

Map to a Surprise

Notice how a writer builds suspense and meaning.

4.T.T.1 "Narrative Techniques: Explain, analyze, and use narrative techniques to shape understandings."

NAME _____

DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline sensory details and circle dialogue in the passage. Number the three events that build suspense or solve the problem, then notice how these choices show Nia's feelings.

The Rainy Map

- ① At recess, Nia found a folded map under the library window. Rain tapped the glass like tiny fingers. The paper smelled damp, and a blue line curled from the school garden to the old oak tree. "This must lead somewhere," Nia whispered. Her stomach fluttered. She tucked the map into her pocket before the bell rang.
- ② After class, Nia hurried outside, but she slowed near the garden. Mud sucked at her sneakers. She followed the blue line to a flat stone beside the oak. Under it lay a small metal box. Nia held her breath as the lid scraped open. Inside was a note: "Look up." Above her, a red kite was caught in the branches.
- ③ Nia remembered her brother's lost kite and grinned. She climbed no trees. Instead, she ran to the office and asked the custodian for help. Soon, Mr. Vale used a long pole to free the kite. Nia gave it to her brother at pickup time. "You found it!" he shouted. The map had not led to treasure, but it had led Nia to a kind surprise.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE Use the passage

1 How does the detail "Rain tapped the glass like tiny fingers" shape the mood at the beginning?

2 How do the details that Nia "held her breath" and the lid "scraped open" affect the pace of the middle paragraph?

3 Why does the writer use the short dialogue, "Look up," instead of explaining the clue right away?

4 How does the ending, where the map leads to a kite instead of treasure, shape your understanding of Nia?

3 YOUR TURN Your own words

Write a 4 to 6 sentence scene about finding and solving a small problem. Include one sensory detail, one line of dialogue, and a moment that slows down just before the solution.

PART 1 • READ AND MARK

Underline sensory details and circle dialogue in the passage. Number the three events that build suspense or solve the problem, then notice how these choices show Nia's feelings. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 • ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	How does the detail "Rain tapped the glass like tiny fingers" shape the mood at the beginning?	It creates a mysterious, slightly suspenseful mood.
2	How do the details that Nia "held her breath" and the lid "scraped open" affect the pace of the middle paragraph?	They slow the action and build suspense before the reader learns what is inside the box.
3	Why does the writer use the short dialogue, "Look up," instead of explaining the clue right away?	The short clue makes the reader wait and wonder, then creates surprise when Nia sees the kite.
4	How does the ending, where the map leads to a kite instead of treasure, shape your understanding of Nia?	It shows that Nia is helpful and that helping her brother is more meaningful than finding treasure.

PART 3 • YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

Milo followed a trail of feathers across the playground after school. Wind brushed his cheeks, and the swing chains squeaked above him. "Where did you come from?" he asked when he saw a gray pigeon beside the fence. He paused as the bird pecked at a tangled string near its foot. Milo called an adult, who gently freed the bird, and it flew toward the bright sky.

Accept equivalent explanations of how sensory details, dialogue, and pacing create mood, suspense, surprise, or meaning. For the writing task, check for 4 to 6 sentences with a sensory detail, dialogue, and a slowed moment before the solution.