Story Structure

Grade 4 Reading Worksheet

Name _____ Date _____

Read the text. Circle how a play, a poem and a story are alike or different.

READ THIS FIRST

The Fish Lantern

CAST OF CHARACTERS
MEI LIN, a ten-year-old girl who loves to make things
GRANDPA WEI, her grandfather, a patient artist
DANIEL, Mei Lin's best friend from next door

SCENE 1
(GRANDPA WEI's kitchen, the night before the Lantern Festival. Red paper, glue and thin bamboo sticks cover the table. MEI LIN holds up a finished lantern shaped like a fish.)
MEI LIN: Look, Grandpa! The fins finally stay on.
GRANDPA WEI: (putting on his glasses) Beautiful. The scales look almost real.
MEI LIN: Tomorrow everyone at the park will see it glow.
GRANDPA WEI: Paper is delicate, Mei Lin. Carry it with care.
MEI LIN: (laughing) I will hold it like a baby bird.
(DANIEL knocks and pokes his head through the doorway.)
DANIEL: Is the fish done? Can I see?
MEI LIN: (proudly turning it around) Ta-da!
DANIEL: Whoa. Mine is just a plain circle.

SCENE 2
(The park, the next evening. Strings of lights hang between the trees. People hold glowing lanterns. A light rain begins to fall.)
DANIEL: (looking up) Uh-oh. Is that rain?
MEI LIN: (pulling the fish close) Not now! Not tonight!
(A raindrop lands on the lantern. The wet paper splits along one side. MEI LIN stares at the tear and goes quiet.)
DANIEL: Maybe nobody will notice.
MEI LIN: (her voice shaking) Everyone will notice. It looks ruined.
GRANDPA WEI: (stepping under the snack tent) Bring it here, out of the rain.
(GRANDPA WEI pulls a folded square of gold paper from his coat pocket. He cuts out a circle with small scissors.)
MEI LIN: What are you making?
GRANDPA WEI: A moon for your fish to swim past. (He presses the gold circle over the tear.) There. Now the tear is part of the picture.
DANIEL: (grinning) It looks even better than before.
MEI LIN: (slowly smiling, lifting the lantern high) A fish swimming under the moon. I like it.
(The rain stops. MEI LIN and DANIEL carry their lanterns into the crowd.)

1. If this play were rewritten as a story, what would most likely change?
   - A narrator would describe actions and feelings.
   - Every line would have to rhyme.
   - The events would happen in a different order.
   - The characters' names would be left out.

2. Which feature does this play have that a poem usually does not?
   stage directions in parentheses
   stanzas of four lines
   rhyming words at the ends of lines
   a steady beat in every line

3. How is this play different from a story?
   It has no problem and no ending to the story.
   It is written in rhyming stanzas with a steady beat.
   The characters speak; no narrator tells it.
   It tells every event in a few short rhyming lines.

4. Why might a writer choose a play, rather than a story, to tell this event?
   A play can describe what a character is thinking at any time.
   A play is always shorter and needs fewer words than a story.
   Dialogue and stage directions show each scene to an audience.
   A play lets the writer skip the problem and tell only the ending.

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Answer Key - Grade 4 Reading Worksheet

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