Leave It Dark

Weigh evidence and uncertainty in a literary scene

RL.11-12.1 "Cite multiple pieces of textual evidence that most strongly and thoroughly support an analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text, including determining where the text leaves matters uncertain."

NAME _____ DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline three details that suggest the theater might reopen, circle three obstacles to reopening, and number two details that leave a conclusion uncertain.

The Bell Theater

1 By Friday, the town would decide whether to reopen the Bell Theater or sell it for storage. Mira had come to sweep its aisle before the council's inspection, though her mother said no one could afford another empty building. Dust rose from the red seats as Mira worked. In the projection booth, she found a stack of programs from the theater's last show, twelve years earlier. Someone had penciled attendance figures beside each date. The numbers dwindled from eighty to nine. On the final program, in a different hand, someone had written, 'We stayed until the lights went out.'

2 At noon, Inez, who had kept the keys since the closing, carried a new bulb up the narrow stairs. She screwed it into the aisle lamp, then set a tin of saved ticket stubs on the counter. 'People kept asking for these,' she said, although several stubs were still bound by their original rubber band. When Mira offered to polish the brass sign outside, Inez glanced at the cracked ceiling. 'A bright sign won't hold that up.' Still, she handed Mira the polish and held the ladder steady while Mira worked.

3 After Inez left, Mira found a folded slip beneath the donation box. In block letters it said, 'Leave it dark.' The paper smelled faintly of the lemon oil Inez used on the counter, but the box stood where any visitor could reach it. Mira looked toward the repaired aisle lamp. It lit only three rows, leaving the back of the theater in shadow. She put the slip in her pocket instead of the bin, then wrote the ceiling crack on the inspection list. Before locking up, she added one more item: test the other lights.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. What two details show that the theater's future is in doubt? Cite one detail about the town's plans and one from the theater's records.

2. What do Mira's final actions suggest about how she approaches reopening? Support your inference with two details.

3. Give two plausible meanings of 'Leave it dark.' Cite a different piece of evidence for each reading.

4. Can you conclude that Inez wrote the slip? Cite one detail that points toward her and one that prevents certainty.

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

Write one paragraph arguing whether Inez wants the theater reopened. Use three distinct details from the passage to support your claim, and explain one detail that complicates it.

ANSWER KEY

Leave It Dark

HIGH SCHOOL · RL.11-12.1

PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Underline three details that suggest the theater might reopen, circle three obstacles to reopening, and number two details that leave a conclusion uncertain. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 · ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	What two details show that the theater's future is in doubt? Cite one detail about the town's plans and one from the theater's records.	**The town must decide whether to reopen the theater or sell it for storage. The programs show attendance falling from eighty to nine.**
2	What do Mira's final actions suggest about how she approaches reopening? Support your inference with two details.	**Mira seems hopeful but cautious. She adds testing the other lights to the inspection list, but she also records the ceiling crack.**
3	Give two plausible meanings of 'Leave it dark.' Cite a different piece of evidence for each reading.	**It could mean the theater should stay closed, since past attendance fell to nine. It could also warn against using the building before repairs, since the ceiling is cracked.**
4	Can you conclude that Inez wrote the slip? Cite one detail that points toward her and one that prevents certainty.	**No. The paper smells of the lemon oil Inez uses, but the donation box is within any visitor's reach.**

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

Inez seems to want the theater reopened, but not at the cost of ignoring its problems. She installs a new bulb in the aisle lamp, a practical step toward making the building usable. She has also kept old ticket stubs, suggesting the theater still matters to her. Finally, she holds the ladder while Mira polishes the outside sign, helping make the place welcoming. Yet Inez points to the cracked ceiling and warns that a bright sign will not hold it up. Her help does not mean she thinks the building is ready.

Accept either defensible reading of Inez's wishes if the response explains three distinct details and acknowledges conflicting evidence. For the slip, accept other plausible interpretations supported by specific passage details.