The Garden Speaks

Follow a story as it moves between past and present.

3.RL.10.a "Read and comprehend grade-appropriate texts with increasing challenge in text difficulty and complexity (e.g., layout, text structure, language/literary features, knowledge demands)."

NAME _____ DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline the words that move the story into the past, then circle the words that bring it back to the present so you can follow how Nia changes.

The Tin Bells

1 When Nia reached the school garden, the tin bells were gone. Their wooden frame stood beside the path, bare as a tree in winter. Across the yard, a new student named Eli waited alone by the gate. Nia held a bag of blue string and listened to the leaves scrape the fence. The garden had once helped her find a way to speak.

2 Last fall, Nia had been the new student. At lunch, she hid behind the sunflowers while other children played. Mr. Ortiz showed her how to tie old tin bells to the frame. Each bell made a different sound in the wind. When Sam asked about them, Nia could not stop talking. Soon she and Sam were hanging bells together.

3 Now Mr. Ortiz explained that he had taken the bells down to fix their rusty hooks. Nia looked from her string to Eli at the gate. She walked over and asked, "Would you help me put them back?" Eli followed her to the frame. As they worked, the first bell gave a small ring. Nia smiled. The garden was speaking again, but this time she was not alone.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. Why does the story tell about last fall after Nia sees the empty frame?

2. What does it mean that the garden helped Nia "find a way to speak"? Use a detail from last fall.

3. How does Nia's part in the garden change from last fall to now?

4. At the end, what does "the garden was speaking again" mean besides the sound of a bell? Use something Nia does to explain.

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

Write a three-sentence scene that takes place the next day. Include a clue that shows when it happens and a garden detail that helps the reader understand how Eli feels about Nia's invitation.

ANSWER KEY

The Garden Speaks

GRADE 3 · 3.RL.10.a

PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Underline the words that move the story into the past, then circle the words that bring it back to the present so you can follow how Nia changes. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 · ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	Why does the story tell about last fall after Nia sees the empty frame?	**The memory shows how working with the bells helped Nia make a friend when she was new.**
2	What does it mean that the garden helped Nia "find a way to speak"? Use a detail from last fall.	**The bells gave Nia something to talk about. When Sam asked about them, she talked with him.**
3	How does Nia's part in the garden change from last fall to now?	**Last fall, Nia was the new student who needed help. Now she invites Eli, the new student, to join her.**
4	At the end, what does "the garden was speaking again" mean besides the sound of a bell? Use something Nia does to explain.	**The garden helps people connect again. Nia invites Eli to work with her, just as the bells helped her connect with Sam.**

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

The next morning, Eli hurried to the garden before the bell for class. He touched a blue string on the frame and grinned when a tin bell rang. Then he waved a classmate over to hear it too.

Accept answers that connect the past scene to Nia's choice to welcome Eli. For the final question, students should explain more than the bell's sound.