

## Story elements: Characters, setting & plot

### Grade 4 Reading Worksheet

**Story elements** are the main parts of a story.

They include the characters, setting, events, problem and solution.

### Read the story below and then answer the story element questions.

This year is the second summer that Leah and Jamal have been at camp together. They don't go to the same school, so they were hoping they would be together again this summer. When they saw each other in the parking lot during drop off, they were very happy! Then, when they found out they were in the same group and had the same counselor for the whole summer, they were even more excited.

During the first week at camp, Leah and Jamal's group did all the "normal" camp things. They went hiking and looked for bugs, went canoeing in the lake and swam in the pool. They played kickball against the older kids, they did arts and crafts and they ate lots of ice cream. Then on Friday, right before the weekend, the counselors announced a brand new challenge for the summer!

They explained that pairs of campers would spend the next month building a cardboard boat that one camper could actually sit in and paddle across the shallow end of the pool! They would have unlimited cardboard and duct tape to create their boat... but only those two materials! The competition would take place in two parts: The first day would be a trial so that teams could see how their boat performs. The next day, one week later, would be the actual competition! In between the trial and the competition, students would have time to fix, change and update their boats.

Every afternoon, after swimming, Leah and Jamal worked on their boat. They made the bottom as sturdy as possible, the four walls as tall as possible and even made the front of the boat triangular so it could pass through the water more quickly. When the day of their trial arrived, they were excited to give it a try. They decided Leah would sit in the boat and paddle since she was a little lighter. When it was their turn, she changed into her bathing suit and grabbed her paddle. Jamal placed their boat near the side of the pool and Leah carefully climbed in. Before she could even paddle, the boat started sinking. After one paddle, Leah was neck-deep in the water. Leah and Jamal couldn't believe how badly their boat performed!



Thankfully, this wasn't the final competition. Everyone had one more week to make changes to their boats before the real event. Leah and Jamal needed to make some BIG modifications! After discussing what went well and not so well, Leah and Jamal agreed that the biggest change they needed to make was better water-proofing! It didn't matter how strong the sides were or how stylish the front of the boat was if it sank! So, all week long, the two friends covered every inch of their boat with duct tape, layer by layer by layer.

When the day of the competition arrived, Leah and Jamal were feeling more nervous than they were before. They didn't want to fail as quickly as they had last time! When their names were called, Jamal placed their boat in the water again and Leah slowly climbed in. As Leah carefully took a seat, the boat stayed afloat and didn't start sinking! Quickly, Leah began using all of her strength to paddle across the pool. Though the boat got a little soggy with each paddle, it held up! Leah was able to paddle to the other side. When she arrived, she was sitting in water... but she was still floating, and that's what mattered! Jamal came over, helped Leah out of the water and gave her a high five.

They then watched as other groups of campers raced across in their boats. Some did better than them and some did worse. Once everyone had competed, the judges took a few moments to speak among themselves. They then announced who came in first, second and third place based on how long it took each boat to cross the pool. Next, they announced awards for "Most Creative Boat Design" and "Best Paddler." Finally, they announced the winner of the "Most Improved" Award... and, to the surprise of Jamal and Leah, they won!



1. What is the setting (timing and place) of this story?

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2. Who are the main characters in this story?

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3. What is the story's problem?

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4. How is the problem solved?

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## Answers

1. What is the setting (timing and place) of this story?

This story takes place at summer camp.

2. Who are the main characters in this story?

Leah and Jamal

3. What is the story's problem?

Jamal and Leah have to design a boat made out of cardboard, but it sinks during the trials!

4. How is the problem solved?

Jamal and Leah try again and cover everything with layers of duct tape. They wind up winning the "Most Improved" award.