Elements of Fiction

Use this key to check answers and read the explanations.

1. At dawn, Mina unlocked the garden shed while frost still covered the grass. Which phrase identifies both the time and place of this scene?

A. At a garden shed at dawn
B. In a garden at noon
C. On a farm after sunset
D. On a porch at dawn

Correct answer: A. At a garden shed at dawn
The scene happens at the garden shed, and “at dawn” identifies when it takes place.

2. After finding a wallet on the stairs, Theo checks the school office and asks the custodian about it. What goal is driving his actions?

A. Keep other students off the stairs
B. Find a quiet place to study
C. Return the wallet to its owner
D. Get permission to leave school early

Correct answer: C. Return the wallet to its owner
Theo asks people who might help identify the owner. The wallet gives his actions a shared purpose.

3. Lian needs to deliver a cake before the shop closes. A fallen tree blocks the only road she knows. Which detail introduces the external conflict?

A. The cake needs frosting
B. The tree blocks her route
C. Lian is a delivery driver
D. The shop has a familiar sign

Correct answer: B. The tree blocks her route
The fallen tree is an obstacle in the world outside Lian, and it interferes with her goal of making the delivery.

4. In a story about two neighbors disputing a fence, which event gives their disagreement a resolution?

A. Both neighbors make different plans for repairs
B. One neighbor notices a gap in the fence
C. A neighbor calls an emergency meeting
D. They agree on where to place a shared gate

Correct answer: D. They agree on where to place a shared gate
The agreement gives the neighbors a shared decision. The other events could still occur while the dispute is unresolved.

5. Which sentence directly tells the reader a character trait, instead of giving behavior from which to infer it?

A. Amari waited for the beginner to finish
B. Amari was patient with beginners
C. Amari pulled up a chair for the beginner
D. Amari repeated the example more slowly

Correct answer: B. Amari was patient with beginners
The adjective “patient” names a trait. The other actions invite readers to infer a trait from behavior.

6. One student lends a pencil to a classmate and quietly adds an eraser after noticing the classmate has none. What do the actions suggest about the student?

A. The student notices and responds to other people’s needs
B. The student likes having the newest supplies
C. The student expects to win a reward for helping
D. The student dislikes working with classmates

Correct answer: A. The student notices and responds to other people’s needs
Giving the eraser without being asked shows that the student is paying attention to what the classmate needs.

7. Nia hoped the invitation had reached Sol. When she finally saw him, he smiled, but she could not tell why. Which description fits the narrator’s access to the characters?

A. Third person, with no access to either character’s thoughts
B. Third person, with access to Sol’s thoughts only
C. First person, narrated by Nia
D. Third person, with access to Nia’s thoughts only

Correct answer: D. Third person, with access to Nia’s thoughts only
The narrator refers to Nia by name and reports what she hopes. Sol’s thoughts remain unknown.

8. Sofia made a promise to play in her first band concert. At home she holds the unsigned form, torn between fear of performing and excitement about keeping her promise. What is the main internal conflict?

A. Sofia has lost the form she needs to join
B. Sofia and the band director disagree about the date
C. Sofia’s desire to perform conflicts with her fear of the stage
D. Her family and the school want the concert on different days

Correct answer: C. Sofia’s desire to perform conflicts with her fear of the stage
Both sides of the struggle occur within Sofia as she weighs fear against something she wants to do.

9. A story opens with Ben inspecting an unfamiliar uniform. In the next paragraph, he remembers a scene from childhood when his sister taught him to sew. Then the narration returns to the uniform. What is the childhood scene doing?

A. Interrupting the present action with a flashback
B. Skipping ahead from the present to the ending
C. Repeating the opening in a second narrator’s voice
D. Resolving the story before the opening

Correct answer: A. Interrupting the present action with a flashback
The childhood scene comes from before the story’s present. The narration visits that earlier time and then returns.

10. An island clinic receives supplies by boat. An unusually low tide keeps its dock out of reach until evening. How does the setting affect the plot?

A. It settles a dispute over who owns the dock
B. It explains why the clinic is crowded
C. It reveals why the boat has a new captain
D. It forces the clinic to wait for supplies

Correct answer: D. It forces the clinic to wait for supplies
The dock and tide create a practical delay. The supplies can arrive by the usual route only once the water rises.

11. A school magazine story follows Jo as she hides a printing error, realizes it could cost her teammate a prize, and finally steps to the microphone to admit it. The judges then revise the results. Which event is the climax?

A. Jo imagines what could happen to her teammate
B. Jo notices the printing error
C. Jo chooses to admit the error in public
D. The judges publish the revised results

Correct answer: C. Jo chooses to admit the error in public
Admitting the error is Jo’s decisive action and changes what can happen next. The revised results follow from it.

12. A later chapter hinges on a bridge bell failing to ring during fog. Which detail in an early chapter would best prepare the reader for that event?

A. The keeper changes the color of the toll booth door
B. The keeper has to pull the bell rope twice before it rings
C. A traveler loses a glove crossing the bridge
D. A shop posts a new price for umbrellas

Correct answer: B. The keeper has to pull the bell rope twice before it rings
A bell that fails to respond on the first pull hints at the later malfunction while letting it remain an uncertain possibility.

13. At first Luz refuses help because she wants her garden to be entirely her own work. When a frost threatens it, neighbors share cloth and save the seedlings. Luz later teaches them how to transplant. Which theme is best supported?

A. Teaching is useful only when every student starts at the same level
B. Gardens survive only if one person makes every decision
C. Planning is more important than responding to change
D. Accepting help can lead to mutual learning

Correct answer: D. Accepting help can lead to mutual learning
Luz benefits from her neighbors' help and then shares her own skill. Both directions of that exchange support the theme.

14. Readers hear one character's thoughts as she misreads her brother's silence as anger. Which revision keeps readers close to her misunderstanding at first, then lets them discover her brother's real reason?

A. Begin with her viewpoint, then later give him a scene from his viewpoint
B. Reveal his reason before she notices his silence
C. Use a narrator who explains both characters' thoughts immediately
D. Tell every scene from his viewpoint alone

Correct answer: A. Begin with her viewpoint, then later give him a scene from his viewpoint
The first viewpoint limits readers to what she knows. A later shift can supply information that was unavailable to her.

15. Early in a story, Ana keeps a spare key under a stone and tells nobody where it is. At the end, she hands that same key to a close friend. What does the change in how she uses the key show?

A. The friend used to live in Ana's house
B. Ana has become more worried about strangers coming in
C. Ana lets someone share the access she once kept to herself
D. The key has become less important because it no longer works

Correct answer: C. Ana lets someone share the access she once kept to herself
The same object appears first in a hiding place and later in her friend's hand. That contrast makes the change in Ana's trust visible.