Fogbound Compass

Trace how craft choices shape a character's dangerous decision.

8.T.T.1.a "Analyze how narrative techniques are used across the text to develop plot, characters, and setting. (I)"

NAME _____ DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline details that build the bay setting, circle Mara's thoughts or memories, and number 1, 2, and 3 beside three moments that raise danger or mystery. These choices show how the writer develops setting, character, and plot.

The Turning Tide

1 By the time Mara reached the old ferry dock, the bay had swallowed the last strip of orange sky. Wind pushed cold mist through the broken railings, and the boards groaned under her boots. She gripped the brass compass her grandfather had left her, though its needle spun wildly. At the end of the dock, a small boat knocked against a post. Inside, a lantern burned with no one near it. Mara told herself the light was an invitation, not a warning.

2 Earlier that afternoon, Grandfather had said only, "When the tide turns, follow what points home." He had not explained why he pressed the compass into her palm or why his coat pockets were stuffed with maps. Now, as Mara stepped into the boat, the lantern flickered blue. A sharp bell sounded from somewhere beneath the water. She froze. Then the compass needle stopped spinning and aimed toward the fog. If she rowed away, she might never learn what Grandfather had hidden. If she rowed forward, the dark bay would close behind her.

3 Mara pulled the oars, counting each stroke to keep her hands steady. The boat slid past the dock, and the fog erased the shore after only a few yards. Behind her, the bell rang again, louder this time. Ahead, the compass needle held firm. She remembered Grandfather teaching her to read the stars from this same bay, laughing when she mixed up north and west. The memory slowed her breathing. When a dark shape rose from the water, Mara did not turn back. She lifted the lantern and rowed toward it.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. How do the opening details about the mist, railings, boards, and lantern shape the setting and Mara's first choice?

2. What do Grandfather's statement about the tide and the maps foreshadow? Explain how these clues prepare you for later events.

3. How does the writer control the pace when Mara enters the boat and begins rowing? Use at least two details from the passage.

4. How does Mara's memory of learning to read stars develop her character and affect the plot?

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

Write a 5 to 7 sentence continuation in which Mara reaches the dark shape. Use one vivid setting detail, one thought or memory, and one clue that builds suspense. In brackets after the relevant sentences, label each technique and explain in a few words how it affects the plot, character, or setting.

ANSWER KEY

Fogbound Compass

GRADE 8 · 8.T.T.1.a

PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Underline details that build the bay setting, circle Mara's thoughts or memories, and number 1, 2, and 3 beside three moments that raise danger or mystery. These choices show how the writer develops setting, character, and plot. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 · ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	How do the opening details about the mist, railings, boards, and lantern shape the setting and Mara's first choice?	**They create an eerie, unsafe setting. The strange lantern and threatening details make Mara's choice to enter the boat feel risky.**
2	What do Grandfather's statement about the tide and the maps foreshadow? Explain how these clues prepare you for later events.	**They foreshadow that Mara will use the compass and travel on the bay to uncover something Grandfather hid.**
3	How does the writer control the pace when Mara enters the boat and begins rowing? Use at least two details from the passage.	**The brief sentence "She froze" pauses the action, while the bell, the either-or choice, and the dark shape raise tension and move the action forward.**
4	How does Mara's memory of learning to read stars develop her character and affect the plot?	**The memory shows her connection to Grandfather and helps her calm herself. Because she becomes steadier, she rows toward the dark shape instead of turning back.**

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

The dark shape was a stone marker, its wet surface shining like black glass in the lantern light. [Setting detail, makes the bay feel unfamiliar and dangerous] Carved into the marker was a map symbol that matched one on Grandfather's folded charts. [Clue, gives the plot a new direction] Mara remembered his voice telling her that lost sailors trusted the tide more than fear. [Memory, shows why she becomes steadier] The bell stopped, but a narrow channel opened beyond the marker. [Suspense, creates a new unknown] She guided the boat into the channel and watched the fog close behind her. [Plot action, moves Mara forward]

Accept answers that cite accurate details and explain how a narrative technique affects setting, character, or plot. For Part 3, accept varied continuations if they include the required techniques and clear labels that explain their effects.