Sensory Story Clues

Use sensory details to understand a story's setting, characters, and events.

3.RL.2.B "Identify and explain how an author uses sensory language (e.g., sights, sounds, smells, and tastes) to impact a reader's understanding of characters, settings, and plot events."

NAME _____ DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline words or phrases that tell about a sight, sound, smell, taste, or touch. Write S, C, or P beside each underlined detail to show whether it helps you understand the setting, a character, or a plot event.

Mina's First Parade

1. At sunset, Mina carried her paper boat to Willow Creek. The water flashed orange beneath the low sun, and mud squished between her boots. Along the bank, families tapped bright lanterns onto small boats. Mina smelled pine smoke from the picnic fires and held her boat close. Tonight's floating lantern parade was her first chance to lead the creek club.

2. Then a sharp wind rattled the reeds. Mina's lantern flickered, and the creek slapped against the rocks with a cold, hard sound. Her little boat spun toward a tangle of fallen branches. Mina's stomach felt tight as a knot. She heard her younger brother call, "Mina, catch it!" but the slippery bank made her stop.

3. Grandma Jo waded beside Mina, her yellow raincoat shining in the dim light. Together, they reached the branches with a long bamboo pole. The pole scraped the rough wood, then Mina's boat popped free. A cheer rose from the shore, warm and loud. Mina laughed as her lantern drifted forward, leaving a trail of gold on the dark water.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. Which two sensory details help you picture the creek at sunset? Explain what they show about the setting.

2. What sounds does the author describe when the wind begins? How do these sounds help you understand the plot event?

3. What does the phrase "Mina's stomach felt tight as a knot" help you understand about Mina?

4. How do the "warm and loud" cheer and the "trail of gold" help you understand the ending?

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

Write four sentences about a character facing a small problem. Include a sight, a sound, and a touch detail, then explain how your sensory details help the reader understand the character or event.

ANSWER KEY

Sensory Story Clues

GRADE 3 · 3.RL.2.B

PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Underline words or phrases that tell about a sight, sound, smell, taste, or touch. Write S, C, or P beside each underlined detail to show whether it helps you understand the setting, a character, or a plot event. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 · ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	Which two sensory details help you picture the creek at sunset? Explain what they show about the setting.	**The water "flashed orange" and mud "squished between her boots." These details show an evening creek bank with wet, muddy ground.**
2	What sounds does the author describe when the wind begins? How do these sounds help you understand the plot event?	**The wind "rattled the reeds" and the creek "slapped against the rocks." These sounds make the stormy moment seem dangerous as Mina's boat spins toward the branches.**
3	What does the phrase "Mina's stomach felt tight as a knot" help you understand about Mina?	**It shows that Mina feels worried or nervous when her boat is in danger.**
4	How do the "warm and loud" cheer and the "trail of gold" help you understand the ending?	**They show that Mina's boat is free and the people feel happy and relieved at the successful ending.**

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

Leo stood in the quiet gym before the spelling bee. The bright lights made the stage shine, and the cool metal rail pressed against his palm. When the bell rang, its clear ding made him take a slow breath. These details help the reader understand that Leo is nervous but ready to begin.

Accept sensory words or phrases that students connect accurately to the setting, a character's feelings, or a plot event. For Part 3, accept varied situations if the response has four sentences, includes the required sensory details, and explains their effect.