

Three Ways Forward

Compare how structure shapes a journey, a crossing, and a choice.

8.RL.3.A "Compare and contrast the structure of two or more stories, poems, and plays and analyze how the differing structure of each literary text contributes to its meaning and style."

NAME _____

DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK _____ Read it twice

YOUR JOB In Story A, underline time markers. In Poem B, circle the repeated line. In Play C, box one speaker label and one bracketed action. Use these features to compare structure and effect.

Three original literary texts

Story A: The Last Seed Packet

On Saturday, Mara found an old packet of bean seeds behind her grandfather's tools. She doubted they would grow. She soaked six seeds overnight, then tucked them into a damp paper towel. On Monday, two split their pale coats. By Wednesday, thin roots had emerged. Mara carried them to her grandfather, who had stopped planting after his illness. He smiled, chose a sunny patch and asked her to plant the strongest sprouts beside him.

Poem B: At the Ferry Dock

The river keeps its secret.

I wait with my bike, counting gulls.

The river keeps its secret.

The horn calls; I roll aboard.

The river keeps its secret.

Midstream, the wind folds my map shut.

The river keeps its secret.

I pedal inland with questions in my pocket.

Play C: One Flashlight

[The power is out. Eli holds the working flashlight.]

JON: The radio needs batteries. Could we use those?

ELI: These are our last two. Then the flashlight would go dark.

[Thunder shakes the window. Jon looks toward the street.]

JON: Mrs. Chen lives alone. We should check on her.

ELI: Then let's leave the batteries in the flashlight.

[Jon takes his coat. They leave together, carrying the light.]

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE Use the passage

1 How do two time markers in Story A show change? Explain their effect on the ending.

2 Which line returns in Poem B, and where? How does this pattern shape the speaker's journey?

3 How do dialogue and bracketed actions in Play C work together to reveal a decision?

4 Compare how Story A and Play C show change over time. Use a structural feature from each to explain an effect.

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

Write a short poem and a brief play scene about the same moment, then compare how their structures create different effects. Use the separate spaces below.

Poem

Put each poetic line on its own ruled line. Repeat a line for an intentional effect; keep your poem within this space.

Play scene

Use speaker labels and dialogue, with at least one bracketed stage direction. Start each speech or direction on a new line.

Compare the effects

Explain one effect of each form, using a feature of each piece you wrote. Compare the effects rather than only naming the forms.

PART 1 • READ AND MARK

In Story A, underline time markers. In Poem B, circle the repeated line. In Play C, box one speaker label and one bracketed action. Use these features to compare structure and effect. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 • ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	How do two time markers in Story A show change? Explain their effect on the ending.	Saturday and Wednesday, for example, trace gradual growth from doubtful beginnings to sprouts. The sequence makes the invitation to plant together feel hopeful.
2	Which line returns in Poem B, and where? How does this pattern shape the speaker's journey?	"The river keeps its secret" appears in lines 1, 3, 5 and 7. It returns between stages of travel, keeping uncertainty present even as the speaker moves forward.
3	How do dialogue and bracketed actions in Play C work together to reveal a decision?	Dialogue presents the battery choice and concern for Mrs. Chen. Looking toward the street, taking a coat and leaving with the light turn that concern into a decision to check on her.
4	Compare how Story A and Play C show change over time. Use a structural feature from each to explain an effect.	Story A summarizes events across several days through time markers, so hope grows gradually. Play C uses short exchanges and visible actions in one moment, making the choice feel immediate. Other supported comparisons are valid.

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

Poem

The key is still missing.

Rain taps the library glass.

The key is still missing.

I reach into the book return slot.

Play scene

[Ava searches beneath a desk.]

AVA: The key is not in my backpack.

LEO: Check the book return slot.

[Ava reaches inside and raises the key.]

Comparison

The poem's returning line makes the worry linger, and its ending leaves the search unresolved. The play uses a suggestion followed immediately by an action to reveal the discovery, making its ending feel quicker and more decisive.

TEACHER ASSESSMENT NOTES

All three source texts are original fiction. Compare structure and its effect on meaning or style; different supported interpretations are acceptable. Poem B has eight visibly separate lines and one complete recurring line. The student poem and play must be visibly distinct and concern the same moment. Do not require an exact sentence count. The model offers one comparison, not a rule that all poems or plays work the same way.