Then, while neighbors argue over whether to leave, Luis searches the dark gym for his younger sister. The flood is not merely water in his thoughts, it is a patient thief, taking familiar rooms one at a time. When he discovers the mitten's owner asleep beneath blankets, he carries her outside. The final image returns to the lion, newly clean but facing a street of ruined books.

3. Priya Okafor's "Map of the Sirens" unfolds through nine entries from Nia's phone. "7:42, pharmacy awning. Three batteries left." "7:51, bus stop. Grandma says the water is only rain." "8:03, bridge ramp. Why is the river louder than the siren?" "8:11, underpass. Car stopped. Do not tell Grandma I am scared." After a blank screen, the last entry appears: "8:19, school gym. Two cups of tea." Nia never names the route she took or says whether the bridge held. The record ends with the siren still sounding beyond the gym doors.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. Compare Moreno's and Chen's plot structures. How does each structure shape a reader's experience of the flood?

2. Compare the central conflicts in Moreno's and Chen's excerpts. How does each narrator's point of view affect your closeness to that conflict?

3. Chen uses a return to an earlier moment, while Okafor uses brief phone entries and a blank gap. How does each device create uncertainty for readers?

4. Evaluate which text, Chen's or Okafor's, asks readers to make more inferences about events that are not directly stated. Support your choice with one detail from each excerpt.

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

Write a four-sentence flood-evacuation scene that uses a narrative device not used by one excerpt you choose, such as dialogue-driven action, a letter, or an overheard announcement. Then write two sentences that name the excerpt, compare the craft choices, and explain the different audience effects.

ANSWER KEY

Floodlines and Footsteps

GRADE 12 · 12.T.T.1.b

PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Underline one clue to each excerpt's structure, circle one word or image that shapes the flood, and box a detail that reveals a central conflict. Use your marks to compare how the authors guide readers' feelings and attention. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 · ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	Compare Moreno's and Chen's plot structures. How does each structure shape a reader's experience of the flood?	**Moreno tells events in chronological, minute-by-minute order, which creates immediate urgency. Chen begins after the storm and moves back to the evacuation, creating curiosity about what happened and emphasizing the storm's aftermath.**
2	Compare the central conflicts in Moreno's and Chen's excerpts. How does each narrator's point of view affect your closeness to that conflict?	**Moreno's narrator fears being separated from her father as floodwater rises, and first person places readers inside her immediate fear. Chen focuses on Luis finding his sister, and third-person limited narration follows his actions and thoughts while giving readers slightly more distance.**
3	Chen uses a return to an earlier moment, while Okafor uses brief phone entries and a blank gap. How does each device create uncertainty for readers?	**Chen's shift backward makes readers initially wonder why the mitten matters and what happened during the storm. Okafor's incomplete entries and blank gap make readers infer Nia's route, the danger at the bridge, and whether her grandmother is safe.**
4	Evaluate which text, Chen's or Okafor's, asks readers to make more inferences about events that are not directly stated. Support your choice with one detail from each excerpt.	**Okafor's text asks for more inference because the blank screen and the unstated fate of the bridge leave key events missing. Chen withholds information at first, but his flashback later explains that Luis found his sister and carried her outside.**

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

The dispatcher said, "The bridge is closed." "Then we walk," I told my brother. "With the water rising?" he asked. "Before it reaches the porch," I said, lifting the lantern. Unlike Chen's flashback structure, this dialogue-driven scene stays in one immediate decision. The quick exchanges make readers feel the siblings' uncertainty in real time rather than learning about danger through a return to an earlier moment.

Accept equivalent comparisons when students accurately connect a structural, point-of-view, device, or word-choice detail to an audience effect. For Question 4, accept either text if the student makes a defensible evaluation using accurate evidence from both excerpts.