

Reading Comprehension Worksheet: Analyze Visuals

Read the short story and answer each question.



The Train to Elsewhere

The first time I saw the train, it looked like a giant iron dragon. Steam hissed from its nostrils, and its long body coiled around the bend.

Mama and I stood on the platform with two small suitcases and one photograph.

She didn't cry. Not then. I didn't either.

We had been leaving for a long time—ever since the signs in shop windows started changing, ever since the neighbors stopped waving.

Mama whispered, "This isn't running. It's choosing."

We boarded the train and found two seats near the back. A woman with a green scarf handed me a boiled egg. A boy with a missing shoe offered me a smile.

Outside the window, trees blurred into streaks of gold and brown. I pressed my hand against the glass. I didn't know where Elsewhere was. Only that it wasn't Here.

When Mama finally rested her head against my shoulder, I imagined planting new roots wherever we landed. Quiet ones at first. Then stronger.

The train kept moving.

And so did we.



Name: _____

The Train to Elsewhere

1. How does the illustration enhance the tone of the story's ending?

- A. It visually captures the quiet hope and emotional weight of the characters' journey by showing the train, the passengers, and the movement toward an uncertain future.
- B. It shows a party scene that changes the story's meaning completely.
- C. It focuses only on Mama and ignores the setting of the train.
- D. It makes the story seem silly and unrelated to the emotions in the text.

2. What emotional effect does the image of the moving train and passengers have on the reader?

- A. It emphasizes reflection, courage, and the bittersweet nature of leaving home.
- B. It creates confusion and disconnection from the characters.
- C. It shows an action-packed scene that feels unrelated to the tone.
- D. It removes the seriousness from the characters' situation.

3. Fill in the blank:

The wide train illustration helps the reader understand the quiet _____ behind the characters' decision to leave.

4. What visual details in the illustration help show the emotions of the characters and the tone of the story?

5. How does the image reflect the story's message about resilience and beginning again?



Parent and Teacher Guide

Guide Reading Level: V

Lexile Level: 950L–1100L

Grade Level: 5th Grade, End of the Year

Genre: Historical Fiction with Poetic Elements

Introducing the Text

“In this story, the narrator and her mother are quietly leaving their home during a difficult historical moment. The wide, wordless illustration adds to the mood and message of the story. As students read and view, encourage them to connect specific image details—like body posture, color, light, and movement—to the feelings and meaning in the text.”

Vocabulary: platform, Elsewhere, streaks, resilience, whispered

Before Reading Discussion Questions

1. What can an image show that words sometimes can't?
 2. What do you think a train journey might symbolize in a story like this?
 3. How might light and shadow in a picture reflect a character's emotions?
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During Reading Discussion Questions

1. How do the narrator's emotions shift from beginning to end?
 2. What clues in the text foreshadow the significance of the journey?
 3. What parts of the story do you imagine being captured in the illustration?
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After Reading Discussion Questions

1. How does the illustration reflect the tone of the final scene?
 2. Which elements in the image add meaning or emotion to the story's ending?
 3. Why do you think the illustrator chose to focus on the wide setting instead of just close-ups of the characters?
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Activity Idea

Invite students to choose a moment from the story and create a color palette or texture board that reflects the emotional tone. Then, ask them to write a brief reflection about how their visual choices support the message or mood of that scene, just like the final illustration does.

