

The Silent Bell

Trace how plot events shape a story's message.

7R3 "In literary texts, analyze how elements of plot are related, affect one another, and contribute to meaning. (RL) In informational texts, analyze how individuals, events, and ideas are introduced, relate to each other, and are developed..."

NAME _____

DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK _____ Read it twice

YOUR JOB Number 1 beside the event that starts the problem, 2 beside the discovery that changes Mara's understanding, and 3 beside the event that resolves the problem. Draw arrows to show how each event leads to the next.

The Garden Bell

- ① On Monday morning, Mara arrived early at the community garden to ring the old brass bell that called volunteers to work. The bell was missing from its hook. Beside the empty hook lay a torn strip of blue raincoat fabric. Mara remembered that her neighbor Theo wore a blue raincoat and had argued that the bell was too loud. Instead of accusing him, she tucked the fabric into her pocket and began searching the damp paths before the other volunteers arrived.
- ② Near the tool shed, Mara found fresh wheel tracks leading toward the street. She followed them to Theo's porch, where his younger sister, Lila, sat beside a wagon. The bell rested under a blanket. Lila explained that she had borrowed it for a pretend school, but its clapper had cracked when the wagon hit a curb. Mara saw Theo kneeling nearby, trying to glue the broken piece before anyone noticed. His silence now seemed less like defiance and more like worry.
- ③ Mara asked Theo to bring the bell back with her. When the volunteers gathered, she described the accident without naming Lila until Theo admitted what had happened. The group decided to repair the clapper together and use a hand chime that day. Theo offered Lila an apology for leaving her alone with his worry. As the garden work began, Mara realized that pausing to investigate had changed a suspected theft into a problem the neighbors could solve together.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE _____ Use the passage

1 How does the blue raincoat fabric introduce the conflict and affect Mara's first action?

2 How do the wheel tracks and Lila's explanation change Mara's understanding of Theo?

3 How does Theo's admission affect the resolution of the problem?

4 What message does the ending suggest? Use two connected events from the story to support your answer.

3 YOUR TURN _____ Your own words

Write a five-sentence plot sketch about a character who makes an assumption. Include a problem, a discovery that changes the character's understanding, a resolution, and a message shown by the events.

PART 1 • READ AND MARK

Number 1 beside the event that starts the problem, 2 beside the discovery that changes Mara's understanding, and 3 beside the event that resolves the problem. Draw arrows to show how each event leads to the next. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 • ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	How does the blue raincoat fabric introduce the conflict and affect Mara's first action?	The fabric makes Mara suspect Theo may have taken the bell, but she chooses to search for evidence instead of accusing him.
2	How do the wheel tracks and Lila's explanation change Mara's understanding of Theo?	The tracks lead Mara to Theo's home, and Lila's explanation shows that the bell was borrowed and damaged in an accident. Mara understands that Theo is worried, not defiant.
3	How does Theo's admission affect the resolution of the problem?	His admission gives the volunteers the information they need to repair the clapper together and use a hand chime for the day.
4	What message does the ending suggest? Use two connected events from the story to support your answer.	The ending suggests that investigating before blaming others can lead to understanding and cooperation. Mara searches for evidence, learns about the accident, and helps the group solve the problem.

PART 3 • YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

During a storm, Inez found that the library's donation box was empty. She suspected the new custodian because he had been working near the front desk. Then she noticed a trail of wet envelopes leading to a leaking window, where the custodian was drying the donations to save them. Inez helped him move the box, and she apologized for her quick judgment. The event shows that finding more evidence can replace blame with understanding.

Accept equivalent explanations that accurately connect the events rather than simply retelling them. For the plot sketch, accept varied scenarios if the discovery clearly changes the character's understanding and the resolution supports a reasonable message.