

Reading Comprehension Worksheet: Compare Story Elements

Read the short story and answer each question.



The Clockmaker's Apprentice

In 1880s Prague, Eliska worked in her grandfather's clock shop. Gears clicked, bells chimed, and Master Horvath expected every second to be perfect. Eliska admired his skill—but dreamed of more. She wanted to build a machine that could reverse time.

One day, she found a dusty blueprint labeled *Time Gear* hidden under old tools. Her grandfather had given up on it long ago, saying, "Time should not be tampered with." But Eliska had a reason—she had hurt a friend with cruel words and wished to undo her mistake.

At night, she secretly worked on the machine. Her hands blistered, her eyes stung, but she didn't stop. One evening, Master Horvath followed the light and found her in the backroom.

"Why are you trying to change the past?" he asked.

"Because I hurt someone," Eliska whispered.

He sat beside her. "We cannot change what's done. But we can shape what comes next."

Eliska abandoned the *Time Gear*. Instead, she built a clock that played soft music when wound—a *Memory Clock*. At the festival, the townspeople loved it.

She didn't reverse time. But she made something that helped people remember what mattered.



Name: _____

The Clockmaker's Apprentice

1. How are Eliska and Master Horvath different in how they view time?

- A. Eliska wants to fix the past, but Master Horvath believes in moving forward.
- B. Eliska avoids clocks, but Master Horvath enjoys them.
- C. Eliska is always on time, but Master Horvath is forgetful.
- D. Eliska is interested in history, but Master Horvath prefers the future.

2. What helps Eliska decide to stop building the Time Gear?

- A. She runs out of tools and supplies.
- B. Her friend apologizes first.
- C. Her grandfather comforts her and offers a new perspective.
- D. She accidentally breaks the machine.

3. Fill in the blank:

Eliska worked secretly at night to build the _____.

4. How does Eliska's final invention reflect her growth as a character?

5. Why do you think the author chose not to let Eliska complete the Time Gear?



Parent and Teacher Guide

Guide Reading Level: S

Lexile Level: 850L-1000L

Grade Level: 5th Grade, Beginning of the Year

Genre: Historical Fantasy

Introducing the Text

“Today’s story is about a girl in a clock shop who wishes she could undo a mistake. As you read, notice how her thoughts and actions change. Think about how her beliefs about time are different from her grandfather’s.”

Vocabulary: apprentice, blueprint, tampered, regret, invention

Before Reading Discussion Questions

1. What would it be like to work in a clock shop in the 1800s?
 2. Have you ever made a mistake you wanted to fix?
 3. Why might someone want to go back in time?
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During Reading Discussion Questions

1. What is the Time Gear, and why is Eliska interested in it?
 2. What does Master Horvath say when he finds Eliska working on the machine?
 3. How do Eliska’s emotions guide her actions?
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After Reading Discussion Questions

1. What do you think the Memory Clock symbolizes in the story?
 2. How do Eliska’s and her grandfather’s beliefs affect what they create?
 3. What lesson do you think the author wants readers to learn?
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Activity Idea

Have students write a short note or letter to someone they care about, then decorate it like a clock face. This helps students reflect on how we can shape the future with thoughtful words instead of wishing to change the past.

