

## Skill Builder Set F

**Focus:** Literary Analysis – Character & Perspective

**Passage:**

*“No one ever listens to me,” muttered Jaya as she kicked at the dusty ground. Her shadow stretched long in the late afternoon sun, mirroring the weight she felt inside. For the third time this week, her ideas had been brushed aside during the class project discussions. Mr. Bennett had smiled politely, but his attention always turned to louder voices—mostly Ethan’s, who never hesitated to dominate the conversation. “Maybe if I shouted every answer, they’d finally hear me,” she thought bitterly.*

She walked slowly down the path behind the school, tracing her fingers along the fence. The clinking of her bracelet, a gift from her grandmother, brought her comfort. “You have a voice, Jaya,” her grandmother had once said. “Even a whisper can carry truth.”

That evening, Jaya sat at the kitchen table, papers scattered in front of her. Her mom peeked in. “Another tough day?”

Jaya nodded. “I want to help, I really do. But no one sees me.”

Her mother smiled gently. “Being seen starts with seeing yourself. You don’t need to shout to matter. Try again tomorrow. Speak your truth.”

**Prompt:**

*How does the author use contrast to highlight Jaya’s internal growth? Use evidence from the passage to support your analysis (200 words).*

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## Skill Builder Set G

**Focus:** Literary Analysis – Setting & Symbolism

**Passage:**

*The rain had not stopped for days. It pattered endlessly on the roof, soaked the windowpanes, and turned the garden path into a narrow river of mud. Inside, Mira watched the droplets race down the glass like tiny rivals. Her suitcase sat half-packed at the foot of the bed, open like a question mark.*

Her family had lived in this old house for three generations, and yet, tomorrow it would no longer be theirs. Foreclosure, they called it. The word felt like a verdict. Outside, the oak tree swayed, ancient and unbothered, as if mocking her panic.

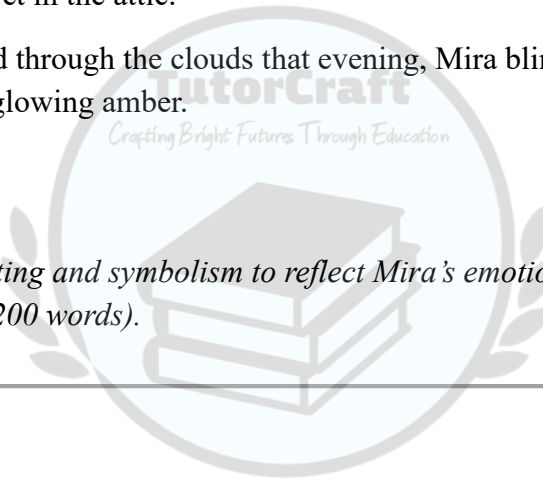
Mira placed her hand on the windowsill. “It’s just wood and walls,” her father had said, trying to be brave. But Mira knew better. This place held echoes of every scraped knee, every birthday candle, every whispered secret in the attic.

When the sun finally cracked through the clouds that evening, Mira blinked at the light. It fell gently on the oak tree, now glowing amber.

**Prompt:**

*How does the author use setting and symbolism to reflect Mira’s emotional state? Refer closely to the text in your analysis (200 words).*

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## Skill Builder Set H

**Focus:** Literary Analysis – Theme & Tone

**Passage:**

*“Do you know what I see when I look at you?” Grandpa asked, his voice low like the hush before a storm.*

*Arman paused mid-bite. “Um, a teenager who eats too much toast?”*

Grandpa chuckled. “That too. But mostly, I see someone forgetting who he is.”

Arman shifted uncomfortably. Since starting at his new school, he had tried to fit in—changed his name to ‘Aaron,’ laughed at jokes that didn’t feel funny, even stopped bringing biryani for lunch. “Just trying to be normal,” he’d told himself.

Grandpa continued, “You know, back in my day, I used to wear a bright orange turban to class every day. They laughed. I kept wearing it. By the end of the year, even the principal asked where I got it from.”

Arman stared down. “But it’s different now.”

“Different how? Same pressure, different packaging. Just remember—what’s different about you is the best part.”

That night, Arman packed biryani again.

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**Prompt:**

*Explore how the author develops the theme of identity and the tone used to express it. Use examples from the passage. (200 words)*

## Answer Key (Sets F–H)

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### Set F

- The contrast is established between Jaya’s internal feelings of invisibility and the outward dominance of peers like Ethan.
  - Her transformation is marked by subtle but symbolic shifts: from muttering and feeling ignored to the comfort she finds in the bracelet and her mother’s advice.
  - The grandmother’s phrase “even a whisper can carry truth” reflects the idea that strength doesn’t require volume—an internal growth in Jaya’s confidence.
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### Set G

- The setting (relentless rain, muddy paths, and the swaying oak) mirrors Mira’s emotional turmoil and feeling of powerlessness.
  - The house is personified and symbolic—a “container” of memories.
  - The oak tree and sunlight at the end suggest endurance, hope, and continuity despite loss.
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### Set H

- Theme: Identity and authenticity are central—Arman’s tension between fitting in and staying true to his roots is core.
- Tone: The tone is warm, intimate, and reflective—especially in Grandpa’s dialogue.
- The orange turban symbolizes pride and resilience; Arman’s final act of packing biryani signals self-acceptance and growth.