

Threads & Themes Grade 6, Unit 1

Investigation 1 Summative Assessment

Name: _____ Date: _____ Class: _____

PASSAGE 1

“Still Water”

(1) By the fifth day at Mémère’s house, Celine had run out of things to do. She had opened every kitchen drawer, traced the hallway photographs with her eyes until she had memorized their order, and sat on the back porch counting the boats tied up along the bayou. She had also discovered, early on, that the cell service disappeared past the back steps (not weakened, just up and gone), which meant the only thing her phone was good for now was the time. So when her grandmother appeared in the doorway at seven o’clock, still in her garden clothes and smelling of basil and turned soil, and said simply, “Come sit with me,” Celine tucked her phone away and followed.

(2) The dock behind Mémère’s house ran out over the water on weathered gray pilings, a little soft underfoot near the middle. The bayou was wide and slow, dark as strong tea, and the surface caught the last of the evening light the way still things do. Cypress trees crowded the far bank, their roots rising from the water in tangled rows, and somewhere deeper in the reeds the bullfrogs had begun their long, unhurried refrain. Mémère settled into her chair at the end of the dock without looking behind herself to confirm it was there. She always knew where her things were.

(3) The light shifted. Celine sat beside her grandmother and tried to think of something worth saying. She pulled her knees to her chest and watched a great blue heron move along the far bank in slow, deliberate steps. She thought about the group chat she couldn’t read. She thought about the show she was three episodes behind on, about Houston, about the fact that this was supposed to feel like a vacation. The bayou lay between her and her life back home. Patient and unmoving, the bayou was a wide and unhurried thing. It had been here long before she arrived and would be here long after she left.

(4) Her grandmother watched the water silently with her hands folded in her lap. This was the way she did most things—without hurry, without any sign she wished she were somewhere else. A pair of egrets lifted from the rushes across the bayou and rose slowly against the bruised evening sky, like two letters carried off by the wind. Celine watched them until they crossed the tree line and disappeared.

(5) “Mémère,” she said. “What are we doing out here?”

(6) Her grandmother glanced over at her, then back at the water. “Watching,” she said.

(7) “Watching what?”

(8) Mémère’s mouth turned up at the corners. Her eyes sparkled. “Does it have to be something in particular?”

(9) Celine almost said yes. She almost said she could name ten better ways to use the hour before dinner. But the way her grandmother asked, not teasing, not impatient, just genuinely curious about the answer, held her back. She looked where Mémère was looking: at the long, low surface of the bayou where the light had spread itself thin and gold.

(10) After a while, Mémère spoke again. “Your mother used to ask me that exact same question,” she said. Her voice was the same temperature as the air. It was warm, without urgency. “Every summer she came here. And then somewhere in the second week, she would stop asking.”

(11) Celine held that for a moment. She thought about her mother standing at the kitchen window back home in Houston, looking out at the neighbor’s fence for reasons Celine had never been able to figure out. She had always assumed her mother was just tired. She was not sure now that was all it was.

(12) She did not say anything else. She looked at the bayou, and for the first time since she had arrived, she was not counting the minutes. The water held the last light in slow, dark ribbons, and Celine held still inside it. When Mémère finally rose to go inside, Celine stayed on her own for another moment—not because she had decided to, but because something in her had not finished yet.

ITEMS — PASSAGE 1

Item 1

Sort each quote from the passage into the correct category.

Category 1: Simile

Category 2: Metaphor

- A) “dark as strong tea”
- B) “the bayou was a wide and unhurried thing”
- C) “like two letters carried off by the wind”
- D) “the bayou lay between her and her life back home”

Item 2

Read this sentence from “Still Water.”

She had also discovered, early on, that the cell service disappeared past the back steps (not weakened, just up and gone), which meant the only thing her phone was good for now was the time.

How do the words “disappeared” and “just up and gone” affect the meaning of the passage?

- A) They use imagery to describe the exact location of the back steps and help the reader visualize the setting.
- B) They use imagery to help the reader clearly picture the lack of cell signal once Celine stepped away from the house.

- C) They use personification to show the cell service is physically moving away from the house, explaining how signals travel in rural areas.
- D) They use personification to suggest the cell service leaves suddenly and completely, emphasizing Celine's disconnection from her usual life.

Item 3

Select the TWO details from paragraphs 6 through 9 that BEST show how Celine's thinking is beginning to change.

- A) "Watching what?"
- B) "Does it have to be something in particular?"
- C) "Mémère's mouth turned up at the corners. Her eyes sparkled."
- E) "She almost said she could name ten better ways to use the hour before dinner."
- D) "She looked where Mémère was looking: at the long, low surface of the bayou where the light had spread itself thin and gold."

