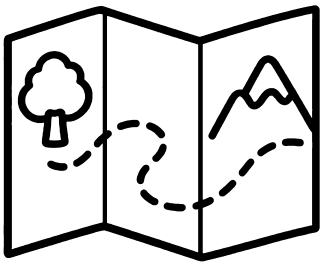
Name _____ Date _____

Two Ways Across the Lake

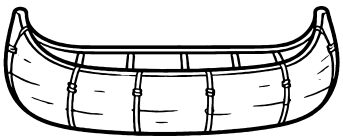
Read the story. It is told in three chapters.

Chapter 1: The Plan



The lake was as smooth as a sheet of glass on the morning Grandpa said the girls could take the old green canoe out on their own. Lily, who was ten and had never once in her life waited for anything, was already halfway down the dock before he had even finished his sentence. “Come on, Mei!” she shouted. “Let's go all the way to Eagle Island!”

Mei, who was twelve, did not run anywhere. Instead, she unfolded the creased map of the lake on the kitchen table and slowly traced the route to the island with her finger, measuring the distance against the scale in the corner, which showed it was nearly two miles. She checked the weather radio, which promised a calm morning and wind after lunch. Then she carefully packed two water bottles, four sandwiches, a rain jacket for each of them and the silver whistle that Grandpa always kept on a hook beside the kitchen door.



“You're taking forever,” Lily groaned from the dock, swinging her life jacket around by one strap.

“Put it on, and buckle it,” said Mei. “We'll go, but we're coming back before lunch. The wind picks up in the afternoon.”

Lily rolled her eyes dramatically but buckled the jacket, and Grandpa stood on the porch and watched them push off from the dock. He knew his two granddaughters very well. One of them would get them to the island, he thought, and the other one would get them home again, but he wasn't sure yet which would be which.

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Two Ways Across the Lake

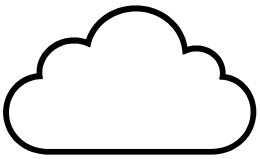
Read the story. It is told in three chapters.

Chapter 2: The Island



Eagle Island was even better than Lily had imagined. Tall pines leaned over a strip of pebbly beach, and the air smelled of sap and sun-warmed needles. Before Mei had even pulled the canoe safely onto the shore, Lily had disappeared into the trees.

"Mei! Come look!" Lily's voice rang out from somewhere above. Mei found her sister crouching on a rocky ledge, pointing at the top of a dead pine. Balanced in its branches was a nest so enormous that it looked like someone had piled up a whole cartload of sticks. A bald eagle sat beside it, white head gleaming.



For a long time, neither girl spoke, until Mei happened to glance at her watch and felt her stomach tighten. They had been on the island for more than an hour, far longer than she had planned. Out on the lake, the glassy water had begun to wrinkle into small, choppy waves, and a gray line of clouds was creeping over the far hills.

"Lily, we have to go. Now," she said.

"Five more minutes," Lily begged. "The eagle might fly!"

But Mei was already walking back toward the beach without a word, and something in her serious expression made Lily follow her.

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Name _____ Date _____

Two Ways Across the Lake

Read the story. It is told in three chapters.

Chapter 3: The Crossing Home



By the time they reached the middle of the lake, the wind was pushing hard against them, and waves slapped over the bow and splashed into their laps. The canoe rocked so wildly that Lily gripped the sides with both hands. All of the boldness she had shown that morning had drained away completely. “We're going to tip over!” she cried.

Mei's heart was pounding too, but she suddenly remembered the shape of the shoreline on the map she had studied at breakfast. “We won't cross the open water,” she said. “We'll turn and follow the shoreline. It's longer, but the trees block the wind.”

They turned toward the shore, and the waves grew a little smaller. But now the canoe needed steady, powerful strokes to keep moving against the wind, and Mei's arms were already burning.

“Lily,” she gasped, “I need you to paddle as hard as you can. You're stronger than I am.”

