Tower Tapping

Track how suspense grows through narrative choices.

7.T.T.1 "Narrative Techniques: Analyze and apply narrative techniques."

NAME _____ DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline sensory details, circle clues that hint at trouble, and put a star beside the memory that helps Mara act.

The Locked Tower

1 At 6:12, Mara pushed her bike up the hill toward the old water tower. A storm pressed gray clouds over the fields, and the metal steps clanged in the wind. Her brother, Eli, had texted, "Meet me at the tower. I found something." He had not answered her next three messages. Mara gripped the cold railing and listened. Beneath the wind, a steady tapping came from inside the locked tower. The sound stopped whenever she took another step.

2 At the door, Mara saw a strip of blue fabric caught beneath the frame. It matched Eli's raincoat. "Eli?" she called. Only the tapping answered. She remembered their grandfather's warning from last summer: the tower's maintenance hatch sometimes stuck after heavy rain. Mara knelt and slid her fingers along the wet concrete. Near the hinge, she found a narrow opening and a small brass key, warm as if someone had just held it. Her breath caught.

3 Mara turned the key once. It resisted. She tried again, harder, and the hatch sprang open with a rusty groan. Inside, Eli crouched beside a fallen tool box, his ankle wrapped in a torn sleeve. "My phone died," he said. The tapping had been his wrench against the pipe. Mara laughed once, then grabbed his hand. Above them, thunder rolled, but together they moved carefully down the stairs. Each step squeaked, yet Eli kept his weight on Mara's shoulder.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. How do the details about the cold railing, clanging steps, and tapping affect the mood of the beginning?

2. What do Eli's text message and his lack of replies foreshadow?

3. How does Mara's memory of her grandfather's warning help move the plot forward?

4. How do the short sentences, "It resisted. She tried again, harder," affect the pace when Mara opens the hatch?

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

Write a 90-120-word suspenseful scene about a character trying to find someone. Include one sensory detail, one line of dialogue, one clue that foreshadows trouble, and a brief memory that helps the character decide what to do. Underline the sensory detail.

ANSWER KEY

Tower Tapping

GRADE 7 · 7.T.T.1

PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Underline sensory details, circle clues that hint at trouble, and put a star beside the memory that helps Mara act. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 · ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	How do the details about the cold railing, clanging steps, and tapping affect the mood of the beginning?	**They create an uneasy, tense mood by making the tower seem cold, noisy, and mysterious.**
2	What do Eli's text message and his lack of replies foreshadow?	**They foreshadow that Eli may be in trouble at the tower.**
3	How does Mara's memory of her grandfather's warning help move the plot forward?	**It tells Mara that the hatch can stick after rain, so she searches near the hinge and finds a way to open it.**
4	How do the short sentences, "It resisted. She tried again, harder," affect the pace when Mara opens the hatch?	**They make the action feel quick and tense, emphasizing Mara's struggle to open the hatch.**

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

Jalen reached the empty bus stop just as the streetlights flickered on. Rain ticked against the glass shelter, and the air smelled like wet pennies. His sister's backpack sat beneath the bench, although she had promised to meet him at the library. "Nia?" he called. A train whistle sounded three blocks away. He remembered Dad's rule after Nia once missed her stop: check the route board before searching anywhere else. Jalen studied the schedule and saw that the last bus had changed platforms. He ran toward Platform 4, clutching the backpack strap.

Accept answers that identify how sensory details, foreshadowing, a memory, and pacing build suspense or move the plot. For the writing task, accept varied scenes that meet the word count and include all four required techniques.