

Reading Comprehension Worksheet: Story Structure

Read the short story and answer each question.



The Umbrella Thief

Scene 1 - The Rainy Mystery

It rained every afternoon that week, and every afternoon, someone's umbrella went missing from the school's front rack. Maya noticed—because hers was the first to disappear. "Someone's stealing them," she whispered to her friend Ezra.

Scene 2 - The Investigation Begins

Maya and Ezra started watching. They took notes. Blue umbrella, gone Monday. Polka-dotted one, Tuesday. "It's always the nicest ones," Ezra said.

They hid behind the trophy case the next day, peeking around the corner as students left. But no thief appeared.

Scene 3 - The Clue

On Thursday, Maya spotted a strange trail of wet footprints in the hallway—bare feet, not shoes. "That's odd," she murmured. The prints led to the art room. Inside, they found a quiet boy named Theo drying a bright yellow umbrella with a towel.

Scene 4 - The Truth

Theo looked startled. "I wasn't stealing," he said softly. "I was fixing them." He pointed to a row of umbrellas with torn fabric, bent handles, and frayed cords. Each had been mended with paint, tape, and creativity.

Scene 5 - The Change

Maya and Ezra apologized. Then they asked if they could help. By the next week, a small sign sat next to the umbrella rack: "Broken? Leave it here. We'll fix it."

The thief had never existed. But a helper had.



Name: _____

The Umbrella Thief

1. What role does Scene 3 play in the structure of the story?

- A. It introduces a key clue that leads Maya to the person with the umbrellas.
- B. It explains how Ezra became friends with Maya.
- C. It ends the mystery and solves the problem.
- D. It shows how the rain caused students to be upset.

2. What is the purpose of Scene 5 in the overall structure?

- A. It introduces a new problem with the umbrella rack.
- B. It shows the community's disappointment in Theo.
- C. It ends the story by resolving the misunderstanding and creating a new system.
- D. It explains the weather changes at the school.

3. Fill in the blank:

Maya and Ezra discovered that Theo wasn't stealing umbrellas—he was _____ them.

4. How do the scenes in the story build on each other to solve the mystery?

5. Why is it important that the story includes both the misunderstanding and the resolution?



Parent and Teacher Guide

Guide Reading Level: T

Lexile Level: 900L-1050L

Grade Level: 5th Grade, Beginning of the Year

Genre: Mystery

Introducing the Text

“This story is a mystery told in scenes, like short chapters. As we read, think about how each scene adds something important—whether it’s a clue, a problem, or a turning point—and how the scenes work together to build the story’s meaning.”

Vocabulary: investigation, footprints, startled, mended, misunderstanding

Before Reading Discussion Questions

1. What kinds of clues or details do you expect in a mystery story?
 2. How do authors use scenes or chapters to keep you interested?
 3. What might happen when people jump to conclusions without asking questions?
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During Reading Discussion Questions

1. What are Maya and Ezra trying to figure out?
 2. How does the footprint clue help move the mystery forward?
 3. What is surprising about Theo’s role in the story?
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After Reading Discussion Questions

1. How does each scene contribute to solving the problem?
 2. What would the story lose if the ending scene hadn’t been included?
 3. What message do you think the author wanted readers to learn?
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Activity Idea

Have students rewrite the story from Theo’s point of view, organizing it into five scenes. This helps them reflect on structure, perspective, and how details shape a reader’s understanding.

