Before the Gate Opens

Notice how a story opening introduces characters, a place, and a problem.

3.W.4.a "Establish an introduction (e.g., situation, narrator, characters)."

NAME _____ DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline the words that tell when and where the story begins. Circle the words that introduce the characters, then put a 1 beside the first sentence that shows a problem.

The Garden Gate

1 On Saturday morning, I stood outside the school garden with my friend Lila. Our class had promised to bring fresh lettuce to the rabbit rescue next door. But the garden gate would not open. A thick vine had wound itself around the latch. Lila held the empty basket while I tugged at the gate. It did not move.

2 Lila set down the basket. "We should not pull so hard," she said. "The hinge might break." I looked closely at the vine. Its green stem ran through the latch and into the fence. We could not reach the vine from outside. Then I saw a small gap below the fence, just wide enough for my hand.

3 I slipped my hand under the fence and gently lifted the vine from the latch. The gate swung open with a squeak. Inside, the lettuce leaves shone with drops of rain. Lila and I filled our basket and carried it to the rabbit rescue. A worker washed the leaves before feeding the rabbits. One rabbit twitched its nose as if it had been waiting for us.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. Who tells the story? What word in the opening helps you know?

2. When and where does the story begin?

3. Which character does the opening introduce besides the storyteller? How do you know they are together?

4. What are the characters trying to do, and what problem does the opening set up?

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

Write a new story opening in three or four sentences. Show who is there, when and where the story begins, and a problem the characters face. Do not solve the problem yet.

ANSWER KEY

Before the Gate Opens

GRADE 3 · 3.W.4.a

PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Underline the words that tell when and where the story begins. Circle the words that introduce the characters, then put a 1 beside the first sentence that shows a problem. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 · ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	Who tells the story? What word in the opening helps you know?	**The student with Lila tells the story. The word "I" shows who is speaking.**
2	When and where does the story begin?	**It begins on Saturday morning outside the school garden.**
3	Which character does the opening introduce besides the storyteller? How do you know they are together?	**It introduces Lila. The storyteller says they are standing outside the garden with their friend Lila.**
4	What are the characters trying to do, and what problem does the opening set up?	**They are trying to get lettuce for the rabbit rescue, but a vine is holding the garden gate shut.**

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

At dusk, my cousin Ben and I walked into the quiet library. We had come to return a book before closing time. Ben reached into his backpack, but the book was gone. We checked every pocket as the librarian turned off the lights.

Accept answers that identify the opening details in the student's own words. For the new opening, look for three or four sentences that establish characters, time, place, and an unsolved problem.