

Bell Before Ferry

Trace how a stormy harbor shapes choices, tension, and theme.

7.7 “Multiple genres: listening, speaking, reading, writing, and thinking using multiple texts--literary elements. The student recognizes and analyzes literary elements within and across increasingly complex traditional, contemporary...”

NAME _____

DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK _____ Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline two details that build suspense or foreshadow trouble, circle setting details that affect events, and number 1, 2, and 3 beside Mara’s important choices. Use your marks to analyze how the conflict develops and is resolved.

The Harbor Bell

- ① On the island of Brindle, Mara spent Saturday repairing the old harbor bell with her grandfather. Fog pressed against the windows, and waves slapped the pilings below. “The bell rope frays near the wheel,” Grandfather said, handing her a coil of new line. Mara wanted to finish quickly so she could meet friends at the ferry dock. Still, she tested each knot twice. Before leaving, she noticed a thin crack in the bell’s wooden support, but Grandfather called her to supper.
- ② That night, rain erased the path to the dock, and the last ferry arrived late. Mara heard a sharp groan from the bell tower as passengers crossed the slick pier. The cracked support had split wider. If the bell fell, its heavy frame could block the only ramp to the ferry. Mara’s friends waved from the waiting boat, but she ran uphill instead. Inside the tower, the wind jerked the loose rope, making the bell swing toward the broken support.
- ③ Mara braced her feet on the wet floor and pulled the rope away from the crack. She tied Grandfather’s new line around a ceiling beam, then called to him through the open door. Together, they steadied the bell until the ferry passengers reached the ramp. Mara arrived too late to join her friends, yet she smiled when the boat pulled safely away. Later, Grandfather said that careful work often matters most when no one is watching. Mara saved the cracked support for repair.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE _____ Use the passage

1 Infer two themes in the passage. For each theme, give one detail that supports your idea.

2 How do Mara's qualities influence the resolution of the conflict? Use two actions from the passage as evidence.

3 What detail foreshadows the danger at the bell tower? Then explain how the last sentence of paragraph 2 builds suspense.

4 How does the stormy island harbor setting influence both Mara's choices and the plot?

3 YOUR TURN _____ Your own words

Write a 5-sentence scene set in a challenging place. Include a character quality that shapes the resolution, one clue that foreshadows danger, a suspenseful moment, and a final sentence that reveals a theme.

PART 1 • READ AND MARK

Underline two details that build suspense or foreshadow trouble, circle setting details that affect events, and number 1, 2, and 3 beside Mara's important choices. Use your marks to analyze how the conflict develops and is resolved. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 • ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	Infer two themes in the passage. For each theme, give one detail that supports your idea.	Possible themes: Careful, responsible choices can protect others, supported by Mara testing knots and securing the bell. Doing what is right may require sacrifice, supported by Mara missing the ferry with her friends to help the passengers.
2	How do Mara's qualities influence the resolution of the conflict? Use two actions from the passage as evidence.	Mara is careful and responsible. She tests each knot twice, then gives up meeting her friends and uses the new line to steady the bell, which keeps the ramp open for passengers.
3	What detail foreshadows the danger at the bell tower? Then explain how the last sentence of paragraph 2 builds suspense.	The thin crack in the wooden support foreshadows the later danger. The bell swinging toward the broken support makes readers wonder whether it will fall and block the ferry ramp.
4	How does the stormy island harbor setting influence both Mara's choices and the plot?	Rain, wind, fog, wet floors, and the slick pier make the harbor dangerous. Because the ferry ramp is the only way for passengers to board, Mara chooses to repair the bell instead of joining her friends.

PART 3 • YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

The flooded subway station filled with water as Niko searched for his sister's lost backpack. A low rumble shook dust from the tunnel ceiling, warning him that a train might come. Because he was patient, Niko listened for the rising water instead of rushing onto the tracks. When a train rumbled nearby, he guided his sister to a high stairwell and called for help. Their safety showed that careful choices can protect others.

Accept other defensible themes if students support them with accurate passage evidence. For the open task, check for all required elements and for a logical connection between the character's quality, the conflict, and the resolution.