Item 4

What does Celine realize about her mother as a result of the conversation with Mémère?

- A) She realizes that her mother may have appreciated quiet moments and reflection more than she had thought.
- B) She realizes that her mother preferred spending time at Mémère's house rather than at home in Houston.
- C) She realizes that her mother spent more time watching the bayou each summer during her visits than Mémère had.
- D) She realizes that her mother was bored when she stood at the window at home rather than tired as she had thought.

Item 5

How does Celine's point of view change from the beginning to the end of "Still Water"?

- A) She begins feeling connected to the bayou and ends feeling out of place in her grandmother's world.
- B) She begins happy to visit her grandmother and ends wishing she were back in Houston with her mother.
- C) She begins restless and disconnected from the bayou and ends more patient and willing to sit with the experience.
- D) She begins focused on using her phone and ends with a greater appreciation for the natural beauty of the bayou.

Item 6

Which statement BEST summarizes "Still Water"?

- A) Mémère worries that Celine will never slow down and decides to tell her a story about her mother to help her change.
- B) Celine spends time with her grandmother on the dock and starts to understand why her mother enjoyed visiting each summer.

- C) Mémère encourages Celine to slow down and notice the quiet beauty of the bayou, leading Celine to begin appreciating her surroundings.
- D) Celine reluctantly joins her grandmother on the dock, resists sitting still, and gradually becomes present after her grandmother shares a memory about her mother.

Item 7

What theme does “Still Water” MOST clearly develop?

- A) Slowing down and paying attention to the present can lead to deeper understanding.
- B) Family traditions matter most when people are far from home and the world they know.
- C) Nature teaches patience to those who are willing to spend time observing it carefully and consistently.
- D) Older people have more wisdom than younger people, and listening to them helps young people grow up faster.

Item 8

Read these sentences from “Still Water.”

“Your mother used to ask me that exact same question . . . Every summer she came here. And then somewhere in the second week, she would stop asking.”

To whom does she refer in this sentence?

- A) Celine, because she is the main character of the passage
- B) Celine’s mother, because Mémère is speaking about her daughter’s childhood visits
- C) Mémère, because she is the one speaking in this paragraph
- D) Mémère’s mother, who used to visit the bayou before Celine was born

PASSAGE 2

“Saturday at Ray’s”

(1) The shop was busy when Justin walked in. His uncle Ray was finishing a cut at the first chair; another barber, Lorenzo, worked at the second. The television above the door was going, and somebody’s playlist drifted underneath it all—that old R&B that Ray always played on Saturdays because, he said, “Saturdays deserve something real.” The place smelled the way it always had: clippers, aftershave, some coffee burning on a hotplate. Justin knew it as the particular warmth of somewhere people came to settle in for a while. He dropped into a waiting chair near the window and took out his phone. There was nothing on it he actually wanted to see, but it had become habit. Looking at it was easier than looking at anything else.

(2) Ray caught his eye in the mirror. “Nephew.” That was all—just the word, the way Ray said most things, as if it were the opening of a sentence he hadn’t yet decided to complete—and Justin lifted his chin in acknowledgment before dropping his eyes back to his phone.

(3) The man in Ray’s chair was Mr. Edmonds, someone Justin had known his whole life without really knowing him, except that he came every other Saturday and always asked for the same thing. Mr. Edmonds was asking about Ray’s son now, a boy Justin’s age who went to a different

school. Ray answered without looking up from his clippers. “He’s doing good. Works hard. Gets in his own way sometimes, but that’s just being thirteen.”

(4) Mr. Edmonds laughed low. “Ain’t that the truth.”

(5) “Every last one of them,” Ray said, chuckling. “Can’t tell ’em nothing they don’t already know.”

(6) Justin looked out the window at the street. Two older men were bent over the folding chess table that appeared on the corner every Saturday without anyone seeming to set it up or take it down. A woman jogged past with a dog that stopped to investigate every crack in the sidewalk, unbothered by her impatience. A delivery truck idled at the curb and swallowed the rest of the view while the driver consulted his route sheet. The ordinary business of a Saturday on this block, the same as it was every week. Justin observed without registering any of it. He had been watching things without seeing them for days now, ever since Darius had said what he said at lunch, and Justin had acted like it didn’t bother him when it did.

(7) Mr. Edmonds climbed down from the chair, paid, and took his time buttoning his jacket. When the door finally swung shut behind him, Ray swept the floor once and turned the chair toward Justin. “You up.”

(8) Justin sat down. Ray snapped the cape out and settled it around him. In the mirror, Justin’s face looked like a face waiting for something to be over.

(9) “Same?” Ray said.

(10) “Yeah.”

