

Three Ways Forward

Compare how structure shapes a journey, a crossing, and a choice.

8.RL.3.A “Compare and contrast the structure of two or more stories, poems, and plays and analyze how the differing structure of each literary text contributes to its meaning and style.”

NAME _____

DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK _____ Read it twice

YOUR JOB Circle the first and last sentence or line in each section, then number the places where the section shifts to a new moment, action, or idea. Use your marks to compare how each section is built.

Three Short Texts

- ① Story: “The Last Seed Packet” On Saturday, Mara found a packet of bean seeds behind her grandfather's tools. The label said 2018, and she doubted they would grow. First, she soaked six seeds in a jar. On Monday, two split their pale coats. By Wednesday, thin roots pressed against the glass. Mara carried the jar to her grandfather, who had stopped planting after his illness. He smiled, chose a sunny patch, and asked her to plant the strongest sprouts beside him.
- ② Poem: “At the Ferry Dock” The river keeps its secret under gray morning water. I wait with my bike, counting gulls. The river keeps its secret when the horn calls once. I roll aboard, leaving the town's brick roofs behind. The river keeps its secret at the middle crossing. Wind lifts my map, then folds it shut. The river keeps its secret when the far dock appears. I pedal into streets I have never traveled, carrying questions like small stones in my pocket.
- ③ Play: “One Flashlight” [The power is out. A narrow beam moves across a kitchen.] JON: The storm took every light on our block. ELI: Except this one. [He holds up a flashlight.] JON: We need batteries for the radio. ELI: Or we can use the last two to find Mrs. Chen. [Thunder shakes the window. Jon looks toward the dark street.] JON: She lives alone. ELI: Then bring your coat. [They leave the flashlight on the table for a moment, then return together and take it.]

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE Use the passage

- 1 How does the story arrange Mara's experiences? Use two time markers from the story, and explain how this arrangement affects the story's meaning.

- 2 What line returns in the poem, and where does it appear? Explain how this pattern affects the poem's mood.

- 3 How do the dialogue and bracketed actions work together in the play? Explain how this structure builds the meaning of the characters' decision.

- 4 Compare the story's structure with the play's structure. How does each text reveal a change in what its characters decide to do?

3 YOUR TURN Your own words

Write a four-line poem and a four-sentence scene about the same moment. Arrange the poem around a repeated line and the scene with dialogue plus one bracketed action, then write exactly two sentences comparing how the two structures create different effects.

PART 1 • READ AND MARK

Circle the first and last sentence or line in each section, then number the places where the section shifts to a new moment, action, or idea. Use your marks to compare how each section is built. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 • ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	How does the story arrange Mara's experiences? Use two time markers from the story, and explain how this arrangement affects the story's meaning.	The story moves from Saturday to Monday to Wednesday. This sequence shows the seeds gradually growing and helps make Mara and her grandfather's return to planting feel hopeful.
2	What line returns in the poem, and where does it appear? Explain how this pattern affects the poem's mood.	"The river keeps its secret" returns four times, at different points in the crossing. Its return creates a quiet, mysterious, and reflective mood.
3	How do the dialogue and bracketed actions work together in the play? Explain how this structure builds the meaning of the characters' decision.	The dialogue shows Jon and Eli discussing what to do, while the bracketed actions show darkness, thunder, and their movement. Together, they make the choice to help Mrs. Chen feel urgent and caring.
4	Compare the story's structure with the play's structure. How does each text reveal a change in what its characters decide to do?	The story uses events across several days to show Mara moving from doubt to planting with her grandfather. The play uses quick dialogue and actions to show Jon and Eli changing from saving batteries for a radio to helping Mrs. Chen.

PART 3 • YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

The key is still missing. Rain taps the library glass. The key is still missing. I check the book return slot. [Ava searches beneath a desk.] Ava says, "The key is not in my backpack." Leo points to the return slot. Ava reaches inside and smiles. The poem's repeated line makes the missing key feel like a worry that returns. The scene moves through actions and dialogue, so the discovery feels quicker and more dramatic.

Accept equivalent structural observations when students support them with details from the text. For the open task, check that the poem and scene use the required different structures and that the two comparison sentences explain an effect of each.