Reading Comprehension Worksheet: Make Connections

Read the short story and answer each question.

Cloudwatch Station

Kai Martinez peered through the curved glass dome of Cloudwatch Station, the highest observatory on Earth. Perched above a dormant volcano, the station floated on a ring of silent turbines that hummed with wind power. Kai's parents were scientists here, studying how cloud movements predicted patterns in climate—and danger.

Kai wasn't a scientist. He was an artist. While the grown-ups measured and typed, he sketched what he saw: swirls in the sky, the purple shadows of clouds, and lightning webs that never touched the ground.

One afternoon, while helping clean the glass dome, Kai noticed something strange. A cluster of clouds was moving *against* the wind—spinning slowly in the wrong direction. He drew it quickly in his sketchbook and ran to the control room.

"No readings show that," said Dr. Lin, squinting at her monitors.

"But look," Kai insisted, holding out his sketch. "It's real. I saw it."

Dr. Lin studied the drawing, then looked again through the telescope. Her eyes widened. "He's right. It's forming a spiral—like a warning signature we saw decades ago."

They sounded the alert.

Thanks to Kai's quick thinking and artistic eye, the team detected a rare cloud-triggered thermal shift—early signs of a volcanic tremor.

Afterward, a copy of his sketch was added to the station's archive. On the wall next to weather maps and data charts hung his drawing, labeled:
"Observation #291 — Seen by Eye, Not by Sensor."

And on the back of his sketchbook, Kai added a note:
Science sees through numbers. Art sees through wonder.

Name:

Cloudwatch Station

1. How would an illustration of Kai's sketch of the spiral cloud help readers understand the story?

A. It would show how Kai tricked the scientists

B. It would explain what the volcano looks like

C. It would help readers visualize what the monitors missed

D. It would show that Kai copied someone else's idea

2. How might a dramatized scene of Kai presenting his sketch help an audience feel the tension?

A. It would show a volcano exploding

B. It would make the control room look boring

C. It would help the audience feel how urgent and important Kai's discovery was

D. It would explain the names of the scientists

3. Fill in the blank:

Kai used his _____ to spot a weather pattern that even the scientists' machines couldn't detect.

4. If this story were turned into a short film or comic, what scenes would need the most visual detail? Why?

_____

_____

_____

5. What does Kai's sketch add to the story that could be lost without a picture?

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Parent and Teacher Guide

Guide Reading Level: S
Lexile Level: 850L-1000L
Grade Level: 4th Grade, End of the Year
Genre: Eco-Science Fiction

Introducing the Text

"Today's story is about a boy named Kai who lives at a high-tech observatory above a volcano. As you read, think about what parts of the story would be most powerful in a visual or oral version—like a movie, comic, or audiobook. We'll explore how visuals can show things words might only describe, and how both work together to build meaning."

Vocabulary: observatory, turbine, sketchbook, thermal, tremor

Before Reading Discussion Questions

1. Have you ever noticed something that others didn't see at first?
2. What do you think an observatory above a volcano would look like?
3. How can visuals like drawings or photos help explain scientific ideas?

During Reading Discussion Questions

1. What makes Kai's sketch different from the scientists' tools?
2. How does the author build suspense when Kai notices the strange cloud pattern?
3. What is the turning point in the story when adults begin to listen to Kai?

After Reading Discussion Questions

1. Why do you think Kai's drawing was added to the official archive?
2. How could this story be told through illustrations or animation?
3. What message does the story send about different ways of "seeing" and understanding the world?

Activity Idea

Have students create their own "observational sketch" of an imaginary weather pattern, such as glowing rain or upside-down lightning. Then have them write a short paragraph explaining what their weather phenomenon could signal and how it might be missed by a machine but seen by an observant person. Display the sketches gallery-style to celebrate the power of visual thinking.