



Reading Comprehension Worksheet

Grade 9

Name: _____

Date: _____

The Clockwork Challenge

Maya Torres did not believe in wasting time. She listened to podcasts at double speed, read the last page of every novel first, and had once timed her morning routine down to eleven minutes flat. Her grandfather, who repaired antique clocks in a cramped shop on Elm Street, found this both impressive and a little worrying.

"Some things only work if you let them take their time," he told her one afternoon, carefully easing a tiny gear into place. Maya rolled her eyes. She was too busy studying the flyer in her hand. The city's first Clockwork Challenge, a puzzle race through downtown, would take place Saturday. The prize was five hundred dollars.

"I might enter that myself," her grandfather said, smiling. Maya laughed. He walked so slowly that she usually finished her errands before he found his keys.

On Saturday morning, two hundred contestants crowded the town square. Each received an envelope with a single page of instructions in tiny print. Maya skimmed the first line, which named the library as the first stop, then took off running before most people had finished reading. Behind her, she noticed her grandfather settling onto a bench beside the old clock tower with a cup of coffee and his reading glasses.

Maya flew through the course. She cracked a riddle at the library in four minutes, decoded a cipher at the bakery in six, and sprinted past puzzled contestants at the museum. By 11:50, she had collected every clue but one. The final card read: *The answer has been in front of you since the start.*

Confused, she pulled out the original instructions and finally read the whole page. At the very bottom, in the smallest print, was a line she had skipped: *Before you leave the square, wait at the clock tower until it chimes noon. Listen carefully.*

Maya ran. Her lungs burned as she raced back across downtown, but when she reached the square, the bells had already gone silent. A small crowd had gathered

around the bench beside the tower. In the middle stood her grandfather, holding an oversized check for five hundred dollars.

"Twelve chimes," he explained to a reporter. "But the tenth one was out of tune. That was the code." He caught Maya's eye and winked. "I just had to sit still long enough to hear it."

Part A: Multiple Choice

Circle the best answer.

1. Which detail best shows Maya's attitude toward time at the start of the story?
 - a) She repairs clocks with her grandfather.
 - b) She listens to podcasts at double speed and times her morning routine.
 - c) She reads every instruction carefully.
 - d) She enjoys sitting in the town square.
2. Why did Maya miss the important instruction?
 - a) The instructions were written in code.
 - b) Someone took her envelope.
 - c) She only skimmed the first line before running off.
 - d) Her grandfather hid the page from her.
3. What was the code that won the challenge?
 - a) The tenth chime of the clock tower was out of tune.
 - b) A riddle hidden in the library
 - c) A cipher found at the bakery
 - d) A number painted on the museum wall
4. Why did Maya fail to solve the final clue in time?
 - a) She gave up and went home.
 - b) She reached the clock tower after it had already chimed noon.
 - c) She could not find the clock tower.
 - d) Her grandfather told her the wrong answer.

Part B: True or False

Write T for true or F for false.

5. Maya's grandfather said he might enter the Clockwork Challenge. _____
6. Maya read all of the instructions before leaving the square. _____
7. Maya's grandfather won the five hundred dollar prize. _____

Part C: Irony and Foreshadowing

Foreshadowing is a hint about what will happen later in a story. Situational irony happens when the outcome is the opposite of what the characters or readers expect.

8. Find one example of **foreshadowing** in the story. What does it hint at?

9. Explain the **situational irony** at the end of the story.

Part D: Think and Explain

10. The author does not reveal the skipped instruction until the end of the story. Why do you think the author made this choice? What theme does the story's ending suggest?