(11) Ray picked up his clippers and worked in concentrated silence. The line along Justin’s temple came in clean and straight. Then Ray said, without making it a thing: “You want to tell me what’s going on, or you want me to act like I don’t see it?”

(12) Justin shrugged. “Nothing’s going on.”

(13) “All right,” Ray said. He kept working. Another full minute passed.

(14) “You know what I notice about people who say nothing’s wrong? They always got real specific nothing’s.”

(15) Justin didn’t answer. He sat with that for the rest of the cut—the specific nothing that had a name, that wore Darius’s face, that had been taking up space in his chest for three days like when he tried to fit something extra in his backpack and it wouldn’t zip up. When he stepped down from the chair and zipped his jacket, he stopped on the sidewalk outside and stood still for a moment in the ordinary noise of the street. He put his phone in his pocket without opening it. Then he turned right back into the barbershop—not because he needed Uncle Ray’s advice, but because going without it was worse than going it alone.

ITEMS — PASSAGE 2

Which detail from paragraphs 1 and 2 BEST shows that Justin is trying to avoid paying attention to what is happening around him?

- A) Justin drops into a waiting chair near the window.
- B) Justin takes out his phone even though there was nothing to see.
- C) Justin notices the familiar sounds and smells.
- D) Justin lifts his chin to acknowledge Ray before looking away again.

Item 10

How does the conversation between Ray and Mr. Edmonds in paragraphs 3 through 5 contribute to the plot of the story?

- A) It shows that Ray does not notice Justin has arrived, which creates tension that causes Justin to not want to talk to Ray.
- B) It introduces Ray's understanding of thirteen-year-olds before he addresses Justin directly, preparing the reader for how Ray will approach him.
- C) It reveals that Ray's son and Justin share the same problem, so the reader understands Ray already knows what to do.
- D) It establishes that the barbershop is a social gathering place, which makes Justin think of his conversation with Darius.

Item 11

Read this passage from "Saturday at Ray's."

Mr. Edmonds laughed low. "Ain't that the truth."

"Every last one of them," Ray said, chuckling. "Can't tell 'em nothing they don't already know."

What does the use of the word 'em reveal about the way Ray speaks in the barbershop?

- A) Ray uses informal language because he wants to correct the way Mr. Edmonds speaks.
- B) Ray changes the way he speaks depending on how much he likes the person he's speaking with.
- C) Ray uses informal language that fits the comfortable, familiar atmosphere of the barbershop.
- D) Ray changes the way he speaks depending on whether he is talking to adults or to young people.

Item 12

Read this sentence from "Saturday at Ray's."

Justin observed without registering any of it.

What is the relationship between the words observed and registering in this sentence?

- A) They suggest Justin is too far from the window to see the activity on the street clearly.
- B) They describe two actions Justin performs at the same time as he looks out at the street.
- C) They show that Justin is watching the street carefully in order to understand what he sees.
- D) They show that Justin is seeing the street with his eyes but not processing it with his mind.

Item 13

How does the author convey Ray’s point of view toward Justin in paragraphs 11 through 14?

- A) By having Ray stop cutting Justin’s hair, showing that he is frustrated with Justin for not answering his question honestly the first time
- B) By having Ray ask Justin a direct question, showing that Ray believes Justin should talk about his problems with adults
- C) By having Ray keep working quietly after Justin denies anything is wrong, showing that Ray is patient and observant with Justin
- D) By having Ray make a general comment about people, showing he believes Justin’s problem is similar to his son’s

Item 14

Read this sentence from “Saturday at Ray’s.”

He sat with that for the rest of the cut—the specific nothing that had a name, that wore Darius’s face, that had been taking up space in his chest for three days like when he tried to fit something extra in his backpack and it wouldn’t zip up.

What does the underlined phrase suggest about how Justin feels?

- A) Justin feels relieved because he has finally found a way to explain what is bothering him.
- B) Justin feels weighed down by something he cannot ignore or push aside, no matter what he tries.
- C) Justin feels confused because he cannot figure out why Darius’s words upset him so much.
- D) Justin feels regret because he knows he said the wrong thing to Darius and cannot take it back.

Item 15

What does Justin’s decision to turn back into the barbershop at the end of paragraph 15 MOST reveal about his character?

- A) He would rather reach out for help than face his problem by himself.
- B) He believes Ray’s advice will solve his problem with Darius once and for all.
- C) He feels sad about the conversation with Darius and wants to distract himself.
- D) He feels uncomfortable leaving without saying anything and doesn’t want to be rude.

SPELLING

Item 16

Write the spelling word you heard:

Item 17

Write the spelling word you heard:

Item 18

Write the spelling word you heard:

Item 19

Write the spelling word you heard:

Item 20

Write the spelling word you heard:
