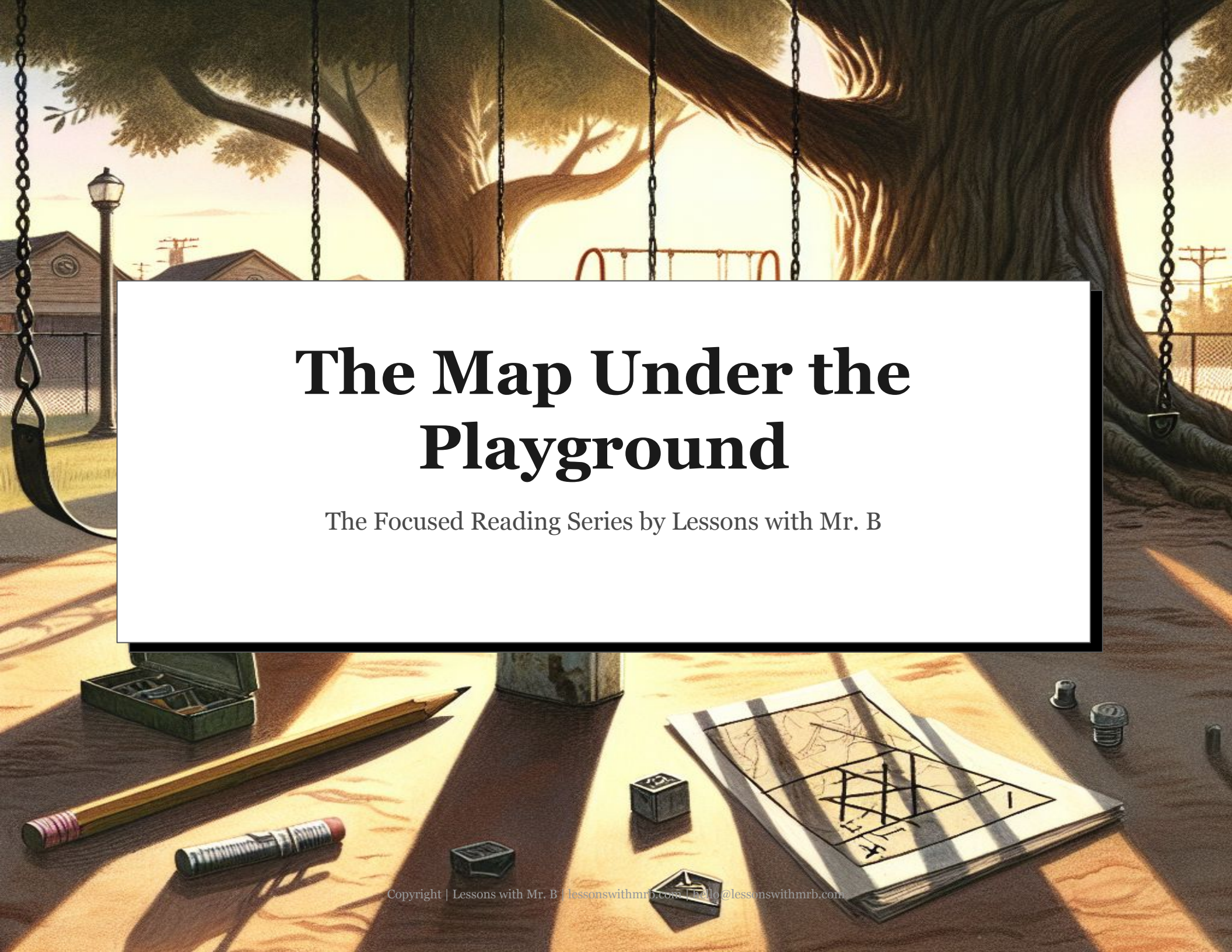




The Map Under the Playground

The Focused Reading Series by Lessons with Mr. B

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Instructor Guide

The Focused Reading Series

Band B (Grades 2-3)

