When Lights Fail

Notice how a small clue grows into a turning point.

7.3.W.1 "Students will compose narratives reflecting real or imagined experiences that: • include plots involving complex characters resolving conflicts • unfold in chronological or surprising sequence (e.g., foreshadowing) • include a narrator..."

NAME _____ DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline two details that show the narrator's mixed feelings about Jo, circle an early clue to the problem, and number three actions that solve it in the order they happen.

The Dragon in the Dark

1. Before our shadow-puppet show, the lamp above the screen made a tiny clicking sound. Jo heard it too. "I brought a flashlight," she said, patting her jacket pocket. I nodded, though I wished she would stop planning for disasters. I had spent all week carving the paper dragon, and tonight I wanted the audience to know it was mine. Jo had painted the hills and practiced every voice. Her work mattered. Still, when the curtains rustled and the gym smelled of popcorn, I imagined my name alone on the program.

2. Halfway through the show, the lamp clicked twice and went dark. A few people gasped. My dragon vanished against the screen, and my stomach seemed to drop with it. "We can still finish," Jo whispered. I wanted to blame her for not checking the lamp, even though I had heard it click before the show. For one breath, I stood still, clutching the dragon's paper handle. Then I remembered the flashlight in her pocket. "Get it," I said. "I'll hold the screen steady."

3. Jo pulled out the flashlight and aimed it at the back of the screen. I held the screen steady while she guided the dragon into the beam. Its jagged wings rose again, larger than before. The audience clapped, but Jo's hand shook as she made the dragon bow. She had been worried too. After the show, our teacher asked how we had saved it. I glanced at my carved dragon, then at Jo's painted hills. "Jo planned ahead," I said. "We did the rest together." This time, her smile felt brighter than the beam.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. Which two early details hint that the lamp may fail and that Jo can help?

2. What does the narrator want at first, and how does the narrator's response to Jo change by the end?

3. After the lamp goes dark, what three actions bring the dragon back into view?

4. The passage begins with a lamp and ends with Jo's smile seeming brighter than the beam. How does the image of light help show the narrator's change?

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

Write a 6- to 8-sentence scene about a character who wants something but must cooperate with someone they resent. Begin with a small clue to a later problem, then show how they solve it together. Include dialogue, a thought, a sensory detail, and an image or sound that returns with a new meaning.

ANSWER KEY

When Lights Fail

GRADE 7 · 7.3.W.1

PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Underline two details that show the narrator's mixed feelings about Jo, circle an early clue to the problem, and number three actions that solve it in the order they happen. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 · ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	Which two early details hint that the lamp may fail and that Jo can help?	**The lamp makes a tiny clicking sound, and Jo says she brought a flashlight.**
2	What does the narrator want at first, and how does the narrator's response to Jo change by the end?	**The narrator wants sole credit for the dragon. By the end, the narrator credits Jo for planning ahead and says they finished together.**
3	After the lamp goes dark, what three actions bring the dragon back into view?	**Jo aims the flashlight at the back of the screen, the narrator holds the screen steady, and Jo guides the dragon into the beam.**
4	The passage begins with a lamp and ends with Jo's smile seeming brighter than the beam. How does the image of light help show the narrator's change?	**At first, light helps the narrator show off the dragon. By the end, the narrator values Jo and their shared success more than the spotlight.**

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

One drop tapped my poster before the art fair opened, but I ignored the gray clouds. I wanted to beat Nora, who had won last year with a painting I secretly admired. When rain rattled the tables, her poster slid toward a muddy puddle. Why should I save her work when mine was getting soaked? “Grab the corner!” I shouted, pinning her poster with my elbow. Nora caught it, then held my dripping poster while I dragged both frames beneath the awning. As the rain tapped overhead, I thanked her, surprised that helping a rival felt better than winning alone.

For the marking job, accept details showing both the narrator's wish for sole credit and recognition of Jo's work. Accept any three correctly ordered actions that help finish the show.