

Reading Comprehension Worksheet: Make Connections

Read the short story and answer each question.



The Echo Trail

The wind whispered secrets as Lena Nguyen stepped carefully along the rocky trail, her boots kicking up red dust. She had come to the canyon with her dad to help map the ancient carvings etched into the walls. But something felt different this time.

While her dad marked coordinates on a tablet, Lena wandered ahead, drawn to a narrow path that twisted behind a large stone. The air grew still as she stepped into a small alcove. There, hidden from the sun, was a wall unlike the others—filled with spirals, handprints, and what looked like stars.

At the center was a carving of a girl holding a flute. Below it were faint words in an old language. Lena took out her notebook to sketch, but when she touched the wall, something strange happened. The wind stopped completely. Then, a soft tune echoed through the canyon. It was the same melody her grandmother used to hum—one Lena had only ever heard indoors, never in the wild.

She turned to call her dad, but the path behind her had shifted. More carvings had appeared. Some looked newer. One showed a girl with a notebook.

Hers.

Lena traced the symbol and smiled. "Echo Trail," she whispered. "It's recording the present, too." She rejoined her dad and showed him the carvings. He looked at them, then at her, wide-eyed.

"There's more to this canyon than we thought," he said.

Lena tucked her notebook away. She had more exploring to do—and more stories to uncover.



Name: _____

The Echo Trail

1. What would an illustration of the wall with spirals, handprints, and stars help you understand?

- A. That the canyon is crowded with people
- B. That the carvings are detailed and filled with meaning
- C. That Lena doesn't like drawing
- D. That the carvings are hard to see in daylight

2. How would a visual of Lena touching the carving and hearing the tune help the reader?

- A. It would show Lena arguing with her dad
- B. It would add magic and mystery to the scene
- C. It would make the canyon look smaller
- D. It would explain how Lena got lost

3. Fill in the blank:

Lena called the special area in the canyon the _____, because it seemed to echo both the past and the present.

4. If you were watching this story as a short film, what parts would you want to see illustrated or acted out? Why?

5. How do visuals—like carvings and symbols—help the reader understand Lena's connection to the canyon?



Parent and Teacher Guide

Guide Reading Level: R

Lexile Level: 790L-940-L

Grade Level: 4th Grade, Middle of the Year

Genre: Historical Mystery

Introducing the Text

“Today we’re reading a story about a girl who finds something mysterious while exploring ancient carvings in a desert canyon. As you read, think about what parts of the story would be most powerful in an illustration or if it were told aloud. We’ll focus on how visual or spoken versions can reflect and enhance what’s written.”

Vocabulary: carving, alcove, melody, spirals, present

Before Reading Discussion Questions

1. Have you ever visited a place with ancient history or old markings?
 2. What do you know about how people told stories before books existed?
 3. What would you expect to see in a picture of a canyon filled with carvings?
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During Reading Discussion Questions

1. Why is Lena drawn to the hidden path?
 2. How does the story show that something magical or unusual is happening?
 3. What do the carvings reveal about Lena’s present and her past?
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After Reading Discussion Questions

1. Which parts of this story would be important to include in a visual version?
 2. How would you use music or sound to tell this story aloud?
 3. Why do you think the canyon adds new carvings as Lena explores it?
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Activity Idea

Ask students to create their own “story wall” on a large piece of craft paper or cardboard. Using symbols, shapes, and simple images, they should illustrate moments from their own lives that they’d want to preserve like ancient carvings. Then have them present their wall and explain which symbols would be most meaningful if this story were told visually.