Estimated time: 12-25 min

Standards Alignment

RL.2.1, RL.2.3, RL.2.10, RL.3.1, RL.3.3, RL.3.10, RF.2.4, RF.3.4, W.2.3, W.3.3, L.2.4, L.3.4

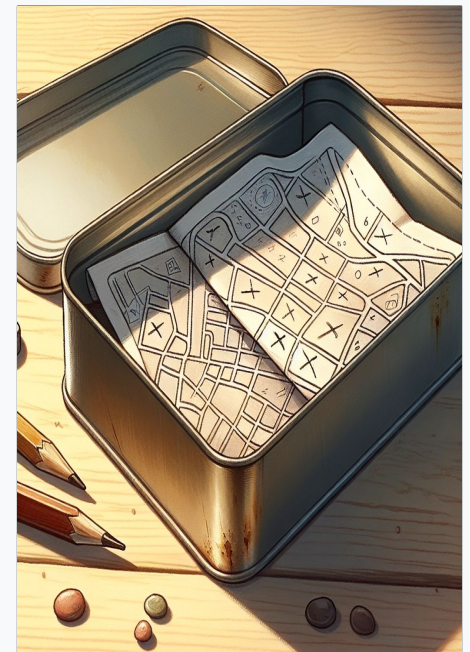
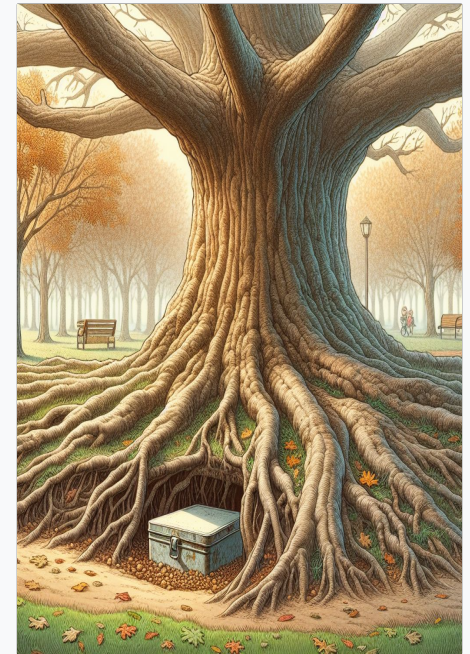
What This Builds

- Reading stamina and comprehension
- Evidence based thinking
- Structured short writing
- Vocabulary in context

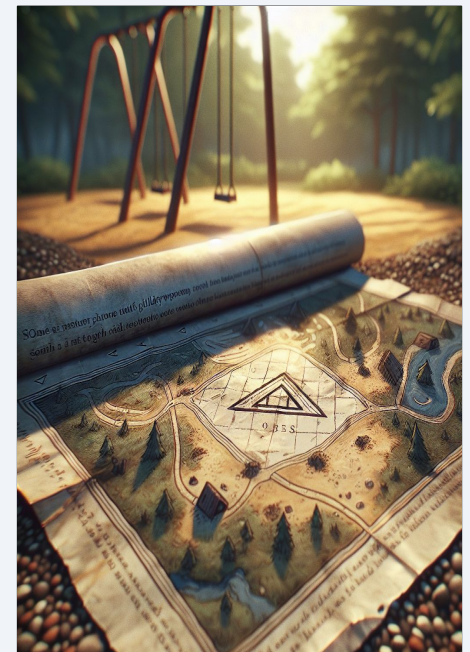
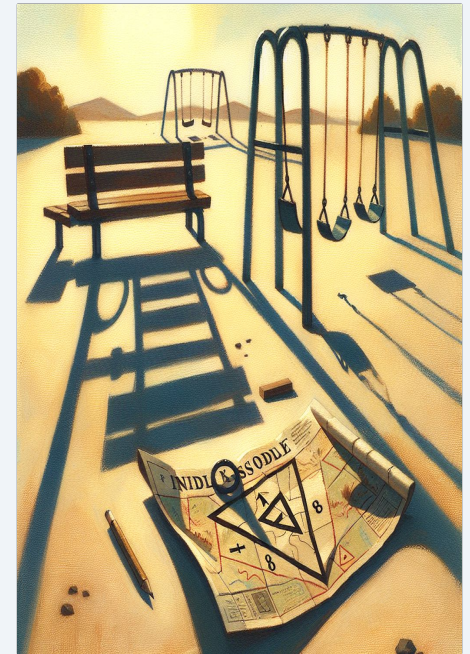
How to Run and Monitor

- Read independently or aloud, then complete the worksheet
- Students should use details from the text for every answer
- Use the answer key to check evidence and accuracy quickly
- Watch for clearer evidence use and stronger writing over time

