

Reading Comprehension Worksheet: Compare and Contrast

Read the short story and answer each question.



The Heart of the Jungle

Tariq Yilmaz stood at the edge of the jungle, gripping the woven satchel his grandmother had given him. Inside was a single note: *"Retrieve the Stone of Ruma and return before sunset."* According to legend, the stone lay deep inside a forgotten temple guarded by the spirits of the forest. Many had tried before him. None had returned. With each step through the tangle of vines, Tariq reminded himself: "Courage is not the absence of fear, but choosing to go on anyway." After crossing a rope bridge, solving a puzzle made of shifting stones, and facing a sudden monsoon, he finally reached the stone's resting place—a glowing gem surrounded by tree roots. As he lifted the stone, a whisper filled the air: "Only the brave may carry light into darkness." Tariq returned home just before sunset. The villagers welcomed him not for the stone, but for the heart he had shown. The temple didn't just test strength—it tested spirit.



The Flame for Winter

Lena Patel wrapped herself in her warmest cloak. The Festival of Light was one day away, but the Sacred Flame, which lit every lantern in the village, had gone out. The flame could only be reignited at the summit of the Icepeak. No one wanted to make the climb. The path was steep, icy, and full of ancient traps meant to test those who dared. But Lena volunteered. Along the way, she faced freezing winds, a creaking rope ladder over a gorge, and a whispering snow spirit who asked her riddles. When she reached the summit, the final test was silence: to sit and wait in the cold until the fire sparked itself. She waited. And waited. Finally, from the snow, a flicker appeared—blue and steady. She cupped it in her hands and descended carefully. When she returned, the elders nodded. "Bravery is sometimes quiet," they said, "but always bright." That night, the lanterns glowed warmer than ever before.



Name: _____

The Heart of the Jungle & The Flame for Winter

1. What do both stories show about how bravery looks in different places?

- A. It's always about being the loudest person
- B. It's about facing challenges, whether in the jungle or the snow
- C. It means being faster than everyone else
- D. It means finding treasure and keeping it

2. How are the quests in both stories similar?

- A. They both require the character to win a race
- B. They both involve finding magical fire
- C. They both require courage to reach a powerful item
- D. They both end with the character getting lost

3. Fill in the blank:

Both Tariq and Lena showed _____ when completing a challenge alone in a dangerous place.

4. How are the settings in each story different, and how does that change the challenges the characters face?

5. What lesson about courage can you learn by comparing Tariq's journey and Lena's?



Parent and Teacher Guide

Guide Reading Level: P

Lexile Level: 645L-795L

Grade Level: 4th Grade, Beginning of the Year

Genre: Myth-Inspired Adventure, Traditional Tale Adaptation

Introducing the Text

“We’re going to read two stories with different settings and characters, but with a similar theme—courage. As we read both stories, we’ll compare what the main characters do, what challenges they face, and what lessons they learn. We’ll also look at how different cultures and genres treat the idea of a quest.”

Vocabulary: quest, courage, summit, spirit, legend

Before Reading Discussion Questions

1. What is a “quest” in a story?
 2. Can courage look different depending on the place or person?
 3. How might setting affect the events in a story?
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During Reading Discussion Questions

1. What does Tariq have to face in the jungle?
 2. How does Lena respond to the snow spirit’s riddle?
 3. What do both characters need to do besides just being strong?
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After Reading Discussion Questions

1. How are Tariq’s and Lena’s quests alike and how are they different?
 2. What do both stories say about what bravery really means?
 3. Why do you think authors from different genres or cultures often write about similar themes?
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Activity Idea

Have students draw a “Courage Quest Map” for each character, showing key moments along the way. Then have them compare the two maps and highlight similarities and differences using color-coded labels (same action, different outcome, etc.). This helps visualize the compare/contrast structure of RL.4.9.

