

Reading Comprehension Worksheet: Story structure

Read the short story and answer each question.



Clara's Candle

Clara lived in a small mountain town in 1910, where electricity had not yet reached every home.

Each night, she did her homework by candlelight while her parents worked in the bakery downstairs.

One cold winter evening, a windstorm rolled through town. The candle flickered and died.

Clara gasped. Her math page was only half done. She tiptoed downstairs, holding her cold, unlit candle.

"We're out of matches," her mother said. "And the shop won't open until morning."

Clara sighed. She couldn't see well enough to finish her work. Then she remembered something.

Earlier that week, their neighbor Mr. Lowell had said, "If your candle ever goes out, bring it over. I always keep one lit in my window."

Clara slipped on her boots and coat. Snow whipped around her as she hurried next door.

Mr. Lowell answered with a warm smile. "Need a light?"

Clara nodded. He held out his candle. She tipped hers into the flame.

When Clara returned home, she finished her work by the steady glow.



Name: _____

Clara's Candle

1. How does the story begin?

- A. Clara eats dinner with her family.
- B. Clara lights a lantern in her bakery.
- C. Clara works on homework by candlelight.
- D. Clara reads a story about electricity.

2. How does the story end?

- A. Clara gets a flashlight from town.
- B. Clara finishes her homework by a borrowed flame.
- C. Clara goes to sleep without finishing her homework.
- D. Clara's parents fix the electricity.

3. Fill in the blank:

Mr. Lowell helped Clara by sharing his _____.

4. What does the beginning of the story tell us about Clara's time and setting?

5. How does the ending show the action has been resolved?



Parent and Teacher Guide

Guide Reading Level: M

Lexile Level: 425L-575L

Grade Level: 2nd Grade, End of the Year

Genre: Historical Fiction

Introducing the Text

“This historical fiction story takes place over 100 years ago, before most homes had electricity. As we read, we’ll focus on how the story is structured. The beginning gives us important details about the time and setting, while the ending shows how Clara solves her problem. We’ll look closely at how the beginning and ending work together to make the story feel complete.”

Vocabulary: candlelight, flickered, bakery, matches, neighbor

Before Reading Discussion Questions

1. What do you think life was like before electricity?
 2. What does a strong beginning need in a historical story?
 3. What problems might happen if you had to do your homework by candlelight?
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During Reading Discussion Questions

1. What event causes Clara’s problem in the story?
 2. How does the middle of the story build tension or challenge?
 3. What is Clara’s solution?
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After Reading Discussion Questions

1. How did the beginning introduce important details like setting and problem?
 2. How does the ending show the resolution of the action?
 3. Why do you think Mr. Lowell’s character is important to the story structure?
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Activity Idea

Have students create a “Story Structure Timeline” using sentence strips. Each strip includes one event from the beginning, middle, or end. After re-reading the story, students work in pairs to place the events in order on a timeline labeled **Beginning**, **Middle**, and **End**, then explain how each part helps the story flow.

