Pond Race Problem

See how characters and settings move a story forward.

3.RL.2.A "Discuss how an author uses characters and settings to advance the plot."

NAME _____ DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline setting details that create a problem or help solve one. Circle each action Luis or Nia takes to solve the problem.

The Paper Boat Race

1. On Saturday morning, Luis carried his paper boat to Maple Park for the pond race. Dark clouds covered the sky, and wind bent the tall reeds along the water. At the muddy edge, Luis saw that the pond had risen after a night of rain. The usual starting rock was underwater, so racers could not launch their boats there safely.

2. Luis did not want to quit. He noticed a flat board near the park shed, but it was too heavy to drag alone. Then he asked his friend Nia to hold one end. Together, they carried the board to a low patch of grass beside the pond. Luis placed his boat on the board and poured a little pond water around it.

3. The board floated in the shallow water beside the grass. Its wide top made a new launch place above the muddy bank. When the race began, Luis gave his boat a gentle push. The wind that had bent the reeds caught the paper sail and moved the boat across the pond. Luis and Nia watched it reach the finish bell first.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. How does the pond setting create the first problem in the story?

2. What do Luis and Nia do that moves the plot toward a solution?

3. How does the low, grassy area beside the pond help solve the problem?

4. How does the wind affect the ending of the story?

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

Write a three-sentence mini-story. In the first sentence, use a character and setting to create a problem. Show the character acting in the second sentence, then show how the setting helps or makes the ending harder in the third sentence.

ANSWER KEY

Pond Race Problem

GRADE 3 · 3.RL.2.A

PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Underline setting details that create a problem or help solve one. Circle each action Luis or Nia takes to solve the problem. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 · ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	How does the pond setting create the first problem in the story?	**Rain made the pond rise, so the starting rock was underwater and racers could not launch there safely.**
2	What do Luis and Nia do that moves the plot toward a solution?	**Luis finds a board and asks Nia for help. Together, they carry it beside the pond.**
3	How does the low, grassy area beside the pond help solve the problem?	**It gives Luis and Nia a shallow place where the board can float and become a new launch place.**
4	How does the wind affect the ending of the story?	**The wind catches the paper sail and moves Luis's boat across the pond to the finish bell.**

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

At the snowy bus stop, Tessa's map blew into a puddle. She used a dry page from her notebook to copy the street name before the ink faded. Because the bus shelter blocked the snow, Tessa could read the new note and find the library.

Accept answers that explain a cause-and-effect link between a setting detail, a character action, and a plot event. For the open task, accept varied stories if they include all three required sentences and clearly show the setting affecting the plot.