

Reading Comprehension Worksheet: Story Structure

Read the short story and answer each question.



The Signal in the Fog

Scene 1 - Static in the Sky

At the edge of the coast, Mira adjusted the dials on her father's old signal box. It had been quiet for years—until that morning, when it buzzed to life with static that pulsed like a heartbeat.

Scene 2 - The Vanishing

The fog rolled in thick that evening. Boats vanished into it like ghosts swallowed by clouds. When the ferry from the mainland didn't return, Mira grew uneasy. She played the signal again. Among the static, she heard a whisper: "Help us."

Scene 3 - The Search

Mira packed the signal box, flashlight, and her bike. Her older brother laughed. "You chasing space ghosts again?" "No," Mira muttered. "Just listening." She followed the shore until she saw a flicker through the mist—faint lights, circling like fireflies.

Scene 4 - The Discovery

Tucked beneath a collapsed cave near the lighthouse, Mira found the missing ferry passengers huddled in silence. They'd taken shelter after fog disoriented the captain. Her signal box crackled again. The whisper returned: "Found."

Scene 5 - The Message

Later, back home, Mira adjusted the dials again. The fog lifted.

The box was quiet. But in her journal she wrote: "Some signals are meant for people who know how to listen."



Name: _____

The Signal in the Fog

1. What role does Scene 2 play in the overall structure of the story?

- A. It introduces the central mystery and raises the stakes when the ferry goes missing.
- B. It shows Mira ignoring the signal and choosing to go to sleep.
- C. It provides a solution to the story's main conflict.
- D. It explains how Mira learned to build the signal box.

2. What is the purpose of Scene 5 in this story's structure?

- A. It introduces a new character who solves the mystery.
- B. It reflects on Mira's experience and reveals what she learned.
- C. It restates the same information as Scene 1.
- D. It builds suspense before Mira begins her journey.

3. Fill in the blank:

Mira's _____ crackled with a mysterious message that led her to the missing passengers.

4. How does the structure of the story—moving from signal to discovery—help build suspense?

5. What do the signal and fog symbolize in Mira's journey?



Parent and Teacher Guide

Guide Reading Level: V

Lexile Level: 950L–1100L

Grade Level: 5th Grade, End of the Year

Genre: Science Fiction Mystery

Introducing the Text

“This story is a mystery told through five scenes that build suspense and deepen the meaning. As you read, pay attention to how each part adds a new layer to the mystery and how the author uses structure to guide the reader from problem to discovery.”

Vocabulary: static, signal, vanished, circling, disoriented

Before Reading Discussion Questions

1. What do you expect in a mystery that involves signals or strange sounds?
 2. Have you ever followed a clue that led to something unexpected?
 3. Why might an author choose to tell a story in clear scenes?
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During Reading Discussion Questions

1. What role does the fog play in building suspense?
 2. How does Mira react differently from others when she hears the signal?
 3. Why is Scene 3 important to the flow of the story?
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After Reading Discussion Questions

1. How did each scene build on the last to solve the mystery?
 2. What lesson or message did Mira learn from her experience?
 3. How would the story feel different if it didn't include the final reflection?
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Activity Idea

Have students design their own “signal mystery” storyboard with five labeled scenes. Each should include a setting, problem, clue, discovery, and reflection—mirroring the structure of the story they just read.

