

Seedling Steps

Track how each part of a story moves the action forward.

4.RL.3.C “Explain the overall structure of stories, poems, and plays and how each successive part builds on earlier sections.”

NAME _____

DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK _____ Read it twice

YOUR JOB Number the paragraphs 1, 2, and 3. Underline one event in each paragraph that moves Nia’s story forward, from the beginning to the ending.

Nia’s Careful Plant

- ① On Monday, Nia found a small wooden sign beside the school garden. It read, “Pumpkin Contest, Friday.” Nia loved drawing, but she had never grown anything. Mr. Bell gave each student one seedling and said the winner would be the plant that showed the most care. Nia chose a drooping plant with two pale leaves. She carried it home in a paper cup.
- ② Each day, Nia checked the soil before breakfast. She moved the cup to the sunny porch and gave the plant a little water. By Wednesday, one leaf had turned green, but a squirrel knocked over the cup. Soil spilled across the porch. Nia wanted to quit. Instead, she used a larger pot and placed it on a high shelf.
- ③ On Friday, Nia carried her plant to the garden. It was not the tallest, and its leaves still had brown spots. However, it stood straight in its new pot, with three fresh green leaves. Mr. Bell gave Nia a blue ribbon for careful tending. Nia smiled as she sketched the plant. Next year, she decided, she would start with seeds and keep a garden journal.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE Use the passage

1 What does paragraph 1 do at the beginning of the story?

2 How does paragraph 2 build on paragraph 1?

3 How does paragraph 3 build on the earlier paragraphs?

4 Explain the overall structure of the story in order.

3 YOUR TURN Your own words

Write a three-paragraph story about someone learning a new skill. In paragraph 1, introduce the goal. In paragraph 2, show a problem and an action. In paragraph 3, show the result and how the person changes.

PART 1 • READ AND MARK

Number the paragraphs 1, 2, and 3. Underline one event in each paragraph that moves Nia's story forward, from the beginning to the ending. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 • ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	What does paragraph 1 do at the beginning of the story?	It introduces the pumpkin contest and shows Nia choosing a drooping seedling to care for.
2	How does paragraph 2 build on paragraph 1?	It shows Nia caring for the seedling, facing the problem of the spilled soil, and solving it by using a larger pot.
3	How does paragraph 3 build on the earlier paragraphs?	It shows the result of Nia's care when she brings the plant to the contest and earns a ribbon.
4	Explain the overall structure of the story in order.	The beginning introduces Nia and her plant, the middle shows her work and problem, and the ending shows the contest result and her plan for next year.

PART 3 • YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

Milo wanted to learn to ride his new skateboard before the neighborhood fair. His older sister showed him how to place one foot on the board. At first, Milo rolled only a few inches before stepping off. He practiced every afternoon and learned to bend his knees when the board wobbled. On fair day, Milo rode down the smooth path without falling. He did not win a race, but he signed up for the beginner skate club.

Accept answers that identify the beginning, middle, and ending and explain how later events depend on earlier events. For the writing task, accept a clear three-part story with a goal, a problem and response, and a result or change.