The action of a story is called the **plot**. Most plots follow a similar pattern. The introduction presents a character’s main problem. Then the problem gets more complicated until the climax—or exciting turning point—of the story happens. And then (whew!) the resolution: The problem is resolved. Finally, there’s a conclusion. In this activity, you’ll figure out the different parts of the plot in “Amira’s Song.”

**Directions:** Fill in each block in the pyramid, using the prompts to help you.

1. **Introduction**
   - What is Amira’s dream? What keeps her from following it?

2. **The Plot Thickens**
   - How does Amira prepare for International Day? How does she feel when she arrives at the event?

3. **Climax**
   - What does Amira do to comfort herself?

4. **Resolution**
   - How do the people in the gym respond to Amira’s singing?

5. **Conclusion**
   - How do Amira and her family feel after she sings?
In the story “Amira’s Song,” author Nora Raleigh Baskin uses figurative language. That means her words have a meaning other than what they actually say on the page. Sometimes you have to think about what she means. This activity will help you do that.

Directions: Read each line from the story below. Think about what each one means. Then answer the questions that follow.

1. “It wasn’t just the way the music filled her up, the way it rose from her feet to the top of her head.” (p. 12)
   The music is not actually moving! What does this description tell you about what singing means to Amira?
   How important is it to her? ____________________________________________________________________________
   ________________________________________________________________________________________________
   Find another example of figurative language in the story that expresses the same idea. ________________
   ________________________________________________________________________________________________

2. “On the second table, spread like a delicate mosaic, were tiny cups of individual spices.” (p. 13)
   What does the comparison to a “delicate mosaic” suggest about the table of spices? How does it help you understand why Amira is worried and overwhelmed when she arrives at International Day? ________________
   ________________________________________________________________________________________________
   ________________________________________________________________________________________________

3. “It was like climbing a ladder and not falling from the top, but flying through the air.” (p. 14)
   How might it feel to fly through the air? What does this tell you about Amira’s emotions at this moment?
   ________________________________________________________________________________________________
   ________________________________________________________________________________________________
   ________________________________________________________________________________________________

Bonus! Our Create a Character contest winner, Gia Hilal, says that she is proud of her Syrian heritage and wanted her character to be as well. Find one way the author shows this in the story.
   ________________________________________________________________________________________________
   ________________________________________________________________________________________________
   ________________________________________________________________________________________________
**Finding Her Song**

**Directions:** Answer the questions in the chart below to help you analyze the character of Amira. Use specific examples from the beginning, middle, and end of the story “Amira’s Song.”

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Beginning</strong></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>What does Amira imagine when she sings in her bedroom? How does she feel about singing?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Middle</strong></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>How does Amira feel about her old life in Syria? What role does singing play in her memories?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>End</strong></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>What does Amira imagine when she sings on International Day? What does she discover about her singing?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Think About It!

**Critical-Thinking Questions:** After reading “Amira’s Song,” think about the whole story to answer the questions below.

1. Why is singing important to Amira? What does she realize about it?

________________________________________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________________________________________

2. How do Amira’s feelings about singing in public change during the story?

________________________________________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________________________________________
# Pick Your Own Vocabulary Words

**Directions:** We’ve given you the definitions of seven important words from this issue’s story “Amira’s Song.” Look for the words as you read. Then pick out two more words that are new to you. Write their definitions, using context clues or a dictionary to help you.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>WORD</th>
<th>PAGE NO.</th>
<th>IT MEANS . . .</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. emigrated</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>left a country to move to another one</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. gnarled</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>twisted and bumpy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. heritage</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>important traditions that are part of the history of a family, group, or country</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. hummus</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>a dip or spread made out of chickpeas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. licenses</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>official documents that give permission to do something, like drive a car or work in a certain profession</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. lyrics</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>words of a song</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. mosaic</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>an image created by putting together small pieces of colored tile, stone, glass, or other material</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**My own words:**

8. 

