

# Light on the Cliff

Trace how structure, choices, and setting shape a theme.

**8.7** "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 the flashback and the detail that hints at a later problem. Circle Mara's and Eli's actions that move the conflict toward resolution, then number key events in the order they actually happen.

### The Tower Key

- ① On the storm-battered island of San Mar, every family kept a lantern in the window when fishing boats were late. Mara, fourteen, watched the harbor disappear behind gray rain. Her father's boat was overdue, and the town's emergency radio had failed. "We should light the old signal tower," she said. Grandmother Inez shook her head. The tower had been closed for years, and the cliff path was dangerous. Mara heard fear in her voice, but she also saw the brass tower key hanging beside the door.
- ② Years earlier, when Mara was six, a winter squall had trapped her father at sea. Inez had placed a lantern on the porch and told Mara, "Light is a promise that someone is waiting." Remembering this, Mara took the key while Inez called neighbors to the community hall. At the tower, Mara found Eli, her younger cousin, carrying dry batteries for the radio. He had disobeyed his mother to help. A loose shutter slammed against the tower wall, warning them that the wind was strengthening.
- ③ Mara wanted to scold Eli, yet his batteries could restore the radio and guide rescuers. Together they climbed the spiral stairs, covering the broken window with a sailcloth. Mara turned the brass switch, and the tower lamp sent a beam. When the radio crackled, Inez's voice directed boats toward the tower's beam. Mara's father reached harbor safely before dawn. Later, Mara returned the key to Inez, who said the tower belonged to the whole island. Mara understood that courage was not ignoring danger. It was accepting help and protecting people who depended on one another.

**2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE** \_\_\_\_\_ Use the passage

**1** What theme develops through Mara's decision to use the tower, Eli's help, and the return of the radio? Explain using events from the passage.

**2** Why does Mara take the tower key, and how do her behavior and Eli's behavior help resolve the conflict?

**3** Identify the flashback and the detail that foreshadows a later problem. How does the flashback affect the reader differently than telling the events only in linear order?

**4** How does the storm-battered island setting influence Inez's beliefs about lanterns and the signal tower?

**3 YOUR TURN** \_\_\_\_\_ Your own words

Write a 90 to 120 word scene set in a place with a clear community value. Include a flashback or a detail that foreshadows trouble, show how two characters' motivations and actions resolve a conflict, and make a theme clear through the events.

**PART 1 • READ AND MARK**

Underline the flashback and the detail that hints at a later problem. Circle Mara's and Eli's actions that move the conflict toward resolution, then number key events in the order they actually happen. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

**PART 2 • ANSWERS**

| # | QUESTION                                                                                                                                                                   | ANSWER                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |
|---|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 1 | What theme develops through Mara's decision to use the tower, Eli's help, and the return of the radio? Explain using events from the passage.                              | <b>A theme is that courage includes helping others and accepting help. Mara takes a careful risk to light the tower, Eli brings batteries, and their teamwork restores communication that helps guide boats home.</b>                                                                                                            |
| 2 | Why does Mara take the tower key, and how do her behavior and Eli's behavior help resolve the conflict?                                                                    | <b>Mara takes the key because her father is overdue and her memory of Inez's lantern makes her believe the tower can help. Mara lights the tower, and Eli brings batteries, so the radio works and boats are directed toward the harbor.</b>                                                                                     |
| 3 | Identify the flashback and the detail that foreshadows a later problem. How does the flashback affect the reader differently than telling the events only in linear order? | <b>The flashback describes the winter squall when Mara was six and Inez placed a lantern on the porch. The loose shutter warning that the wind is strengthening foreshadows more danger. The flashback helps readers understand why Mara connects light with waiting for and helping people at sea before she takes the key.</b> |
| 4 | How does the storm-battered island setting influence Inez's beliefs about lanterns and the signal tower?                                                                   | <b>Because the island depends on fishing boats and faces dangerous storms, Inez believes a light is a promise that someone is waiting. She also believes the tower belongs to the whole island because it can protect the community.</b>                                                                                         |

**PART 3 • YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)**

At the crowded apartment laundry room, Jalen guarded the last working dryer because his sister needed clean clothes for school. Mrs. Ortiz asked to use it for blankets after a pipe burst upstairs. Jalen remembered last winter, when Mrs. Ortiz had lent his family heaters during a blackout. Water began dripping through a ceiling tile, and the dryer flickered. Instead of arguing, Jalen helped Mrs. Ortiz load the blankets, then carried his sister's clothes to a neighbor's dryer. In their building, people believed emergencies belonged to everyone. Jalen learned that returning help can matter more than getting his own way.

Accept equivalent themes supported by character choices and events, such as shared responsibility, courage, or community care. For the open task, accept varied settings and conflicts if the response includes a clear nonlinear detail, character motivations, a resolution, and a theme developed through events.