



Reading Comprehension Worksheet

Grade 12

Answer Key

Dear Professor Hale

Email 1 — September 14, from Marcus Webb to Professor Hale

Dear Professor Hale, I wanted to reach out about the essay due Friday. I am confident I can complete excellent work, but I have a family obligation this week that may require a short extension. I take this class, and your feedback, very seriously, and would not ask if it were not necessary. Respectfully, Marcus Webb

Email 2 — September 14, from Professor Hale to Marcus Webb

Marcus, I appreciate you reaching out ahead of the deadline rather than after it, which I do notice and value. You may have until Monday. Please let me know if circumstances change further. Professor Hale

Email 3 — October 3, from Marcus Webb to Professor Hale

Dear Professor Hale, I am sorry to ask again, but another family matter has come up this week, quite similar to last time, and I will need additional time on the midterm paper. I understand if this is becoming frustrating, but I promise the work itself will reflect real effort. Marcus Webb

Email 4 — October 3, from Professor Hale to Marcus Webb

Marcus, I want to be direct with you, since I think you would prefer that to polite avoidance. This is the third extension request this semester, each citing similar circumstances. I am willing to grant this one as well, but I would like you to come to office hours this week. Not as a penalty, simply to talk. Professor Hale

Email 5 — October 6, from Marcus Webb to Professor Hale

Dear Professor Hale, I went back and forth on whether to write this email honestly or to keep things professional as usual, and I have decided on honestly. There is no family emergency. My younger brother was diagnosed with a serious illness in August, and I have been driving home most weekends since, which I did not want to explain in detail to

a professor I barely know. I am sorry for not simply saying so from the beginning. Marcus Webb

Email 6 — October 6, from Professor Hale to Marcus Webb

Marcus, thank you for trusting me with this. You did not owe me a detailed explanation, and I understand exactly why you did not offer one at first. Please take the time you need. I will work with you on deadlines for the rest of the semester without further explanation required. I am glad you told me, and I am sorry about your brother. Professor Hale

Circle the Correct Answer

1. Why does Marcus first contact Professor Hale?

Answer: b) To request a short extension on an essay due to a family obligation

2. How does Professor Hale respond to the third extension request?

Answer: b) She grants it but asks Marcus to come to office hours to talk

3. What does Marcus eventually reveal in his fifth email?

Answer: b) That his younger brother was diagnosed with a serious illness

4. How does Professor Hale respond once she learns the truth?

Answer: b) She offers continued flexibility without further explanation required

True or False

5. This story is told entirely through a private diary.

Answer: False

6. Marcus tells Professor Hale the truth about his brother in his very first email.

Answer: False

7. Professor Hale becomes more understanding once she learns the real reason behind the requests.

Answer: True

Fill in the Blank

8. Professor Hale says she wants to be _____ with Marcus rather than polite avoidance.

Answer: direct

9. Marcus says he went back and forth on whether to write his email _____ or to keep things professional.

Answer: honestly

Think and Explain

10. This story is told entirely through a sequence of emails, a format known as epistolary fiction. What does this format allow the reader to understand about both characters that a traditional third-person narrator might present differently? Use evidence from the text.

Sample answer: Accept reasonable answers noting that the epistolary format lets readers experience each character's evolving tone and trust in real time, without a narrator interpreting their motivations, and that the shift in Marcus's language, from formal and vague to direct and vulnerable, becomes especially visible because we only have his own words to judge him by.

11. Analyze how Professor Hale's characterization develops across the letters. Is she a static or dynamic character, and what specific textual evidence supports your interpretation?

Sample answer: Accept reasonable answers arguing she is relatively static in her core values (patience, willingness to listen) but reveals increasing depth, moving from procedural politeness in Email 2 to a direct, personally invested request for honesty in Email 4, supported by her shift toward warmer, more personal language once she learns the truth in Email 6.