



Reading Comprehension Worksheet

Grade 10

Answer Key

Harbor at Low Tide

*The boats lean sideways on the cracking mud,
tired shoulders resting where the water fled.
Gulls stitch the gray sky with a restless thread,
and rope lines hang like unstrung violins.*

*I used to think low tide meant something lost—
the harbor's voice grown quiet, drained, undone.
But now I see the pilings, tall and sure,
holding their ground for water not yet come.*

*The fisherman does not curse the emptied shore.
He mends his nets and waits with weathered hands,
because he knows, as I am learning too,
that absence is not always the same as end.*

*The tide will turn. It always does, in time.
And what looks like a harbor's slow retreat
is only breath drawn inward, deep and still,
before the sea comes rushing back to meet
the boats, the ropes, the waiting, patient shore.*

Circle the Correct Answer

1. What is being described in the poem's opening lines?

Answer: b) Boats resting in the mud during low tide

2. According to the poem, what did the speaker used to believe about low tide?

Answer: a) That it meant something was lost or finished

3. How does the fisherman respond to the low tide, according to the poem?

Answer: b) He mends his nets and waits patiently

4. What does the poem compare low tide to in its final stanza?

Answer: a) A breath drawn inward before the sea returns

True or False

5. The poem describes the harbor during high tide.

Answer: False

6. The speaker's view of low tide changes over the course of the poem.

Answer: True

7. The poem suggests that the tide will never return.

Answer: False

Fill in the Blank

8. The rope lines are described as hanging like unstrung _____.

Answer: violins

9. The poem states that "absence is not always the same as _____."

Answer: end

Think and Explain

10. Identify one example of a simile or metaphor in the poem and explain what it suggests about the poem's meaning.

Sample answer: Accept reasonable answers identifying an example such as 'rope lines hang like unstrung violins' or 'absence is not always the same as end,' explaining how the comparison conveys stillness, waiting, or the idea that emptiness is temporary rather than permanent.

11. What is the central theme of this poem? Use at least one specific line from the poem to support your interpretation.

Sample answer: Accept reasonable answers noting that the poem's theme centers on patience, renewal, or the idea that quiet or empty periods are temporary and often precede a return, supported by lines such as 'the tide will turn, it always does, in time.'