The Crooked Welcome

Trace how a narrative ending grows from what came before.

9-10.W.3.f "Provide a conclusion (when appropriate to the genre) that follows from and reflects on what is experienced, observed, or resolved over the course of the narrative or creative text."

NAME _____ DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline two details in the first two paragraphs that the ending looks back on, circle the action that solves the sign problem, and box the final sentence that reflects on what happened.

The Garden Sign

1 The morning of the neighborhood garden opening, I carried a cardboard sign across the courtyard as if it were a tray of water. I had painted WELCOME TO THE GARDEN in neat green letters the night before. My little brother, Eli, had offered to add flowers, but I told him the sign was finished. At the gate, volunteers arranged seedlings in paper cups, and someone tested the hose. Then a quick rain swept through. I ducked under the awning too late. Green paint ran down the cardboard, joining the letters in a blur.

2 I wanted to throw the sign away before anyone saw it. Eli took it from my hands and set it flat under the awning. "The letters are still there," he said, pointing to their pale outlines. We found a thick black marker in the supply box and traced each word together. Eli drew small flowers around the streaks, turning the green drips into stems. By the time the first neighbors arrived, the cardboard had dried enough to lean against the gate. A woman stopped to read it, then asked Eli if he could show her where to plant.

3 He led her to an empty bed while I stood beside the sign. The letters were crooked now, and one green streak reached the bottom edge like a root. More people came in, carrying gloves and seed packets. When they asked who had made the sign, Eli looked at me; I told them we had. I had wanted the opening to look exactly as I pictured it, down to the last brushstroke. The rain had ruined that picture. Yet as neighbors smiled at Eli's flowers before stepping inside, I stopped wishing I had kept his hand off the cardboard.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. How does the last sentence change the meaning of the narrator's refusal of Eli's help in the first paragraph?

2. What problem is settled before the narrator reflects on the experience, and what action settles it?

3. Why is the detail about neighbors smiling at Eli's flowers important to the ending?

4. How do the crooked letters and the streak like a root keep the conclusion from claiming that everything turned out perfectly?

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

Write a 70 to 100 word narrative about a small plan that changes unexpectedly. Show what happens, then end with a reflection tied to a concrete detail from your story rather than a general moral.

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PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Underline two details in the first two paragraphs that the ending looks back on, circle the action that solves the sign problem, and box the final sentence that reflects on what happened. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 · ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	How does the last sentence change the meaning of the narrator's refusal of Eli's help in the first paragraph?	**The narrator first treats Eli's help as unwanted but ends by valuing his part in the sign.**
2	What problem is settled before the narrator reflects on the experience, and what action settles it?	**The rain blurs the sign. The siblings trace the words and turn the drips into flower stems so neighbors can read it.**
3	Why is the detail about neighbors smiling at Eli's flowers important to the ending?	**Their response shows that Eli's addition helps welcome people, giving the narrator a reason to rethink refusing his help.**
4	How do the crooked letters and the streak like a root keep the conclusion from claiming that everything turned out perfectly?	**The sign still shows damage from the rain. The narrator accepts the changed sign rather than pretending it matches the original plan.**

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

I planned to bring my grandfather a loaf of bread I had baked without help. At his kitchen table, I lifted it from the bag, and the crust cracked down the middle. I reached for a towel to hide it, but he brought out two plates and asked me to cut the first slice. We ate the uneven pieces with jam while he described the lopsided cakes he used to make. I had carried the loaf there to prove I could do something alone; the crack gave us something to share.

Accept answers that connect the ending to specific earlier actions or details and explain how the narrator's view changes. For Part 3, look for a resolved or changed plan and a concluding reflection grounded in the student's own narrative.