9. 

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“Amira’s Song” Quiz

Directions: Read the story “Amira’s Song” in the May/June 2018 issue of Storyworks. Then fill in the bubble next to the best answer for each question below.

1. You can infer that Amira and her family moved to the U.S. from Syria because . . .
   A. her parents got better jobs in the U.S.
   B. there is a war in Syria.
   C. they needed a bigger house.
   D. they wanted to live near Jibril and Amira’s grandmother.

2. Amira tells her mother she doesn’t need help with her project because . . .
   A. her mother works long hours.
   B. her mother doesn’t speak English well.
   C. Amira would prefer to do it on her own.
   D. Jibril has promised to help her.

3. In the line “It was the way the lyrics sounded, like they had come right from her life,” lyrics means the _____ of a song.
   A. composers
   B. instruments
   C. words
   D. notes

4. In the school gym, how does Amira feel at first about her presentation for International Day?
   A. ashamed
   B. proud
   C. excited
   D. bored

5. Which line from the story supports your answer to question 4?
   A. “Everybody had called out their country.”
   B. “She dreaded having her parents come and see what a terrible job she had done . . .”
   C. “It tasted perfect.”
   D. “Some of Amira’s memories of her life in Syria were fading.”

6. Amira finally is able to sing in front of other people by imagining that . . .
   A. her hairbrush is a microphone.
   B. Jibril is the only one listening.
   C. her bedroom is a stage.
   D. she is singing with her grandmother.

Constructed Response

Directions: On a separate piece of paper, write your answer to each question in a well-organized response. Make sure you support your answers with details from the story.

7. What are two details in the story that show Amira’s close relationship with her grandmother?

8. Why is Amira beaming at the end of the story?
“Amira’s Song” Quiz

Directions: Read the story “Amira’s Song” in the May/June 2018 issue of Storyworks. Then fill in the bubble next to the best answer for each question below.

1. You can infer that Amira and her family moved to the U.S. from Syria because . . .
   A her parents got better jobs in the U.S.
   B there is a war in Syria.
   C they needed a bigger house.
   D they wanted to live near Jibril and Amira’s grandmother.

2. In the sentence “Everyone knew that Amira and her family had emigrated from Damascus,” emigrated means _______.
   A become ill
   B received food
   C learned
   D moved

3. Which memory from Syria is most important to Amira?
   A speaking Arabic
   B the fig tree in her backyard
   C having her own bedroom
   D the love of her grandmother

4. At the dinner table, when Jibril shakes his head at Amira, he is telling her . . .
   A to say “yes” to their mother’s offer to help.
   B to say “no” to their mother’s offer to help.
   C that picking Syria was a great idea.
   D that picking Syria was a terrible idea.

5. In the gym, how does Amira feel at first about the presentation she prepared?
   A ashamed
   B proud
   C excited
   D bored

6. Which line from the story supports your answer to question 5?
   A “Everybody had called out their country.”
   B “She dreaded having her parents come and see what a terrible job she had done . . .”
   C “It tasted perfect.”
   D “. . . some of that was too painful to read.”

7. Amira solves her problem of being too afraid to sing in front of others by . . .
   A singing as quickly as possible.
   B choosing a sad song to perform.
   C pretending her bedroom is a stage.
   D imagining she is singing with her grandmother.

8. Which line from the story supports your answer to question 7?
   A “She didn’t have time to be embarrassed. Or afraid.”
   B “It was everything Amira could do to keep from crying.”
   C “It was as if her grandmother was with her . . . both holding her and lifting her up.”
   D “It became a stage where she could look out to an imaginary audience.”

Constructed Response

Directions: On a separate piece of paper, write your answer to each question in a well-organized response. Make sure you support your answers with details from the story.

9. Compare Amira’s singing at the beginning of the story with her singing at the end.

10. Why is Amira beaming at the end of the story?