

Describing Characters, Settings, and Events in Depth

Name: _____

Date: _____

Score: _____ / 10



Quick Review

Authors show characters through what they say, think, and do. Use the EXACT words and actions in the story — not just your own guess — to describe a character, place, or event.

PART 1 — READ

Read the passage. Then answer the questions.

The Race at Cedar Hill

Jonas had trained for the Cedar Hill cross-country race for six months. He woke before sunrise every Saturday to run up the steep dirt road behind his grandfather's farm. He kept a small notebook of his times and circled the days he ran his fastest.

His cousin Renata, who lived in the city, had only started running in April. She came to the farm for the summer with sneakers that were a size too big. Renata laughed when Jonas showed her his notebook. "Numbers don't make you run faster," she said.

On race day, the air smelled of cut grass and rain. Forty kids lined up at the start. Jonas's heart pounded so loud he was sure Renata could hear it next to him. The whistle blew. For the first mile, Jonas led the pack. He could see the finish flag at the top of the last hill. Then his foot caught on a root. He fell hard, scraping both palms.

Renata was three steps behind him. She slowed, helped him up, and they finished the last quarter mile side by side. Jonas came in eleventh. Renata came in twelfth. That night, Jonas added a new circle to his notebook — not for a time, but for the word "together."

PART 2 — PRACTICE

Use the story to answer each question.

1. Which words BEST describe Jonas at the START of the story?
 - A. Confident and a little vain about his speed.
 - B. Disciplined and serious about his training.
 - C. Anxious and unprepared for the big race.
 - D. Cheerful and easygoing about every workout.



2. Which detail from the story shows that Jonas is NERVOUS on race day?
 - A. He keeps a small notebook of his running times.
 - B. He leads the pack for the entire first mile.
 - C. His heart pounds so loud he thinks Renata can hear it.
 - D. He wakes up before sunrise every Saturday morning.
3. What does Renata's comment, "Numbers don't make you run faster," tell the reader about her?
 - A. She is angry at Jonas for showing off his notebook.
 - B. She does not believe Jonas has trained as hard as he says.
 - C. She is teasing because she ran better times back in the city.
 - D. She has a different idea than Jonas about how to get better at running.
4. Which sentence shows the SETTING at the start of race day?
 - A. "The air smelled of cut grass and rain."
 - B. "Forty kids lined up at the start."
 - C. "His foot caught on a root."
 - D. "He could see the finish flag at the top of the last hill."
5. What does Renata DO that BEST shows what kind of person she is?
 - A. She laughs at Jonas's training notebook on the first day she sees it.
 - B. She slows down during the race to help Jonas up after he falls.
 - C. She wears sneakers that are a size too big to the farm.
 - D. She visits her uncle's farm for the entire summer.
6. How does Jonas CHANGE from the beginning of the story to the end? Use one detail from the START and one detail from the END.

7. Which event causes Jonas to fall?
 - A. He becomes too tired from leading the pack.
 - B. Another runner accidentally bumps into him from behind.
 - C. His foot catches on a tree root in the path.
 - D. The finish flag is set on a hill that is too steep to climb.
8. How does the FALL affect the ending of the story?
 - A. Jonas decides to stop running cross-country for good.
 - B. Renata wins the race because of Jonas's accident.
 - C. Jonas hides his notebook from his grandfather forever.
 - D. Renata helps Jonas up, they finish side by side, and Jonas circles a new kind of word in his notebook.



9. Which detail BEST shows that Jonas's grandfather's farm is in the COUNTRY, not the city?
- A. Jonas runs up the steep dirt road behind the farm.
 - B. Jonas keeps a small notebook of his running times.
 - C. Forty kids line up at the start of the race.
 - D. Jonas wakes up before sunrise every Saturday morning.
10. Which sentence BEST describes the EVENT at the END of the story?
- A. Jonas wins first place and breaks his own time record.
 - B. Jonas finishes beside Renata and writes a new kind of word in his notebook.
 - C. Jonas refuses Renata's help and limps across the finish alone.
 - D. Renata wins the race while Jonas drops out and walks home.



Answer Keys

- 1 A B C D
- 2 A B C D
- 3 A B C D
- 4 A B C D
- 5 A B C D


- 6
- 7 A B C D
- 8 A B C D
- 9 A B C D
- 10 A B C D

Explanations

1. B	Six months of training, pre-sunrise Saturdays, and a notebook of times all point to discipline. A is close but "vain" goes too far — he records times privately, doesn't brag; C contradicts six months of work; D ignores how SERIOUSLY he treats every detail.
2. C	A loud, pounding heart is a clear physical sign of nerves. A and D show DISCIPLINE, not nerves; B shows confidence on the course, not anxiety before it.
3. D	Her line shows a CONTRAST in attitude — feel vs. measure. A reads anger where the text only shows a laugh; B questions Jonas's effort, but she does not deny he trains; C invents city-times the text never mentions.
4. A	Smells of cut grass and rain describe the PLACE and TIME — that is setting. B describes the characters there; C is a plot event; D is an action detail mid-race, not the scene's setup.
5. B	Stopping in the middle of a race to help a fallen runner is a strong action showing kindness — more than her sharp words. A is a moment of teasing, not her whole character; C is an outfit detail; D is biography, not character.
6.	Answer: Strong answers contrast his early focus on times/numbers with his end-of-story focus on running together: e.g., "At the start, he circled the days he ran his fastest — he cared most about times. At the end, he circled the word 'together' — he learned that finishing with someone matters more than the clock." Also acceptable: he begins keeping numbers to himself and ends sharing the race; he begins disciplined and proud and ends humbled. NOT acceptable: an answer that only describes one part (just the beginning OR just the end); an answer with no details from the text; or an answer that says he did not change. Look at what Jonas circled in his notebook before the race and after.
7. C	Paragraph 3 says directly: "Then his foot caught on a root." A is plausible but the text gives a different cause; B invents a runner; D blames the course design where the text blames a single root.
8. D	Cause-and-effect across the whole story: fall → help → side-by-side finish → new word "together." A is the opposite of what the ending shows; B is wrong (she comes in twelfth); C invents an event the story never describes.
9. A	A steep dirt road behind a farm is clearly rural. B, C, and D could happen in any setting — city or country.
10. B	Paragraph 4: Renata helps him, they finish side by side, and his notebook entry shows what he learned. A is wrong (eleventh place, not first); C is the opposite of what he does; D is wrong (he finishes the race).



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