

Reading Comprehension Worksheet: Compare and Contrast

Read the short story and answer each question.



The Bells of Winterwatch

The village of Winterwatch was known for two things: its snow-covered peaks and the Bells of Blessing, which rang every winter solstice to welcome a peaceful year. Lena Patel's family had little, but they always shared what they had. This year, heavy snows had blocked the road to the bell tower, and the village feared the bells would remain silent. A group of travelers arrived, lost and cold. Though her family barely had enough wood or food, Lena offered them her warmest blanket and half her stew. The next morning, Lena woke to find the path to the bell tower mysteriously cleared. At the base of the tower sat a bundle: a new cloak stitched with silver thread and a warm loaf of bread wrapped in ribbon. No one knew how the path had opened, but as the bells rang, Lena smiled. Sometimes kindness makes its own magic.



The Clay Jar

Kai Patel helped his mother sell spices in the dusty market. One day, an old man approached their cart with nothing but a cracked clay jar. "Trade?" the man asked, holding it up. It didn't look valuable, but Kai's mother smiled and handed him a small pouch of herbs. "A fair trade," she said. That night, Kai heard a trickling sound. The jar, sitting in the corner of their tent, had filled with water—clear, cool, and endless. They used it carefully, sharing with their neighbors during the dry season. One morning, the old man returned, smiling. "You gave freely. So did the jar." Kai tried to give the jar back, but the man shook his head. "It belongs to those who understand its gift."



Name: _____

The Bells of Winterwatch & The Clay Jar

1. What is a theme both stories share?

- A. Being brave in battle
- B. Kindness leads to reward
- C. Traveling across the world
- D. Solving a difficult mystery

2. How are Lena and Kai similar in the way they treat others?

- A. They both ask for help from others
- B. They are both too afraid to give anything
- C. They both act with generosity even when they don't have much
- D. They both try to win contests to earn money

3. Fill in the blank:

In both stories, the main characters give something to others, and in return, they receive _____.

4. How are the settings in *The Bells of Winterwatch* and *The Clay Jar* different, and how does that affect the way the theme is shown?

5. Why do you think the authors chose magical or mysterious events as the reward for kindness?



Parent and Teacher Guide

Guide Reading Level: Q

Lexile Level: 735L-885L

Grade Level: 4th Grade, Beginning of the Year

Genre: Traditional Tale Adaptation, Folktale with Magical Realism

Introducing the Text

“In this lesson, we’ll read two stories from different cultural traditions that share a similar message—kindness leads to good things. As we read, we’ll compare how the authors show that theme, what settings they use, and how the characters’ actions lead to magical outcomes.”

Vocabulary: blessing, generosity, marketplace, magical realism, solstice

Before Reading Discussion Questions

1. What does it mean to be generous?
 2. Can acts of kindness lead to real or surprising rewards?
 3. How might a story from the mountains feel different than one from a busy market?
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During Reading Discussion Questions

1. What problem does Lena’s village face?
 2. How does Kai’s mother treat the old man at the market?
 3. What clues show that something magical is happening?
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After Reading Discussion Questions

1. How are Lena and Kai’s stories alike, even though they happen in very different places?
 2. What lesson does each story teach about giving?
 3. How might the outcome be different if the characters had not acted kindly?
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Activity Idea

Have students create a Venn diagram comparing *The Bells of Winterwatch* and *The Clay Jar*. Then, ask them to write a short paragraph explaining how the setting affects the way the same theme is presented in each story.

