

Seedling Steps

Explain how later parts of a story build on earlier parts.

4.RL.3.C "Explain the overall structure of stories, poems, and plays and how each successive part builds on earlier sections."

NAME _____

DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK _____ Read it twice

YOUR JOB Read the three story paragraphs. Underline Nia's goal in paragraph 1, a problem and response in paragraph 2, and the result in paragraph 3.

Read and Use the Texts

Paragraph 1: A new goal

Nia's class began a month-long plant-care project. At the end, Mr. Bell would celebrate the care students had shown, not the size of their plants. Nia loved drawing but had never grown anything herself. She chose a small seedling in a paper cup and decided to keep a sketch journal of its changes. She hoped she could help it grow.

Paragraph 2: A setback

Nia checked the soil each day and watered when it felt dry. One afternoon a squirrel knocked over the cup on the porch. Soil spilled out, and Nia wanted to quit. Then she looked at her first sketch and remembered her goal. With her father, she moved the seedling into a larger pot and placed it on a high shelf. She kept checking, watering and drawing.

Paragraph 3: The result

At the end of the month, Nia's plant was not the largest, but it stood upright with new green leaves. Mr. Bell praised her steady care and her careful journal. Nia placed her first sketch beside her latest one. She saw changes in the plant and in herself: she had kept trying after a problem. She decided to start a new sketch journal for another plant.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE _____ Use the passage

1 What does paragraph 1 establish that the rest of the story develops?

2 How does paragraph 2 build on paragraph 1? Name an earlier detail and a later action.

3 Why does the ending belong after the setback? Explain a connection to paragraph 2.

3 YOUR TURN _____ Your own words

Try the same structure in a short story about learning a skill. Then explain how your later parts build on the beginning.

Beginning paragraph

Introduce a character, a new skill and a goal. Write one short paragraph.

Middle paragraph

Add a problem and a response that grows from the character's goal. Write a new paragraph.

Ending paragraph

Show a result and what the character learns. Connect it to the middle. Write a new paragraph.

Explain your structure

Name one detail you introduced early and explain how a later part builds on it.

PART 1 • READ AND MARK

Read the three story paragraphs. Underline Nia's goal in paragraph 1, a problem and response in paragraph 2, and the result in paragraph 3. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 • ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	What does paragraph 1 establish that the rest of the story develops?	It establishes Nia's goal of helping a seedling grow, her lack of experience and her plan to draw its changes. These prepare the reader for her care, setback and journal at the end.
2	How does paragraph 2 build on paragraph 1? Name an earlier detail and a later action.	The first paragraph introduces her sketch journal and goal. In paragraph 2, looking at her first sketch reminds her of that goal, so she keeps caring for the plant instead of quitting.
3	Why does the ending belong after the setback? Explain a connection to paragraph 2.	The ending shows the result of Nia's steady care after the knocked-over cup. Her realization that she kept trying makes sense because paragraph 2 shows when she wanted to quit and chose to continue.

PART 3 • YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)**Possible three-paragraph story**

Milo wanted to learn a drum rhythm for the class song. He could tap it slowly, but he lost his place when the music sped up. He wrote the beat on a card.

At practice, Milo forgot the rhythm and felt embarrassed. He used his card to practice one small part at a time. His sister clapped along while he gradually played faster.

On Friday, Milo played the rhythm through the song. He still kept his card nearby, but he no longer needed to look at it. He learned that patient practice helped him reach his goal.

Possible structure explanation

The beginning introduces the rhythm card. Milo uses it to practice in the middle, and needing it less at the end shows his progress.

TEACHER ASSESSMENT NOTES

This worksheet focuses on story structure within the broader stories, poems and plays standard. Require explanations of how later parts build on earlier details, not only beginning-middle-end labels. The model intentionally prints as three separate paragraphs. Student stories may be brief; assess the connected goal, problem, response and result rather than a word count. Accept supported interpretations and different realistic or imagined skill stories.