



Reading Comprehension Worksheet

Grade 12

Answer Key

The Waiting Room

Forty minutes now the clock above the fish tank not even real fish plastic ones bobbing pointlessly and I keep thinking about the blue chair I sat in the last time which was different, a different building, a different year, before any of this, and my phone says nothing new my phone has said nothing new for forty minutes which either means good news is taking its time or bad news is being drafted carefully by someone whose job is delivering it gently and isn't that its own kind of answer already, the gentleness

Mom would tell me to breathe she always says breathe like it's a solution and not just something my body does automatically whether I tell it to or not, in, out, in, out, and somewhere down the hallway a door opens and I look up too fast, whiplash-fast, and it's not for me, it's never for me yet, someone else's name called, someone else's forty minutes finally over, lucky them, unlucky them, no way to know which from here

I keep replaying the doctor's face from the ultrasound room, the small pause before she said we'll need to run a few more tests, that pause, that specific quarter-second pause that I have now rebuilt in my mind maybe six hundred times, was it worry or was it just the pause of someone choosing words carefully, doctors choose words carefully for everyone, that doesn't mean anything, I keep telling myself that doesn't mean anything

The plastic fish keep bobbing. Forty-three minutes now. I think about texting my sister just to have something to do with my hands but what would I even say, still waiting, still nothing, still counting fish that aren't real, and isn't that the whole truth of it, waiting rooms don't actually make you wait better they just give you a place to do it in, a chair, a clock, some fish, some version of company, and none of it changes the actual number on the actual clock which keeps moving whether I watch it or don't

Circle the Correct Answer

1. Where does this piece take place?

Answer: a) A waiting room

2. What is the narrator specifically waiting for?

Answer: a) News following medical tests after an ultrasound

3. What does the narrator repeatedly replay in their mind?

Answer: b) A specific pause in the doctor's face before saying more tests were needed

4. According to the narrator's final reflection, what do waiting rooms actually do?

Answer: b) They give you a place to wait, without actually making the waiting itself easier

True or False

5. The narrator's phone has received a new message during the passage.

Answer: False

6. The fish in the tank are described as real, living fish.

Answer: False

7. A door opening down the hallway turns out to be for the narrator.

Answer: False

Fill in the Blank

8. The narrator says Mom always tells them to _____, like it's a solution.

Answer: breathe

9. The narrator has rebuilt the doctor's pause in their mind maybe six hundred _____.

Answer: times

Think and Explain

10. This piece is written in stream of consciousness, a technique that imitates the flow of a character's unfiltered thoughts, often using minimal punctuation and looping, associative structure instead of clear, orderly sentences. Identify one specific passage where this technique is especially noticeable, and explain how the sentence structure itself reflects the narrator's mental state.

Sample answer: Accept reasonable answers identifying a run-on, comma-spliced passage such as the opening lines about the clock and fish tank, or the final paragraph's long unbroken sentence, explaining that the lack of clear sentence boundaries and looping structure mimics anxious, associative thinking that doesn't pause or organize itself neatly, mirroring the narrator's inability to settle

their mind while waiting.

11. Stream of consciousness writing often withholds clear resolution, and this piece ends without revealing what the medical news actually is. Why might the author choose to end the piece this way, and what effect does that lack of resolution have on the reader?

Sample answer: Accept reasonable answers noting that withholding the outcome keeps the reader inside the narrator's own uncertainty rather than resolving it for them, which mirrors real anxious waiting more honestly than a tidy resolution would, and creates a lingering unease in the reader that reflects the narrator's own unresolved emotional state.