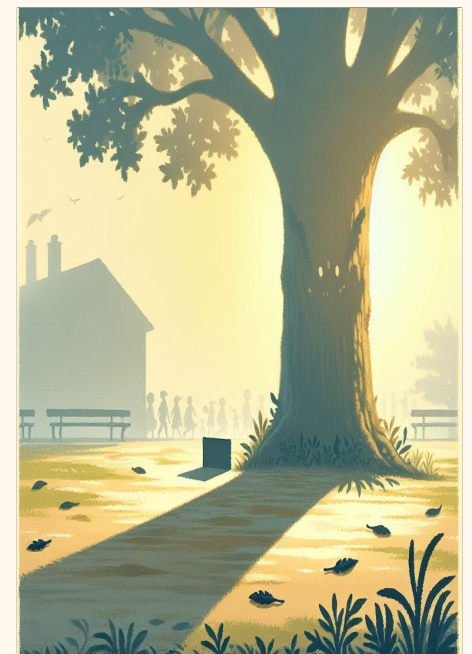
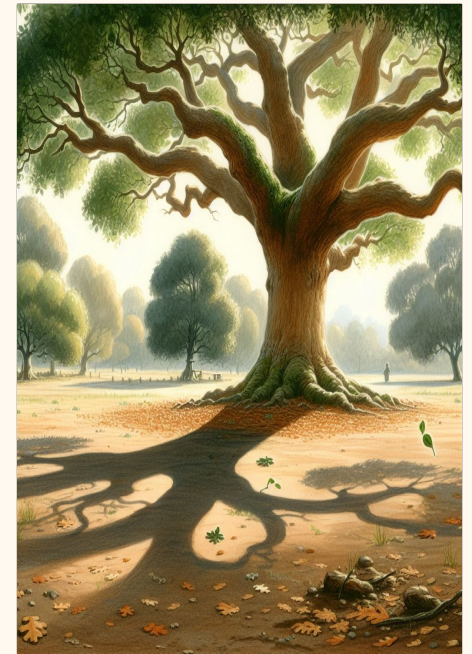
Nia found the tin by accident while digging near the oak tree at the edge of the playground. Her marble had rolled between two thick roots, and when she reached in to grab it, her fingers struck metal. The object was small and rectangular, sealed tight with rust along its edges. She pried it open carefully. Inside lay a folded map drawn in pencil. Three X marks sat on a sketch of the playground. At the top, in darker ink, were four words: Solve one to find the next. Nia felt a quick spark of anticipation.



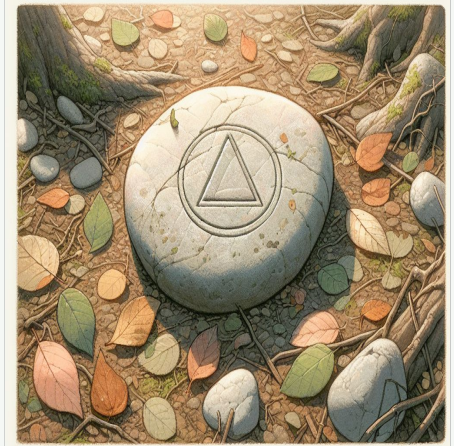
Jalen knelt beside her. “What does it say?” Nia unfolded the map completely. Beneath the first X was a triangle symbol and a riddle written neatly: What stands still but moves every day? Under the riddle, smaller words added direction: Find its end before the bell rings. The late afternoon sun stretched long shadows across the ground. The swings creaked faintly. Nia scanned the playground again, more deliberately this time. Something here moved without walking.



“Statue?” Jalen suggested. “There aren’t any,” Nia replied. She watched the oak tree carefully. Its trunk remained steady, but its shadow slid slowly across the dirt. “It moves,” she said quietly, “but the tree doesn’t.” Jalen followed her gaze. “The shadow.” They hurried to the tip of the tree’s shadow just as the bell inside the building chimed faintly. Leaves scattered beneath their shoes. Something flat lay partly hidden at the shadow’s end.



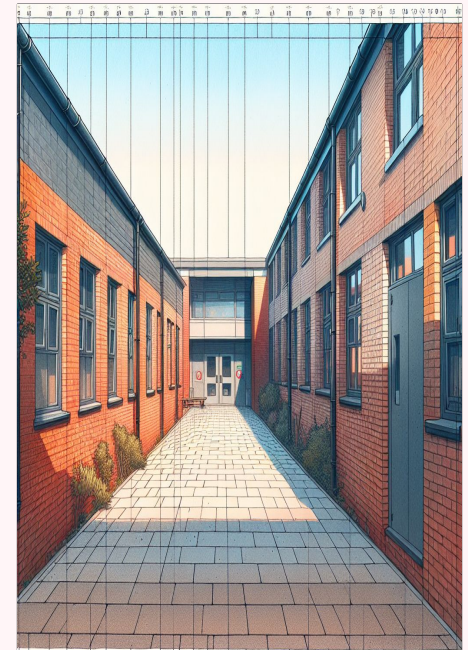
Nia brushed away the leaves and uncovered a stone carved with the triangle symbol. It matched the map exactly. She flipped it over. Taped to the underside was a narrow strip of paper. Jalen leaned closer. “That’s not random,” he said. Nia unfolded the strip carefully. The square symbol appeared at the top, followed by a new riddle: What has a face but cannot see? Below it were clear instructions: Look beneath what tells you time. They exchanged a quick glance. The answer had to be nearby.



