What Survives

Read how fiction uses perspective, imagery, and plot to shape meaning.

12.2.R.2 "Students will identify characteristics of genres and analyze how they enhance comprehension of fiction, poetry, drama, and nonfiction."

NAME _____ DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline a sentence that reveals Leena's thoughts, circle an image that makes the possible loss vivid, and number the problem, reversal, and resolution 1 to 3. Use your marks to trace how the story shapes your understanding of what matters.

The Blue Notebook

1 By the time the rain reached the library steps, Leena had found the blue notebook. Its cover smelled of dust and orange peel, though she could not guess why. Tomorrow the town would dedicate a wall to the people who had built its first public garden; the notebook held their names. A brown line crept along the basement wall, just above her shoes. Leena pressed the book against her coat and listened for the custodian's keys. Upstairs, a door slammed. She pictured the new wall with blank spaces where names should be and started toward the stairs.

2 At the landing, Mr. Ortiz appeared with a flashlight. "The street drain is blocked," he said. "We need to leave." Leena held up the notebook, but a thin stream crossed the bottom step. She could climb around it; Mr. Ortiz could not, not while carrying the heavy box of garden tools he had rescued. For a moment she resented the box, then saw the muddy handles lined up like small raised hands. "Set it down," she said. "Take my arm." As they climbed, the flashlight swung away, and the blue cover slipped from her fingers.

3 The notebook landed in the stream and opened. Leena lunged, but Mr. Ortiz caught her sleeve. On the exposed page, the ink ran into blue branches. At the top of the stairs, she could still hear water tapping each step below. Then Mr. Ortiz opened his coat and drew out a folded sheet. "I copied the names before I came down," he said. Leena read them under the wavering beam: gardeners, neighbors, children who had carried buckets. She had wanted to save a book. What mattered was that someone could still speak the names aloud tomorrow.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. Which sentence gives you access to Leena's thoughts but not Mr. Ortiz's? How does that limited perspective affect your first impression of the box of tools?

2. What does the image of ink running into "blue branches" suggest about the damaged page? How does this image deepen your understanding of the loss?

3. How does Mr. Ortiz's line about copying the names change your understanding of what happened to the notebook? Why does revealing this through dialogue matter?

4. How do the story's problem, reversal, and resolution change the meaning of saving the notebook?

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

Write a brief drama scene set just after the story ends. Use a stage direction and dialogue from Leena and Mr. Ortiz to show a new action, then write two sentences explaining how the script's stage direction and dialogue help an audience understand that action differently from the story's narration.

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PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Underline a sentence that reveals Leena's thoughts, circle an image that makes the possible loss vivid, and number the problem, reversal, and resolution 1 to 3. Use your marks to trace how the story shapes your understanding of what matters. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 · ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	Which sentence gives you access to Leena's thoughts but not Mr. Ortiz's? How does that limited perspective affect your first impression of the box of tools?	**"For a moment she resented the box" reveals Leena's thoughts. Following her perspective encourages readers to see the box as an obstacle at first, before she notices the tools' significance.**
2	What does the image of ink running into "blue branches" suggest about the damaged page? How does this image deepen your understanding of the loss?	**The spreading ink resembles branches, linking the ruined names to the garden. The image makes the damage feel connected to the people and work the notebook records.**
3	How does Mr. Ortiz's line about copying the names change your understanding of what happened to the notebook? Why does revealing this through dialogue matter?	**His line reveals that the names survive even though the notebook is damaged. Hearing the news when Leena does lets readers experience the same reversal she does.**
4	How do the story's problem, reversal, and resolution change the meaning of saving the notebook?	**Leena first fears the names will be lost to the flood. Mr. Ortiz's copy reverses that fear, and the ending shifts the focus from preserving the book to keeping the names known.**

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

[Outside the library, Leena holds the folded sheet beneath the doorway light.]
Leena: The corners are getting wet. Can you hold the door?
Mr. Ortiz: Yes. Fold the sheet inside your coat.
[Leena tucks it away, and they step into the rain.]
The stage directions show the audience how the characters protect the sheet without describing either person's thoughts. Their dialogue makes their quick cooperation audible, while the story's narration could have shown Leena's private reaction.

Accept other supported examples of limited perspective and imagery. For the drama scene, look for a new action after the story, both speakers, a stage direction, and two sentences comparing what the script reveals with what narration can reveal.