Gate, Rain, Resolve

Study how a fiction scene uses craft to reveal a character's choice.

8.11.A "compose literary texts such as personal narratives, fiction, and poetry using genre characteristics and craft;"

NAME _____ DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline three sensory details, circle each line of dialogue, and number three moments that move Maya from being stuck to solving her problem, so you can notice how a writer builds a fiction scene.

The Side Door

1 At 5:40, Maya stood behind the closed gates of the community garden, holding her grandfather's brass key. Rain tapped the hood of her jacket, and the tomato vines bent like tired dancers along the fence. She had promised to water the seedlings while he recovered from surgery, but the lock would not turn. "Come on," she whispered, rubbing the key on her sleeve. Across the street, a bus hissed, then pulled away without stopping.

2 Maya pressed her ear near the gate. Inside, water dripped from a loose hose, slow as a clock. She pictured the tiny basil leaves curling into fists by morning. Her grandfather always said, "Plants remember who shows up." The words warmed her more than the damp jacket. She slid the key out, breathed once, and noticed a narrow side door hidden behind the tool shed. Its latch was hooked there with a simple wire loop.

3 She slipped the loop free and pushed the door open. The garden smelled of wet soil and mint. Maya filled a blue watering can at the rain barrel and carried it between the beds. When water darkened the cracked earth, she laughed, surprised by the sound. The next bus could wait. She knelt beside the basil, letting the cold drops bead on her fingers. "I showed up," she said, and the leaves trembled under the rain.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. What obstacle begins Maya's scene, and what does she do first to try to solve it?

2. How does the comparison of the tomato vines to "tired dancers" help create the setting or mood?

3. How do Maya's grandfather's words affect her actions in the scene?

4. Identify one detail that slows the action before Maya finds a solution and one detail that speeds the action after she finds it.

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

Write one 90-120-word fiction scene about a character facing a small obstacle. Include at least two sensory details, one line of dialogue, one comparison, and an ending that shows the character making a changed decision or taking a new action.

ANSWER KEY

Gate, Rain, Resolve

GRADE 8 · TEKS 8.11.A

PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Underline three sensory details, circle each line of dialogue, and number three moments that move Maya from being stuck to solving her problem, so you can notice how a writer builds a fiction scene. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 · ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	What obstacle begins Maya's scene, and what does she do first to try to solve it?	**The garden lock will not turn. Maya rubs the key on her sleeve and tries to make it work.**
2	How does the comparison of the tomato vines to "tired dancers" help create the setting or mood?	**It makes the rain-soaked vines seem droopy and exhausted, creating a gloomy, difficult mood.**
3	How do Maya's grandfather's words affect her actions in the scene?	**His words remind Maya of her promise and motivate her to keep looking for a way into the garden.**
4	Identify one detail that slows the action before Maya finds a solution and one detail that speeds the action after she finds it.	**The slow dripping water and Maya's thoughts about the basil slow the action. Slipping the wire loop free and pushing open the door speed the action.**

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

At the bus stop, Eli dug through his backpack for the model bridge he had promised to bring to science club. The rain had soaked the bottom pocket, turning the cardboard supports soft as cereal. "I ruined it," he said, watching one tower lean. The sidewalk smelled like wet leaves, and cold water slid down his neck. Then Eli spotted a stack of coffee stirrers beside the bakery door. He asked the owner for a handful and rebuilt the supports under the awning. When the bus arrived, the bridge stood straight in his hands.

Accept supported responses that identify accurate craft choices and explain their effect on the scene. For the writing task, look for a focused fictional moment that includes every required craft element and shows a meaningful character action or decision.