Plot Under Pressure

Track how a story builds a problem and solves it.

7.T.T.1.b "Analyze the use of plot structures, conflict, and narrative devices (e.g., flashback, foreshadowing) within a text. (I)"

NAME _____ DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline the section that shifts to the past. Circle two clues that warn of trouble, then write 1, 2, 3, and 4 beside events that show the setup, rising action, climax, and resolution.

Comet at the Showcase

(1) At dusk, Mara wheeled her repaired robot, Comet, toward the school gym for the city showcase. Its silver arm held the tiny solar panel she had worked on for weeks. Near the door, the gym lights flickered once, then steadied. Mara glanced at the dark clouds pressing against the windows, but she rolled inside. If Comet won, the science club could earn money for new tools and safer batteries for younger students next year, too.

(2) While judges examined the machines, Mara remembered last winter, when Comet had failed during a test. She had wanted to quit after smoke curled from its battery case. Her grandfather had handed her a screwdriver and said, "Find one small problem first." Remembering that advice, Mara checked Comet's loose wheel sensor. The flickering lights came again, longer this time, and rain began tapping the gym roof over the excited crowd that evening.

(3) A loud crack cut through the gym, and every light went out. The judges paused as students whispered in the dark. Mara's solar panel could power Comet, but only if she moved it beneath the emergency skylight. She pushed through the crowd, placed Comet in the pale beam, and switched it on. The robot rolled across the floor, sorting scattered paper scraps into a bin. When the lights returned, the judges applauded Mara's solution, and the club received the tool grant.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. What goal creates Mara's main conflict, and what obstacle threatens that goal?

2. What does the flashback in paragraph 2 reveal about Mara, and how does it help her in the present?

3. Name two details that foreshadow the power outage. What later event do they hint at?

4. How does the final paragraph function as both the climax and the resolution of the plot?

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

Write a five-sentence mini-scene about a character trying to complete an important task. Include a character goal, an obstacle, a flashback, a clue that foreshadows a later problem, a climax, and a resolution.

ANSWER KEY

Plot Under Pressure

GRADE 7 · 7.T.T.1.b

PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Underline the section that shifts to the past. Circle two clues that warn of trouble, then write 1, 2, 3, and 4 beside events that show the setup, rising action, climax, and resolution. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 · ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	What goal creates Mara's main conflict, and what obstacle threatens that goal?	**Mara wants Comet to succeed at the showcase so the club can earn resources. The storm causes a power outage that threatens her demonstration.**
2	What does the flashback in paragraph 2 reveal about Mara, and how does it help her in the present?	**It reveals that Comet failed before and Mara nearly quit. Her grandfather's advice helps her focus on solving a small problem.**
3	Name two details that foreshadow the power outage. What later event do they hint at?	**The flickering lights and the dark clouds, or the rain tapping the roof, foreshadow the storm and the gym lights going out.**
4	How does the final paragraph function as both the climax and the resolution of the plot?	**The blackout is the most tense problem, making it the climax. Mara uses the skylight and solar panel to run Comet, and the judges award the club the grant, resolving the conflict.**

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

Jalen hoped to play his drum solo before the rain canceled the park concert. A cold drop landed on his drumhead, and the wind bent the stage banner. He remembered practicing in his garage after breaking his first pair of sticks. When the storm knocked out the speakers, Jalen used his drumbeat to lead the audience in clapping. The crowd stayed together until the rain stopped, and the concert continued.

Accept equivalent descriptions of the conflict, flashback, foreshadowing clues, and plot stages when supported by details from the passage. For the original scene, accept varied topics if all required narrative elements are present and logically connected.