Details That Matter

Notice how precise language makes a scene clear.

C.9-10.3.e "Use precise words and phrases, telling details"

NAME _____ DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline three details that help you picture the bakery, then circle a phrase that explains a character's choice. Notice how each detail gives the reader more than a general description would.

Before the Market Opens

1 At 6:12 on Saturday morning, Mara unlocked the community bakery while the streetlights still glowed. A delivery crate waited beside the door, its cardboard corners softened by rain. Inside, twelve paper sacks held flour, but one sack had split along its stitched seam. A white ridge of flour crossed the crate and dusted Mara's black sneakers. She carried the torn sack to the stainless-steel counter, pinching the seam shut with both hands. By eight o'clock, the bakery would open for the neighborhood market, and the dough for the first batch of rolls was not mixed.

2 Mara's uncle lifted the flour sack into a clean plastic bin while she swept the spilled flour into a dustpan. He checked the recipe card: the rolls needed four kilograms of flour, and the torn sack still held enough. Mara measured flour into the mixer, then poured in warm water from a metal pitcher. The dough clung to the hook in pale, sticky ropes. As the mixer thudded, she watched the dough turn smooth. After it rose, she lined two baking sheets with parchment. Rain tapped against the front window, where a customer in a yellow coat was waiting.

3 When the rolls emerged, their crusts were amber and their scored tops had opened into narrow white seams. Mara slid a tray onto the cooling rack, then opened the bakery door. The customer in the yellow coat stepped inside and asked for six rolls. Mara reached for a bag, paused, and chose a cardboard box instead; the warm rolls would soften thin paper. She folded the lid around the rolls and set the box on the counter. Flour still marked the toes of her sneakers, but the first sale was complete before the market bell rang.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. Quote the words that show exactly where the sack tore. What do they help you picture?

2. Quote one detail that helps you see the dough and one that helps you hear the mixing.

3. Quote the phrase that describes both the color and the shape of the baked rolls. What does it help you picture?

4. Quote the telling detail that explains why Mara chooses a box instead of a bag. How does it explain her choice?

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

YOUR TURN: Write one paragraph of four to six sentences about preparing a place for visitors, real or imagined. Include at least three precise details about objects or actions, one sensory detail, and a small choice someone makes with a reason for it.

ANSWER KEY

Details That Matter

HIGH SCHOOL · C.9-10.3.e

PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Underline three details that help you picture the bakery, then circle a phrase that explains a character's choice. Notice how each detail gives the reader more than a general description would. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 · ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	Quote the words that show exactly where the sack tore. What do they help you picture?	**"split along its stitched seam" shows that the tear followed the seam of the sack.**
2	Quote one detail that helps you see the dough and one that helps you hear the mixing.	**Sight: "pale, sticky ropes." Sound: "the mixer thudded."**
3	Quote the phrase that describes both the color and the shape of the baked rolls. What does it help you picture?	**"their crusts were amber and their scored tops had opened into narrow white seams" shows browned crusts and pale openings along the cuts.**
4	Quote the telling detail that explains why Mara chooses a box instead of a bag. How does it explain her choice?	**"the warm rolls would soften thin paper" explains that a paper bag might not hold up.**

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

Before the science club arrived, I wiped muddy fingerprints from the aquarium glass with a soft cloth. Three orange guppies darted behind a plastic castle while the filter made a low, steady hum. I set six folding chairs in a semicircle so everyone could see the tank without crowding it. When a chair scraped against the tile, the fish scattered, so I lifted the remaining chairs instead of dragging them. By the time the door opened, a neat row of notebooks waited beside the tank.

For the passage questions, accept other exact quotations that meet the requested description. For the original paragraph, check for four to six sentences, three precise details, a sensory detail, and a choice with a clear reason.