Story Structure

Grade 4 Reading Worksheet - Challenge Me

Name _____ Date _____

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

READ THIS FIRST

The Ferry Crossing: A Poem and a Play

Version 1: A Poem by Yusuf

The ferry horn gives one long blast.
The dock slips out of view.
Teta and I stand at the rail
Where gray waves turn to blue.

The salty wind tugs at my hood.
The seagulls dip and call.
I point and chatter, but Teta
Says nothing much at all.

A sailboat passes on our left,
Its white sail puffed with air.
I wave, but Teta does not turn.
She has a faraway stare.

She watches the far island grow,
Its hills of green and brown.
Her hand is warm upon my hand.
Is she happy or down?

Then, near the shore, she lifts her arm
Toward a house of white.
Her smile grows wide. Her eyes grow wet.
I squeeze her fingers tight.

I do not know what Teta sees.
She doesn't say a word.
But something in her quiet smile
Says more than I have heard.

Version 2: A Scene from a Play

CAST OF CHARACTERS
YUSUF, a ten-year-old boy on his first ferry ride
TETA, his grandmother
A DECKHAND, who works on the ferry

(The deck of a small ferry on a windy morning. YUSUF and TETA stand at the rail. Gulls cry overhead. In the distance, a green island rises from the sea.)
YUSUF: (pointing up) Teta, look! That gull almost landed on my hood!
TETA: (gazing at the island, not turning) Mm.
YUSUF: And there's a sailboat! Its sail is puffed up like a pillow.
TETA: (softly) Yes, very nice.
(YUSUF studies her face. He lowers his arm.)
YUSUF: Are you seasick? You've hardly said a word since we left.
TETA: I'm not sick, habibi. I'm remembering.
YUSUF: Remembering what?
(The DECKHAND walks past, coiling a rope.)
DECKHAND: Ten minutes to Cedar Island, folks!
YUSUF: (to the DECKHAND) Is Cedar Island big?
DECKHAND: (smiling) Big enough to get lost in. Small enough that everyone knows your name.
TETA: (quietly) Everyone used to know mine.
TETA: (pointing toward the shore) Do you see the white house on the hill? The one with the blue door?
YUSUF: (squinting) Next to the big tree?
TETA: I grew up in that house. I left the island when I was your age.
YUSUF: (surprised) You never told me that!
TETA: (wiping her eyes and smiling) I'm telling you now. Today, I wanted you to see it with me.
YUSUF: (taking her hand) Can we knock on the blue door?
TETA: (laughing) Maybe. First, let's see if my old tree is still standing.

1. In the poem, Yusuf wonders, "Is she happy or down?" How does the play answer this?

   Teta says she feels seasick from the waves.

   Teta says she is tired from the long trip.

   Teta explains that she is remembering her old home.

   Teta says the noisy gulls are bothering her.

2. What does the play tell the reader that the poem never does?

   Teta's eyes fill with tears.

   Teta grew up in the white house.

   Teta is quiet during the ride.

   A sailboat passes near the ferry.

3. Which feature does the poem use that the play does not?

rhyme and a steady meter

stage directions in parentheses

dialogue between characters

a cast of characters

4. Why might a writer choose a play, rather than a poem, to tell this event?

A play must keep its ending a secret.

A play lets the reader hear Yusuf's private thoughts.

A play needs fewer characters than a poem.

Dialogue lets Teta explain her feelings in her own words.

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Answer Key - Grade 4 Reading Worksheet - Challenge Me

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