What Remains Visible

Read a story about memory, safety, and whose account gets preserved.

9-10.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 9 and 10..."

NAME _____ DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline one detail that helps you understand the mother's viewpoint, and circle one that helps you understand Mr. Alvarez's. Number two places where the narrator considers both viewpoints.

The Waterline

1 By October, the bakery smelled of cardamom again, but a brown stripe still crossed its back wall at my shoulder. My mother measured flour beneath it, careful not to brush the stain. On Saturday, the neighborhood council would decide whether to repair the plaster and paint over the stripe. I had volunteered to speak for our family because my mother disliked microphones. At home she said, "A clean wall tells customers we can feed them safely." Then she slid the flood photograph into her apron pocket, the one showing her handing out bread through the bakery window.

2 At the meeting, Mr. Alvarez from the apartment upstairs stood with a folded letter in his hand. During the flood, the bakery had been the only place on our block with an oven above the water. He wanted the stripe left visible, with a small plaque beside it, so future tenants would know why the street needed better drains. My mother studied the floor while he spoke. When I asked if the stain made her ashamed, she shook her head. "I remember what we did," she said. "I also remember the inspector warning us about damp plaster."

3 When the chair called my name, I held up the photograph, then set it face down. I told the council about the bread and the inspector's warning. Mr. Alvarez unfolded his letter, a petition for the plaque, and left it on the table instead of reading it aloud. The council voted to repair the plaster and place a dated flood marker on the outside wall. On the walk home, my mother asked if the marker would mention the bread. I said I had not thought to ask. She took the photograph from her apron and held it by one dry corner, as if the paper itself might still be wet.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. Why does the mother want the wall repaired? Use two details to explain her viewpoint.

2. What does Mr. Alvarez think future tenants could learn from the stripe? Why does that matter to him?

3. How does the narrator's speech show an understanding of both the mother's and Mr. Alvarez's viewpoints?

4. What concern does the mother's question on the walk home raise about the council's decision?

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

Choose a literary text you selected and read on your own, such as a story, novel, or poem. In one paragraph, compare a viewpoint in that text with one viewpoint in "The Waterline," describe a specific moment from each, and explain what reading both reveals that reading only one might miss.

ANSWER KEY

What Remains Visible

HIGH SCHOOL · 9-10.RL.10

PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Underline one detail that helps you understand the mother's viewpoint, and circle one that helps you understand Mr. Alvarez's. Number two places where the narrator considers both viewpoints. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 · ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	Why does the mother want the wall repaired? Use two details to explain her viewpoint.	**She wants customers to trust that the bakery is safe, and the inspector has warned her about damp plaster.**
2	What does Mr. Alvarez think future tenants could learn from the stripe? Why does that matter to him?	**The stripe would show how high the flood reached and why the street needs better drains. He wants future tenants to know about that danger.**
3	How does the narrator's speech show an understanding of both the mother's and Mr. Alvarez's viewpoints?	**The narrator describes the bread the bakery provided during the flood, preserving the memory Mr. Alvarez values, and also reports the inspector's warning about damp plaster, which supports the mother's concern about safety.**
4	What concern does the mother's question on the walk home raise about the council's decision?	**The marker will record the flood, but it may leave out the bakery's act of giving people bread.**

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

In O. Henry's "The Gift of the Magi," Della cuts her hair to buy a chain for Jim's watch. She values what the gift expresses, even though losing her hair is painful. In "The Waterline," the mother wants the damaged plaster repaired, but she also keeps a photograph of herself giving out bread. Both characters care about an act of generosity and what it costs. Reading them together shows that a generous act may deserve remembrance even when its physical traces cannot remain.

Accept interpretations grounded in specific passage details. For Your Turn, the second text may be any literary work the student chose and read independently; look for an accurate moment from each text and a meaningful comparison of viewpoints.