



Reading Comprehension Worksheet

Grade 9

Answer Key

The Interview

Characters: Mr. Fenwick, Devon

Setting: A small, cluttered back office at Fenwick's Hardware, a store that has just quietly signed papers to close within the month, though this has not been announced publicly. MR. FENWICK, the owner, interviews DEVON, a nervous seventeen-year-old applying for a summer position. The audience, unlike Devon, has just seen the closing papers on Fenwick's desk.

MR. FENWICK:

So, Devon, tell me why you want to work here this summer.

DEVON:

Honestly, sir, I've been saving up for a car, and I figured a steady summer job would really help. I was hoping this could turn into something long-term, maybe even after school starts back up.

FENWICK shifts uncomfortably and glances at a drawer where the papers are hidden.

MR. FENWICK:

Long-term. Right. Well, summer positions here can be... unpredictable. Retail is a strange business these days.

DEVON:

I understand things change, but I'm a hard worker. My last boss said I was the most reliable person on his whole crew.

FENWICK smiles, but it doesn't quite reach his eyes.

MR. FENWICK:

That's good to hear. Reliability matters. Though I'll say, if I were your age, I might think carefully about where I put my long-term hopes. Businesses like mine, we're at the mercy of a lot of things outside our control.

DEVON:

Sure, but every job has some risk, right? I'd still love the chance to prove myself here.

FENWICK pauses for a long moment, staring at the drawer.

MR. FENWICK:

You remind me of myself at your age. Eager. Certain the ground under your feet would always hold.

DEVON:

Is... everything okay, Mr. Fenwick? You seem a little distracted.

MR. FENWICK:

Fine, fine. Just thinking about the future. Tell you what, Devon. Come back Monday. We'll get you started, and we'll figure out the rest as it comes.

DEVON smiles broadly and shakes Fenwick's hand, unaware of what waits in the drawer beside them.

DEVON:

Thank you so much, Mr. Fenwick. You won't regret this. I'll see you Monday!

Circle the Correct Answer

1. What does the audience know at the start of the scene that Devon does not?

Answer: a) That the store has just signed papers to close within the month

2. Why does Devon want the job, according to the dialogue?

Answer: a) To save up for a car and possibly find long-term work

3. How does Fenwick behave differently from what he is actually thinking?

Answer: a) He speaks vaguely about uncertainty while avoiding telling Devon the store is closing

4. How does the scene end?

Answer: b) Fenwick hires Devon to start Monday, without revealing the closure

True or False

5. Devon knows about the store's closing papers from the beginning of the scene.

Answer: False

6. Fenwick directly tells Devon the store is closing.

Answer: False

7. The audience has more information than Devon throughout the scene.

Answer: True

Fill in the Blank

8. Fenwick says retail is a _____ business these days.

Answer: strange

9. Fenwick says Devon reminds him of himself, eager and certain the _____ under his feet would always hold.

Answer: ground

Think and Explain

10. This scene relies on dramatic irony, when the audience knows something a character does not. Explain how this dramatic irony changes the way a reader or viewer experiences Fenwick's vague, hesitant lines, compared to how Devon experiences them.

Sample answer: Accept reasonable answers noting that a reader aware of the closing papers understands Fenwick's vague warnings about 'unpredictable' retail and 'long-term hopes' as coded, guilty hints at the truth, creating tension and sympathy, while Devon hears the same lines as generic caution or small talk, missing their real significance entirely.

11. What does Fenwick's dialogue reveal about his internal conflict, even though he never states his feelings directly? Use specific lines as evidence.

Sample answer: Accept reasonable answers noting that Fenwick's discomfort, evasiveness, and nostalgic aside about being Devon's age reveal guilt and internal conflict between honesty and self-interest (or avoidance), supported by lines such as glancing at the drawer, his hesitant phrasing about 'unpredictable' retail, and ultimately choosing to hire Devon anyway rather than telling him the truth.