Compare Characters and Settings

Grade 5 Reading Worksheet - Challenge Me

Name _____ Date _____

Circle the answer.

READ THIS FIRST

Two Runners, One Race

Paloma Reyes lived in Tucson, Arizona, where summer mornings were already hot by seven o'clock. Sienna Clarke lived in Leadville, Colorado, a mountain town nearly two miles above sea level. Neither girl had heard of the other. Yet both were training for the same race: the Junior Cross-Country Championship in October.

Paloma's biggest opponent was the heat. To beat it, she ran before sunrise, while the desert air was still cool. Her path wound between saguaro cacti and dry washes, where the sand was soft and slowed her steps. She carried two water bottles on every run. Her coach told her that a runner who trained in heat would feel light and quick on a cooler day.

Sienna's biggest opponent was the thin air. At her altitude, each breath held less oxygen than it would by the sea. On her first runs, she had gasped after only a few blocks. She trained on rocky trails that climbed past pine trees and old mining cabins. Some mornings in September, she ran through frost. Her coach told her that her lungs and heart grew stronger with every climb.

The two girls also had different habits. Paloma liked to run with a group. She chatted with her teammates during warm-ups and sprinted beside them at the end of practice. Running alone felt lonely to her. Sienna preferred to run by herself. The quiet trail helped her think, and she liked listening to her own breathing and footsteps.

The championship took place on a flat, grassy course in Kansas. The morning was cool and cloudy. At the starting line, Paloma bounced on her toes and talked to the runners beside her. Sienna stood still with her eyes closed, picturing the course.

When the starting horn sounded, Paloma shot to the front. The cool air felt wonderful after months of desert heat. Sienna started near the middle and let the leaders pull ahead. She had learned on mountain trails to save energy for the hard parts.

At the two-mile mark, Paloma's legs began to burn. She had started too fast. Sienna, breathing easily in the thick, low air, began passing runners one by one. With half a mile left, she pulled even with Paloma.

For a moment, they ran side by side. Then Paloma did something she had always done with her team. "Come on," she gasped. "Let's catch them together." Sienna was surprised, but she nodded. The two girls pushed each other past three more runners.

Sienna crossed the line in second place. Paloma finished fourth, one step behind a tall girl from Oregon. Afterward, they sat in the grass, sharing a bottle of water.

"Where do you train?" Sienna asked.

"In the desert," said Paloma. "You?"

"On a mountain," said Sienna. They both laughed. They had come from completely different places, but both had arrived ready.

1. How do the main challenges of the two girls' settings compare?
   Both girls train in cool, cloudy weather.
   Paloma trains against thin air; Sienna trains against heat.
   Both girls train against frost and rocky trails.
   Paloma trains against heat; Sienna trains against thin air.

2. How does each setting shape the girls' training?
   Sienna carries two water bottles; Paloma runs through frost.
   Paloma runs before sunrise; Sienna builds strength by climbing.
   Paloma runs at noon; Sienna runs only on flat roads.
   Both girls run before sunrise to stay out of the cold.

3. How are the girls' training habits different?
   Both girls prefer to run alone on quiet trails.
   Sienna likes running with a group; Paloma likes running alone.
   Both girls chat with teammates during warm-ups.
   Paloma likes running with a group; Sienna likes running alone.

4. Which detail from the starting line reflects the girls' different habits?
   Paloma talks to other runners; Sienna stands still with her eyes closed.
   Sienna shoots to the front as soon as the horn sounds.
   Both girls bounce on their toes and talk to the runners nearby.
   Paloma closes her eyes and pictures the whole course.

5. Why does Paloma start the race so fast?
   The course is uphill at the beginning.
   The cool air feels easy after months of heat.
   She knows Sienna is right behind her.
   Her coach told her to lead from the start.

6. How does Sienna's race plan connect to her mountain setting?
   She learned on steep trails to save energy for hard parts.
   She learned in the frost to race only on cold days.
   She learned in the mountains to sprint at the start.
   She learned from her team to stay with a group.

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Answer Key - Grade 5 Reading Worksheet - Challenge Me

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