



# Reading Comprehension Worksheet

Grade 11

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Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

## Inheritance

*My grandmother left me her hands,  
or so my mother always says,  
the same stubborn knuckles,  
the same way of gripping a pen  
like it might try to leave before I am finished with it.*

*I used to think she meant it as a compliment,  
until I noticed how carefully  
she said it around my grandmother's silences,  
the ones that lasted through whole holidays,  
inherited, apparently, along with the knuckles.*

*There is a photograph of my grandmother at nineteen,  
unsmiling, her hands folded so precisely  
in her lap that I wonder now  
whether she was hiding them  
or presenting them, like evidence.*

*I keep the photograph in a drawer  
I do not open often,  
the way you keep something  
you are not ready to call  
a warning, or a gift,  
or possibly, unbearably, both at once.*

*My mother says I have my grandmother's hands.  
She has never once said  
whether she means that  
as something I should be proud of,  
or something I should watch closely,  
the way you watch a door  
that has been known, before,  
to close on its own.*

### Circle the Correct Answer

**1. What does the speaker's mother repeatedly say the speaker inherited from the grandmother?**

- a) Her hands
- b) Her eyes
- c) Her voice

**2. What does the speaker notice about how the mother discusses the grandmother's silences?**

- a) The mother discusses them openly and freely
- b) The mother says it carefully, suggesting some discomfort
- c) The mother refuses to ever mention the grandmother

**3. How does the speaker describe the grandmother's hands in the photograph?**

- a) Folded precisely, possibly hiding or presenting them like evidence
- b) Covered by long sleeves
- c) Holding a bouquet of flowers

**4. What has the mother never clarified, according to the final stanza?**

- a) Whether the speaker should be proud or watchful of inheriting the grandmother's hands
- b) Whether the photograph still exists
- c) Whether the grandmother is still alive

### True or False

**5. The poem is written in the first person. \_\_\_\_\_**

**6. The mother clearly states that inheriting the grandmother's hands is a positive thing. \_\_\_\_\_**

**7. The speaker keeps the photograph of the grandmother somewhere they open often.**

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### **Fill in the Blank**

8. The speaker grips a pen like it might try to \_\_\_\_\_ before they are finished with it.

9. The poem compares the drawer's contents to something the speaker is not ready to call a warning, or a \_\_\_\_\_.

### **Think and Explain**

**10. This poem is deliberately ambiguous about whether inheriting the grandmother's traits is presented as positive, negative, or both. Argue for one interpretation using specific textual evidence, while acknowledging at least one piece of evidence that complicates or challenges your reading.**

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**11. Why might a poet choose to leave a poem's central question deliberately unresolved, rather than clearly stating whether inheritance (of traits, silences, or family patterns) is something to celebrate or fear? What does this ambiguity contribute to the poem's effect on the reader?**

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