

# Reading Comprehension Worksheet: Details & Examples

Read the short story and answer each question.



## The Watchmaker's Apprentice

Emil never intended to become a watchmaker. At twelve years old, he'd rather be out sailing paper boats or sketching animals on the riverbank. But when his uncle—Master Klemens—took him in after his parents' passing, Emil found himself surrounded by ticking clocks and glass lenses.

At first, Emil dreaded the quiet shop with its dusty air and sharp smells of oil and metal. Klemens rarely spoke more than a few words, and the silence stretched between them like string pulled too tight.

But as weeks passed, Emil began to notice the rhythm of things. Each gear, each spring, had its place. Every tool had a purpose. Slowly, Klemens began to trust Emil with small repairs.

One day, a woman entered the shop carrying a pocket watch with cracked glass and faded initials. "It belonged to my brother," she whispered. "It stopped the day he didn't come home from the war."

Emil studied the watch for a long time before speaking. "It can be fixed," he said, though he wasn't entirely sure. He worked on it for days—polishing, adjusting, even sketching the faded initials until they came back to life beneath his careful hand.

When he returned it to the woman, she wept. "It sounds like him again," she said, listening to its soft ticking.

That evening, Klemens placed a hand on Emil's shoulder. "A good watchmaker knows how to repair what's broken," he said. "A great one understands why it matters."

For the first time, Emil didn't feel like a boy pretending to belong. He felt like an apprentice who had found his place—one tick at a time.



Name: \_\_\_\_\_

## The Watchmaker's Apprentice

1. What can you infer about how Emil's feelings toward watchmaking change during the story?

- A. He grows from feeling unsure and uninterested to finding pride and purpose in it.
- B. He becomes more frustrated and gives up completely.
- C. He likes it at first but begins to find it boring.
- D. He learns about it but never really enjoys it.

2. Why does the woman's reaction to the repaired watch matter so much to Emil?

- A. It shows him how his work can help people emotionally, not just fix objects.
- B. He wants to sell the watch for more money.
- C. He plans to keep the watch for himself.
- D. He wants to join the military.

3. Fill in the blank:

Klemens says that a great watchmaker understands **why** the repair work \_\_\_\_\_.

4. How does the author use specific details (like the ticking sound and initials) to help us infer the emotional value of the watch?

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5. What do Emil's actions and choices reveal about his growth throughout the story?

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# Parent and Teacher Guide

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**Guide Reading Level:** R

**Lexile Level:** 790L-940L

**Grade Level:** 4th Grade, Middle of the Year

**Genre:** Historical Fiction

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## Introducing the Text

"In this story, a young apprentice learns more than just how to fix watches—he learns about purpose, emotion, and human connection. As we read, we'll focus on details in the text that help us understand characters' feelings and how those details help us make inferences about their growth."

**Vocabulary:** apprentice, initials, rhythm, faded, repair

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## Before Reading Discussion Questions

1. What do you think it means to be an apprentice?
  2. Why might something like a watch be important to someone emotionally?
  3. What do you expect from a story set in a watch shop?
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## During Reading Discussion Questions

1. How does Emil's attitude toward the watch shop change?
  2. Why does Emil say the watch "can be fixed" even when he's unsure?
  3. What role does the repaired watch play in the story?
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## After Reading Discussion Questions

1. What details show how Emil has changed by the end of the story?
  2. What is the deeper meaning of Klemens's final words to Emil?
  3. What can we infer about the future between Emil and Klemens?
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## Activity Idea

Have students write a short reflection from Emil's point of view, describing what the woman's watch taught him about people, memory, and purpose. Then, ask them to draw or describe an object from their own life that holds emotional meaning and explain why.