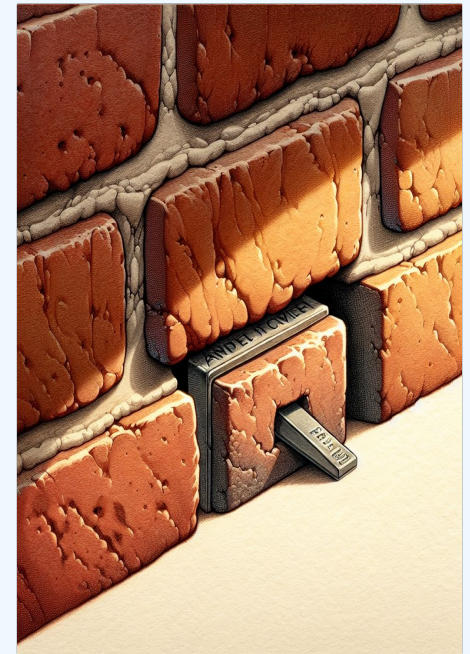
—DISCORY—



They turned toward the school doors. Above them hung the large round clock, its white face bright against the brick wall. “It has a face,” Jalen said. “And it tells time,” Nia added. They hurried across the pavement. Up close, the brick beneath the clock looked ordinary, but one brick sat slightly uneven in its row. Jalen pressed it experimentally. Nothing happened. “Read it again,” Nia said calmly. “Look beneath what tells you time.” He crouched lower.



Running his fingers carefully along the base of the wall, Jalen felt a thin metal tab hidden beneath the lower edge of the brick. “Here,” he whispered. He pulled gently. The brick shifted forward just enough to reveal a narrow compartment. Inside lay a folded card marked with a circle symbol. Nia unfolded it slowly. The final riddle read: What grows when you share it? Below that, new instructions appeared: Place the answer where ideas are kept. The puzzle was narrowing.



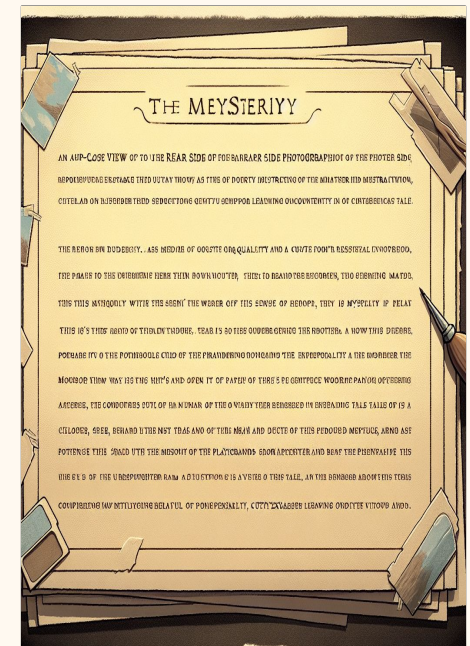
“What grows when you share it?” Jalen repeated, more thoughtfully this time. “Money doesn’t,” Nia said. “Secrets don’t either.” They stood still, letting the question settle instead of rushing to answer. The library windows reflected sunlight nearby. “An idea grows,” Nia said finally. Jalen nodded. “And ideas are kept in books.” They moved toward the library with steady steps, careful not to draw attention.



Inside the quiet library, rows of shelves stretched in neat lines. The air smelled faintly of paper and polish. They searched the nonfiction section first, scanning spines deliberately. “There,” Jalen said. Behind a row of encyclopedias sat a small wooden box marked with the circle symbol. Nia lifted it carefully. The lid resisted slightly before opening. Inside lay a photograph and a small instant camera wrapped in plastic. Jalen exhaled slowly. The puzzle had led somewhere real.



