Lines on the Wall

Trace how a small choice preserves a larger story.

RL.11-12.1 "Cite relevant and thorough textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text."

NAME _____ DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline two facts about the flood, circle two actions that suggest unspoken feelings, and number pairs of details you could use to support an inference.

The Flood Marks

1 On Friday, the town council sent Imani to paint the flood marks off the library wall. The new library was opening uphill, and the old building would become a café. Imani's mother, the librarian, had already packed the books, but she had left the thin brown lines beside the front door untouched. Beside each line someone had written a year in careful pencil. Imani remembered the highest mark from when she was eight: water climbed to the third shelf, and neighbors carried dictionaries out in plastic crates. The café owner wanted clean walls for opening day.

2 Imani taped the trim and opened a can of cream paint. Her mother came in holding the brass date stamp from the checkout desk. "They'll keep the front door," she said, as if that settled something. Imani pointed to the marks. "They won't keep those." Her mother turned the stamp in her hand until its numbers disappeared beneath her thumb. She had spent the flood week handing out dry blankets after the books ran out of safe places to go. Now she said only, "The wall belongs to them." Imani dipped her brush but did not lift it.

3 A boy from the café arrived with a ladder and a sign that read COMING SOON. He set the ladder over the highest line, then asked Imani to move her paint can. She moved it, but first she copied the dates into the notebook she used for sketches. Below the dates, she drew the distance between each line and the door handle. When her mother saw the page, she slipped the stamp into her coat pocket instead of the box marked DONATIONS. Imani painted the wall after the boy left; by dusk the flood lines were gone, but her notebook held their heights.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. What does Imani remember about the flood? Cite one detail from the first paragraph and one from the second to show how it affected the community.

2. What suggests that Imani's mother cares about the marks but feels unable to protect them? Support your inference with two details.

3. How does the boy's arrival affect what Imani does next? Cite two details from the final paragraph.

4. Why might Imani record each line's distance from the door handle instead of copying only the dates? Support your inference with evidence from the ending.

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

Write one paragraph arguing whether the café owner's plan represents renewal, erasure, or both. Use at least three specific details from at least two paragraphs, and explain how they support your reading.

ANSWER KEY

Lines on the Wall

HIGH SCHOOL · RL.11-12.1

PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Underline two facts about the flood, circle two actions that suggest unspoken feelings, and number pairs of details you could use to support an inference. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 · ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	What does Imani remember about the flood? Cite one detail from the first paragraph and one from the second to show how it affected the community.	**Imani remembers water reaching the third shelf and neighbors carrying dictionaries out in crates. Her mother handed out dry blankets during the flood, showing that people needed help as well as the books.**
2	What suggests that Imani's mother cares about the marks but feels unable to protect them? Support your inference with two details.	**She packed the books but left the marks untouched, suggesting she values them. Yet she says, "The wall belongs to them," suggesting she thinks she cannot decide what happens to it.**
3	How does the boy's arrival affect what Imani does next? Cite two details from the final paragraph.	**The boy places his ladder over the highest line and asks Imani to move her paint can. She moves it, but first copies the dates and records the lines' distances from the door handle.**
4	Why might Imani record each line's distance from the door handle instead of copying only the dates? Support your inference with evidence from the ending.	**The door handle gives her a fixed point for recording where each line was. After she paints over the marks, the notebook still holds their heights.**

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

The café owner's plan represents both renewal and erasure. Turning the old library into a café while a new library opens uphill gives the building a new use. Yet the owner wants "clean walls," which would remove the dated lines that record earlier floods. Those lines hold more than decoration: Imani remembers neighbors carrying dictionaries through high water, and her mother handed out blankets. By dusk, paint has covered the marks. Imani's notebook preserves their measurements, but visitors will no longer encounter that history on the wall.

Accept other well-supported inferences. For Part 3, look for at least three accurate details from two or more paragraphs, with an explanation connecting each detail to the claim.