Lily looked at her sister in surprise, because Mei had never said anything like that before. Then she gritted her teeth, dug her paddle deep into the water and pulled hard. Stroke after stroke, she paddled while Mei steered, until at last the dock came into view. Grandpa was standing at the end of it, holding the rope.

That night, wrapped in blankets by the woodstove, Lily said, “You were right about the wind.”

“And you were right about the eagle,” said Mei. “I would have missed it.”

Grandpa smiled, because now he finally knew the answer to his question. It had taken both of his granddaughters to get to the island, and it had taken both of them to get home.

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Name _____ Date _____

How the Chapters Fit Together

Each chapter of a story builds on the one before it. Look back at all three.

1. What does Chapter 1 set up for the rest of the story? Name two things.

2. In Chapter 1, Grandpa thinks one sister will get them to the island and the other will get them home. How does this sentence prepare the reader for Chapters 2 and 3?

3. Which event in Chapter 2 causes the trouble in Chapter 3?

The air smells of sap and pine needles.

The girls stay on the island too long, and the wind rises.

Mei pulls the canoe onto the beach.

4. Why does the story end with Grandpa's thoughts instead of with the girls reaching the dock?

5. Why do you think the author split the story into three chapters? What does each chapter focus on?

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Compare and Contrast

Compare the sisters, the settings and the events. Use details from the story.

1. How are Mei and Lily different in Chapter 1? Give a detail about each.

2. In Chapter 3, how does Lily act differently than she did in Chapter 1? Why?

3. Which of these is true of BOTH sisters by the end of the story?

Both of them were afraid the whole time.

Each one helps the other, and each sees the other's strength.

Both of them want to stay on the island.

4. Compare the lake in Chapter 1 with the lake in Chapter 3.

5. Compare how each sister helps on the trip home.

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Compare Two Characters

Choose two characters from a story. Write what is true of each, and of both.