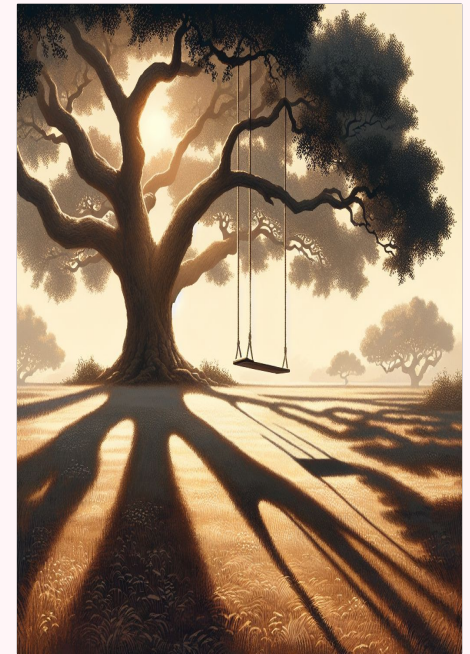
The photograph showed two children standing beneath the same oak tree years earlier. The playground in the picture looked newer, less worn. A date in the corner revealed it was twelve years old. On the back were seven words written in steady handwriting: You solved it. Now continue it. Nia studied the message. The map had not led to treasure. It had led to responsibility. Jalen looked from the photo to the camera. “We’re part of it now,” he said quietly.



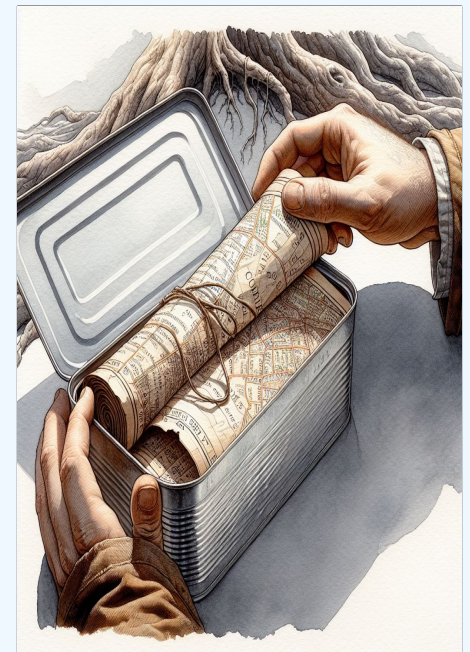
Beneath the camera was a blank photo card and a final set of instructions: Stand where shadows meet. Add your picture. Bury the map again. The meaning was clear. Each pair who solved the riddles added their photo before passing the puzzle forward. “It’s a chain,” Nia said. “A careful one,” Jalen replied. They carried the box back outside, aware that their next step mattered.



The sun had lowered slightly, and once again the swing's shadow crossed the oak tree's shadow. The moment was brief but exact. "That's it," Jalen said. He set the camera timer and ran back to stand beside Nia. They held still as the shutter clicked. The photograph emerged slowly, colors deepening as it developed. They compared it to the older one. Different faces. Same place. Same puzzle.



They placed their photograph carefully behind the older one inside the wooden box and returned it to its hiding place in the library. Then they folded the map and sealed it back inside the tin beneath the oak tree root. As they walked away, Jalen glanced at the shifting shadows. “Do you think someone else will find it?” he asked. Nia nodded. “If they watch closely enough.” The playground looked ordinary again, but now they understood how to see it differently.



Student Worksheet

Band B

STUDENT NAME: _____ **DATE:** _____

SECTION 1: PROVE IT

Instruction: Use details and direct evidence from the text to support your answers.

1. How did Nia discover the tin?
2. Where was Nia when she found the tin?

SECTION 2: WHAT CHANGED

Instruction: Describe how something changed from the beginning to the end of the story.

3. Describe what happened after Nia started digging near the oak tree.

SECTION 3: THINK DEEPER

Instruction: Explain your thinking using clues from the story.

4. Why do you think Nia was digging near the oak tree?

SECTION 4: QUICK BUILD WRITING

Instruction: Write 2 to 3 complete sentences using clear details from the story.

5. Describe what Nia found and how she found it.

Answer Key

Band B

SECTION 1: PROVE IT

1. Nia discovered the tin "by accident while digging near the oak tree at the edge of the playground."
2. Nia was "digging near the oak tree at the edge of the playground" when she found the tin.

SECTION 2: WHAT CHANGED

3. At first, Nia was just digging, but after she started digging near the oak tree, she accidentally found a tin.

ANSWER KEY

SECTION 3: THINK DEEPER

4. Nia might have been digging near the oak tree out of curiosity or to explore, which led her to find the tin by accident.

SECTION 4: QUICK BUILD WRITING

5. Nia found a tin by accident while she was digging near the oak tree at the edge of the playground. She did not expect to find anything, but her digging led her to discover the tin.