The Missing Compass

Use story details to identify a genre.

8.2.R.2 "Students will analyze details in fiction, poetry, and nonfiction texts to identify characteristics of genres."

NAME _____ DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline two details that show how the text tells a story, and circle two details that build a question the characters must solve.

The Empty Case

1 On the morning of the school exhibit, the glass case stood empty. Yesterday, it had held a small brass compass donated for the display. "The case was locked when I left," said Mr. Ibarra, the librarian. Nia looked at the untouched lock, then at a thin line of sand on the shelf. Outside, rain tapped against the windows, but no one had tracked mud through the library. Nia had promised her class the compass would be ready for visitors that afternoon. Now she had three hours to find it.

2 Nia crouched beside the case and spotted a dark water stain on the ceiling above it. A cart stood nearby, with a damp cloth hanging from its handle and grains of sand caught in one wheel. "Who else has a key?" she asked. Mr. Ibarra named Ms. Park, the teacher who had helped arrange the exhibit. Nia pushed the cart toward the supply room, watching the wheel leave faint sandy dots across the floor. Behind the door, something metal clinked against a jar.

3 Ms. Park stepped out holding the compass in a dry towel. "Water started dripping through the ceiling before school," she explained. "I used my key and moved the compass before it got wet." She had carried it to the supply room, then rushed to call the repair crew and forgotten to leave a note. Nia let out a breath she had not noticed holding. The sand had come from the case's miniature desert display, which the cart had brushed. By lunch, the compass was safe in a new spot.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. Which details show that this text tells a fictional story rather than reporting facts about compasses? Give two details.

2. What question makes this story a mystery at the start? Give one detail that makes the question puzzling.

3. How do the water stain and the sand on the cart's wheel help the reader make sense of the compass's disappearance?

4. Why is this realistic fiction rather than fantasy? Use the ending as evidence.

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

Write a different ending in three or four sentences that changes this realistic mystery into a fantasy mystery. Include two impossible events and a clue that helps Nia find the compass.

ANSWER KEY

The Missing Compass

GRADE 8 · 8.2.R.2

PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Underline two details that show how the text tells a story, and circle two details that build a question the characters must solve. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 · ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	Which details show that this text tells a fictional story rather than reporting facts about compasses? Give two details.	**The text follows named characters through a specific problem and includes dialogue and Nia's private feeling of relief.**
2	What question makes this story a mystery at the start? Give one detail that makes the question puzzling.	**The question is where the compass went. The case is empty even though its lock appears untouched.**
3	How do the water stain and the sand on the cart's wheel help the reader make sense of the compass's disappearance?	**The stain suggests a leak threatened the display. The sand connects the cart to the case and helps Nia follow it toward the supply room.**
4	Why is this realistic fiction rather than fantasy? Use the ending as evidence.	**Ms. Park used a key and moved the compass to protect it from a leak. Its disappearance has an ordinary explanation, not a magical one.**

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

Behind the supply room door, the compass floated above a jar of glowing sand. A tiny voice from inside the jar whispered that it had borrowed the compass. Nia noticed the sandy dots ended at the jar, so she opened its lid and asked for the compass back. The voice agreed, and the compass drifted into her hand.

Accept other passage details that support each genre claim. For the new ending, look for three or four sentences, two impossible events, and a clue that helps Nia locate the compass.