Character 1

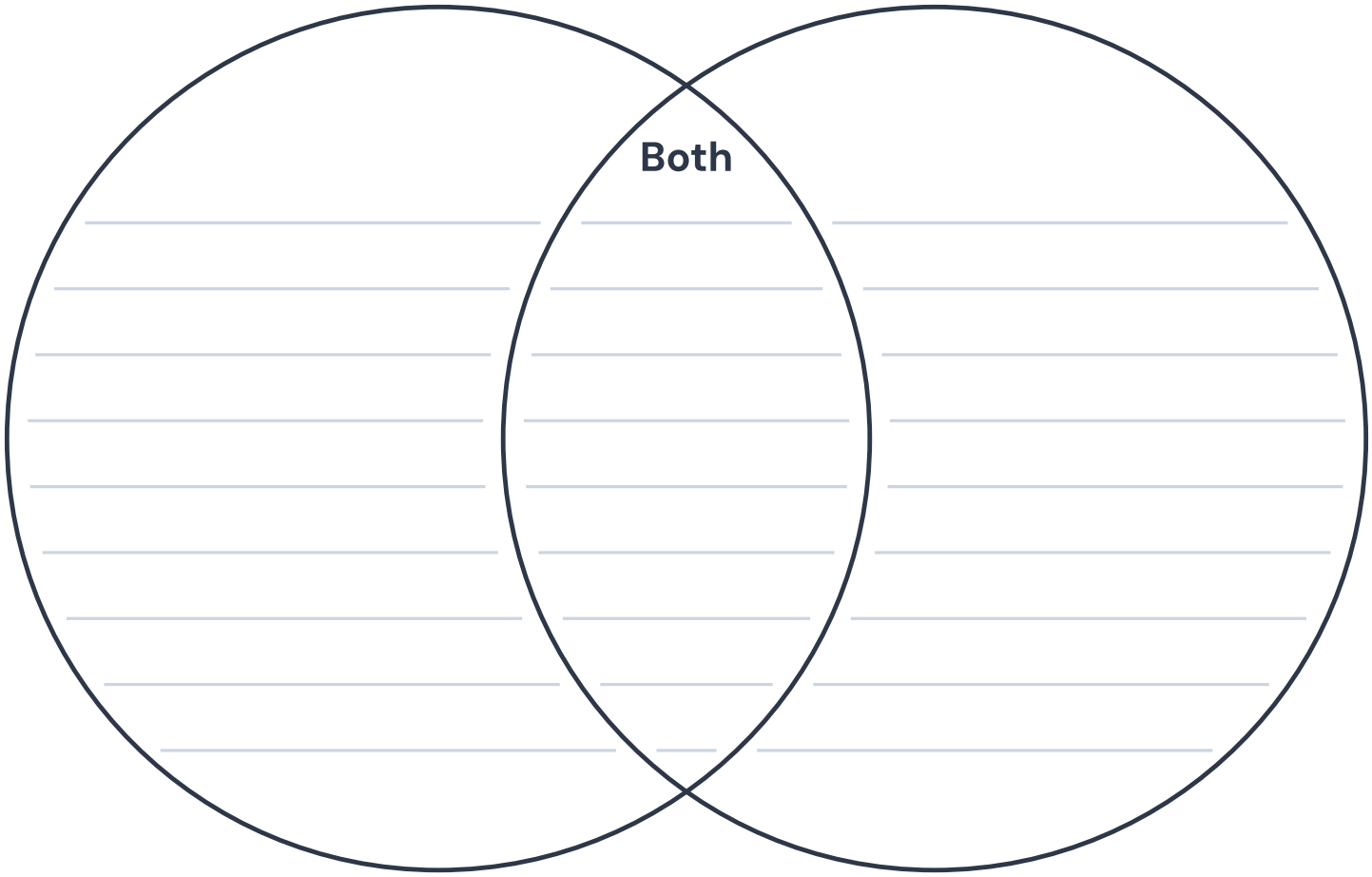
_____

name

Character 2

_____

name



How do the characters' differences matter to the story?

_____

_____

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How the Chapters Fit Together

Each chapter of a story builds on the one before it. Look back at all three.

1. What does Chapter 1 set up for the rest of the story? Name two things.

It shows that Lily is bold and Mei is careful, and it warns that the wind picks up after lunch.

2. In Chapter 1, Grandpa thinks one sister will get them to the island and the other will get them home. How does this sentence prepare the reader for Chapters 2 and 3?

It makes the reader wonder which sister will do which, and the later chapters answer it.

3. Which event in Chapter 2 causes the trouble in Chapter 3?

The air smells of sap and pine needles.

The girls stay on the island too long, and the wind rises.

Mei pulls the canoe onto the beach.

4. Why does the story end with Grandpa's thoughts instead of with the girls reaching the dock?

It connects back to his thought in Chapter 1 and shows the theme: it took both sisters, working together.

5. Why do you think the author split the story into three chapters? What does each chapter focus on?

Each chapter is one part of the trip: getting ready, the island, and the dangerous trip home. The breaks build suspense.

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Compare and Contrast

Compare the sisters, the settings and the events. Use details from the story.

1. How are Mei and Lily different in Chapter 1? Give a detail about each.

Lily is impatient and rushes to the dock. Mei is careful: she studies the map and checks the weather.

2. In Chapter 3, how does Lily act differently than she did in Chapter 1? Why?

She is scared instead of bold, because the waves are big and the canoe might tip.

3. Which of these is true of BOTH sisters by the end of the story?

Both of them were afraid the whole time.

Each one helps the other, and each sees the other's strength

Both of them want to stay on the island.

4. Compare the lake in Chapter 1 with the lake in Chapter 3.

In Chapter 1 it is smooth as glass. In Chapter 3 the wind makes waves that splash over the canoe.

5. Compare how each sister helps on the trip home.

Mei uses the map to choose the safer route by the shore and steers. Lily uses her strength to paddle.

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