



Reading Comprehension Worksheet

Grade 7

Answer Key

The Vanishing Painting

The painting had hung in the school's front hallway for as long as anyone could remember: a faded watercolor of the original schoolhouse, donated decades ago by a former student who had gone on to become a somewhat famous artist. So when Priya walked past the display case Monday morning and saw only an empty frame, she nearly dropped her backpack.

She reported it immediately to the front office, and within an hour, half the school had heard some version of the story. Principal Alvarez called it theft and mentioned reviewing hallway camera footage, but the school's cameras, it turned out, had been malfunctioning for exactly the three days over the weekend when the painting disappeared. Priya found this timing suspicious, and she was not alone. Her friend Marcus agreed to help her investigate, mostly because he had spent the entire weekend at a robotics competition and had a solid alibi to prove it.

Their first real clue came from the janitor, Mr. Kowalski, who mentioned offhand that he had seen the art teacher, Ms. Delgado, in the building unusually late on Friday evening, well after her normal hours. Priya and Marcus exchanged a look. Ms. Delgado had been vocal for months about the painting needing professional restoration, since its colors had faded badly and one corner had begun to crack. The school board had repeatedly denied her funding requests.

When they finally worked up the nerve to ask Ms. Delgado directly, she did not deny being in the building late that Friday. Instead, she opened a supply closet in the art room, revealing the painting, carefully wrapped in acid-free paper and laid flat on a table. "I couldn't watch it fall apart any longer," she admitted. "I'm having it restored myself, on my own budget, and I planned to hang it back up, better than ever, before anyone noticed. I

suppose I should have asked permission first." Priya and Marcus looked at each other, part relieved, part unsure whether they had just solved a mystery or accidentally uncovered someone's secretly generous, if slightly unauthorized, good deed.

Circle the Correct Answer

1. What does Priya discover Monday morning?

Answer: b) The painting is missing, leaving an empty frame

2. Why couldn't the hallway camera footage help solve the mystery?

Answer: a) The cameras had been malfunctioning during the weekend the painting disappeared

3. What clue does Mr. Kowalski provide?

Answer: b) He saw Ms. Delgado in the building unusually late on Friday

4. Why did Ms. Delgado take the painting?

Answer: b) She was having it restored herself after the school denied funding for repairs

True or False

5. Marcus had an alibi because he was at a robotics competition all weekend.

Answer: True

6. The school board had approved Ms. Delgado's funding requests for restoration.

Answer: False

7. Ms. Delgado denies being in the building late on Friday.

Answer: False

Fill in the Blank

8. Ms. Delgado said she couldn't watch the painting fall _____ any longer.

Answer: apart

9. The painting was found carefully wrapped in _____ paper.

Answer: acid-free

Think and Explain

10. This mystery includes several clues before the resolution: the malfunctioning cameras, Ms. Delgado's late-night visit, and her history of requesting restoration funding. Explain how these clues work together to build toward the story's resolution, and identify which clue you think was most significant.

Sample answer: Accept reasonable answers tracing how each clue narrows the investigation, the broken cameras create suspicious timing, the late-night sighting

connects a specific person to that timing, and the funding history provides a motive, with students offering a reasoned choice for which clue mattered most and why.

11. The story ends with the characters feeling 'part relieved, part unsure whether they had just solved a mystery or accidentally uncovered someone's secretly generous, if slightly unauthorized, good deed.' What does this ending suggest about how mysteries do not always have a simple 'good guy versus bad guy' resolution?

Sample answer: Accept reasonable answers noting that this ending complicates a typical mystery resolution by revealing the 'culprit's' motive was caring and well-intentioned rather than malicious, suggesting that real situations, and satisfying mystery endings, are often morally more complicated than a simple theft-and-punishment structure.