Across the River

Read a story through competing perspectives.

11-12.RL.10 "By the end of the year, independently read and comprehend literary texts representing a variety of genres, cultures, and perspectives that exhibit complexity appropriate for at least grade 11 and 12..."

NAME _____ DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline one detail that supports Father's view and one that supports Leila's. Circle two places where the narrator changes an initial judgment so you can track how the story holds more than one view at once.

The Crossing

1 The morning the city fastened a chain across the footbridge, my father stood beside the river holding a paper bag of unsold rolls. Before dawn, he had carried bread to the market on the other bank; now the bus route added forty minutes. He called the bridge a promise the city had made to people who could not afford cars. A notice on the fence said inspectors had found cracks beneath the deck. I wanted to tear it down until I noticed how carefully he read it, as if a warning could also be an apology.

2 At dinner, my sister Leila, who worked on the inspection crew, unfolded a photograph of a rusted support. She had not voted to close the bridge, she said, but she would not walk across it herself. Father pointed out that the replacement bus stopped running before the market opened. Leila answered that a collapsed bridge would not distinguish between a baker and an engineer. Neither raised a voice. When Father passed her the last roll, she left it untouched, and I wondered whether she heard his silence as blame or whether he heard hers as indifference.

3 On Saturday, I took the long bus ride with Father. Through the window, the bridge looked thin enough to draw with a pencil, though the river below moved with a force no pencil could hold. At the market, customers asked why the bread was late; Father told them about the detour, not the photograph. That evening I wrote a letter asking the city for an early bus and a date for repairs. I had begun with a demand to reopen the bridge. I crossed it out, leaving the indentation visible, because I wanted someone to see what the new sentence had cost.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. What different risks do Father and Leila see in the bridge closure? Use one detail to support each view.

2. How does the narrator's reaction to the warning notice become more complicated by the end of the first paragraph?

3. What two meanings does the narrator consider for the silence at dinner? Why can the narrator not be sure which meaning is right?

4. What does the narrator's decision to leave the crossed-out demand visible suggest about the revised letter? Support your answer with two details.

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

Choose a literary text you have read or want to read next. In 3 to 4 sentences, name its title and author, use one detail from this passage to explain why the text's perspective might extend or complicate the conflict, and identify what you would look for as you read.

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PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Underline one detail that supports Father's view and one that supports Leila's. Circle two places where the narrator changes an initial judgment so you can track how the story holds more than one view at once. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 · ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	What different risks do Father and Leila see in the bridge closure? Use one detail to support each view.	**Father sees a threat to his work because the detour adds forty minutes and the replacement bus does not run before the market opens. Leila sees a danger to people's lives because inspectors found cracks and a rusted support.**
2	How does the narrator's reaction to the warning notice become more complicated by the end of the first paragraph?	**The narrator first wants to tear down the notice, then sees Father read it carefully and considers that the warning may also acknowledge the harm caused by closing the bridge.**
3	What two meanings does the narrator consider for the silence at dinner? Why can the narrator not be sure which meaning is right?	**The narrator wonders whether Leila hears Father's silence as blame or Father hears Leila's silence as indifference. Neither says what they think, so the narrator cannot know.**
4	What does the narrator's decision to leave the crossed-out demand visible suggest about the revised letter? Support your answer with two details.	**The narrator accepts that reopening the unsafe bridge is not a simple solution but wants the city to see what people are giving up. The revised letter asks for an early bus and a repair date, while the visible indentation preserves the original demand.**

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

I would choose *The House on Mango Street* by Sandra Cisneros because Esperanza's reflections on home could deepen my thinking about who gets to feel secure in a neighborhood. Father's extra bus ride shows how a closed crossing can change the meaning of a familiar place. I would look for moments when Esperanza's view of home differs from another person's view, rather than assuming everyone experiences a neighborhood alike. Comparing those moments with Father's and Leila's disagreement could help me consider both belonging and safety.

Accept interpretations grounded in passage details, including alternatives to the sample inferences. For Part 3, look for a named literary text, a relevant passage detail, and a specific perspective the student plans to examine.