

Reading Comprehension Worksheet: Ask & Answer Questions

Read the short story and answer each question.



The Clockmaker's Apprentice

In the heart of a busy city, beneath a crooked clock tower, worked a boy named Theo. He was the apprentice of Mr. Elias, the city's most mysterious clockmaker.

Every day, Theo polished gears, wound springs, and listened to the soft ticking of hundreds of clocks. But one morning, he noticed something strange—**all the clocks had stopped at exactly 2:22.**

"Sir," Theo asked, "why have the clocks all frozen?"

Mr. Elias peered over his glasses. "Because someone has stolen the Master Key."

"The Master Key?"

"It connects all the clocks in the city. Without it, time stands still," Mr. Elias explained.

Determined to help, Theo searched the dusty workshop. Behind a stack of books, he found a crumpled blueprint—a **map showing secret tunnels beneath the tower**. He followed the path and discovered a small metal door with a glowing lock.

Inside, a cat-shaped robot stood guard. "Only the apprentice may pass," it said. Theo held out his hand. The robot blinked, then handed him the Master Key.

Back in the workshop, Theo placed the key in the center clock. With a *click*, every clock in the tower began to tick again.

Mr. Elias smiled. "Time always needs a guardian. Maybe now, it's you."



Name: _____

The Clockmaker's Apprentice

1. Why did all the clocks stop working?

- A. Theo forgot to wind them.
- B. Mr. Elias left the workshop.
- C. The Master Key was stolen.
- D. A storm broke the tower.

2. What helped Theo find the Master Key?

- A. A book with a poem inside
- B. A glowing letter
- C. A blueprint hidden behind books
- D. A talking mouse

3. Fill in the blank:

The clocks all stopped at exactly _____.

4. How does Theo show responsibility in the story? Use text evidence to explain.

5. What clues helped you figure out that this story is part mystery and part fantasy?



Parent and Teacher Guide

Guide Reading Level: O

Lexile Level: 590L-740L

Grade Level: 3rd Grade, Middle of the Year

Genre: Fantasy / Mystery

Introducing the Text

"Today's story is about a boy who works in a mysterious clock tower. As we read, we'll practice asking and answering questions that help us better understand the characters and plot. We'll also pay close attention to clues in the story that help us figure things out."

Vocabulary: apprentice, blueprint, gears, mysterious, ticking

Before Reading Discussion Questions

1. What does a clockmaker do?
 2. What do you think might happen in a story where time stops?
 3. What kind of story might include a robot or a secret tunnel?
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During Reading Discussion Questions

1. What did Theo notice about the clocks that seemed unusual?
 2. What was the Master Key, and why was it important?
 3. How did Theo find the secret room?
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After Reading Discussion Questions

1. Why do you think Mr. Elias said Theo could be the next guardian of time?
 2. What lesson can we learn from Theo's determination?
 3. How did asking questions during reading help you solve the mystery of the story?
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Activity Idea

Have students create their own **"mystery clue trail"** for a classmate. They write a short paragraph about a missing object and leave 2–3 clues in the description. Then, partners take turns solving each other's mini mysteries by asking and answering questions based on the text.

