

Unspoken Weight Answer Key

1. Unspoken Emotions

- Daniel likely feels **disconnected, heavy with unspoken memories, uncertain, and restrained**. His hesitation to speak shows discomfort and emotional weight.

2. Setting as Reflection

- The cicadas' loud hum and the long silence mirror Daniel's **inner tension and inability to express himself**. The creaking swing suggests restlessness.

3. Relationship with Father

- The father's silence and avoidance of eye contact suggest **emotional distance**. Both want connection but struggle to reach across the silence.

4. Mother's "Forced Cheer"

- Suggests she is **masking her worry and sadness** by pretending normalcy. This shows the family is trying to act as if everything is fine, though underlying conflict remains.

5. Predicted Conflict

- Daniel may struggle with **readjustment, unspoken trauma, or communication barriers**. He might feel alienated from everyday life or misunderstood by family members.

Teacher Notes

- **Grade 12 Rigor:** This activity pushes students beyond surface comprehension into **textual inference**, which is a core skill for advanced readers.
- Encourage students to underline **clues** in the text (e.g., silence, gestures, setting details) to justify their inferences.
- Extension idea: Have students write a **short continuation scene** in which one character finally breaks the silence. Ask them to show, and not tell emotions through actions and dialogue.