

Last Ferry Details

Precise details turn a moment into a scene.

9-10W3d "Use precise words and phrases, explicit details, and sensory language to convey a vivid picture of the experiences, events, setting, and/or characters."

NAME _____

DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK _____ Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline five precise details that help you picture the setting or actions, and circle three words or phrases that appeal to a sense. These choices show how the writer makes the moment vivid.

The Last Ferry

- ① At 5:40, Mara waited alone on the river dock, gripping the brass rail with both hands. Fog slid over the black water and beaded on her wool sleeves. Across the channel, the ferry's single lamp blinked twice, then disappeared behind a warehouse. The air smelled of diesel, wet rope, and the sharp mineral scent of rain. Mara checked the folded hospital note in her pocket. Her brother had promised to meet her at the terminal, but the last ferry was already late. Water drummed softly beneath the warped boards.
- ② When the boat finally emerged, its hull pushed a low, greasy wake against the pilings. The captain, a woman in a blue knit cap, threw a coil of rope that slapped the dock at Mara's boots. Mara stepped aboard, and the deck shifted under her sneakers. A gust lifted the hospital note from her hand. She lunged, caught one corner, and scraped her palm on the ridged metal rail. The captain cut the engine. In the sudden quiet, Mara heard rain ticking on the roof and her own breath coming too fast.
- ③ Halfway across, the fog thinned into torn gray strips. Yellow windows appeared along the terminal, and a bicycle light swung in a small circle near the gate. Mara pressed her stinging palm against her jacket and watched the light grow brighter. When the ferry bumped the landing, Theo ran down the ramp, his red scarf dark with rain. He took the damp note without speaking. Then he squeezed her uninjured hand, and Mara felt the tight knot beneath her ribs loosen. The boat horn groaned behind them.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE _____ Use the passage

1 Which phrase describes the fog's movement? What picture does that phrase create?

2 What two precise actions does Mara take after the gust lifts the note? How do these actions show urgency?

3 Name two sounds Mara hears on the ferry. How does each sound add to the mood of the scene?

4 How do the details about Theo's red scarf and his squeeze of Mara's hand help you picture the ending?

3 YOUR TURN _____ Your own words

Write a 90-110-word first-person paragraph about arriving at an important place. Include at least three sensory details and at least two precise action verbs to show the narrator's feelings without directly naming the feeling.

PART 1 • READ AND MARK

Underline five precise details that help you picture the setting or actions, and circle three words or phrases that appeal to a sense. These choices show how the writer makes the moment vivid. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 • ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	Which phrase describes the fog's movement? What picture does that phrase create?	"Fog slid over the black water." It makes the fog seem as if it is moving smoothly across the dark river.
2	What two precise actions does Mara take after the gust lifts the note? How do these actions show urgency?	She lunges and catches one corner of the note, then scrapes her palm on the rail. Her quick movements show that the note matters deeply to her.
3	Name two sounds Mara hears on the ferry. How does each sound add to the mood of the scene?	She hears rain ticking on the roof and her breath coming too fast. The rain emphasizes the quiet, while her fast breath reveals tension.
4	How do the details about Theo's red scarf and his squeeze of Mara's hand help you picture the ending?	His rain-darkened red scarf creates a clear visual image, and his squeeze of her uninjured hand shows quiet care and relief.

PART 3 • YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

At 6:15, I pushed through the side door of the empty gym, carrying the trumpet case against my hip. The hallway lights buzzed above the polished floor, and the smell of lemon cleaner mixed with popcorn from the lobby. Near the stage, Mr. Chen knelt beside a torn music stand, tightening its silver screw with a coin. I set my case down carefully, but its latch clicked too loudly. He looked up, smiled, and pointed to the row of chairs waiting under the blue curtain. My cold fingers stopped shaking when I saw my name taped to the first seat.

Accept quoted or accurately paraphrased details from the passage when students explain how word choice creates an image, mood, or feeling. For the writing task, look for a clear moment, precise nouns and verbs, and sensory details that imply the narrator's feelings.