Across the Inlet

A bridge, a ferry, and three ways to see a crossing

11-12.RL.6 "Analyze how the author's background, point of view, and/or purpose shapes the content and style from diverse texts. Evaluate the author's choice of what is stated explicitly or implicitly..."

NAME _____ DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

YOUR JOB Circle a sentence that states a practical benefit of the bridge, underline two details that hint at Father's feelings without naming them, and number a memory that shows the narrator's connection to the ferry.

The Last Crossing

1 On the morning the bridge opened, my father polished the ferry's brass bell with the sleeve of his uniform. He had steered the boat across the inlet for twenty-three years, and I had learned to tell the hour by its engine. At seven, he rang the bell once, though no passengers waited on the dock. Across the water, cars moved over the new bridge without stopping. My sister Lena pressed her forehead to the kitchen window. "Now I can get to the hospital in ten minutes," she said. She had taken the long ferry ride to work every night.

2 I went down to the landing with a paper bag of peaches. The ticket booth was locked, but a strip of blue paint still clung to the rail where Father measured our heights each summer. He stood beside a coil of rope, turning his cap in his hands. "They offered me a job checking bridge tolls," he said. He did not say whether he had taken it. A gull landed on the empty boarding ramp and stared at us as if we were in its way. Father put his cap on, then took it off again.

3 At noon, Lena drove us over the bridge. From the middle, I could see the ferry tied below, small enough to cover with my thumb. Lena pointed to the hospital roof and smiled. Father said the view was better than he had expected. I watched his hands rest on his knees, still curved as if they held the wheel. When we reached the far shore, traffic flowed past shops that used to close when the last boat left. I wanted to tell Lena to slow down, but the cars behind us were already pressing forward.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. How does growing up with the ferry shape what the narrator notices? Use one detail from the passage.

2. The narrator does not tell us whether Father accepted the toll job. What might his actions suggest about his feelings, and what does leaving his decision unstated add to the scene?

3. Why might the author describe Father's hands as still curved around a wheel that is no longer there? Explain how this image affects the bridge ride.

4. How might someone who has spent years taking the ferry to a night shift interpret the bridge differently from the narrator? Use a passage detail.

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

Write a 75 to 100 word retelling of the bridge ride from Lena's point of view, preserving two facts from the passage and suggesting one feeling through a physical detail rather than naming it. End with a sentence explaining how her hospital commute shapes her version.

ANSWER KEY

Across the Inlet

HIGH SCHOOL · 11-12.RL.6

PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Circle a sentence that states a practical benefit of the bridge, underline two details that hint at Father's feelings without naming them, and number a memory that shows the narrator's connection to the ferry. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 · ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	How does growing up with the ferry shape what the narrator notices? Use one detail from the passage.	**The narrator notices the blue paint where Father measured the children's heights. This childhood memory makes the landing feel personal, not merely outdated.**
2	The narrator does not tell us whether Father accepted the toll job. What might his actions suggest about his feelings, and what does leaving his decision unstated add to the scene?	**Turning his cap and putting it on, then taking it off, suggest unease or uncertainty. Leaving his decision unstated lets readers share that uncertainty.**
3	Why might the author describe Father's hands as still curved around a wheel that is no longer there? Explain how this image affects the bridge ride.	**The image suggests that steering the ferry remains part of Father's identity. It brings a sense of loss into a ride that also shows the bridge's benefits.**
4	How might someone who has spent years taking the ferry to a night shift interpret the bridge differently from the narrator? Use a passage detail.	**Such a reader might share Lena's relief that she can reach the hospital in ten minutes. The narrator instead dwells on family memories and the ferry below.**

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

At noon, I drove Father and my sister onto the bridge. My fingers tightened around the wheel as the hospital roof came into view. Below us, Father's ferry rested against its ropes. He said the view was better than he expected, but his hands lay on his knees like they missed the wheel. I pointed to the hospital and smiled. Behind us, other cars kept coming, and I held the speed steady instead of looking down again. My night shifts at the hospital make the shorter crossing matter most to me.

Accept supported interpretations of Father's feelings and of the bridge's value. In Part 3, check that the retelling stays within Lena's point of view, preserves two passage facts, implies a feeling through a physical detail, and ends by connecting her commute to what she emphasizes.