Taps and Thoughts

How a narrator's voice shapes a small mystery

4.LF.17.b "State an opinion of the author's use of narration, supporting reasoning with examples from the text."

NAME _____ DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline two places where the narrator shares a thought, and circle two details you could use to support an opinion about how the story is told.

The Tapping in the Greenhouse

1. On Saturday morning, I followed a tiny tapping sound into Grandma's greenhouse. Tap. Tap. Tap. The tomato leaves shook, but I could not see what moved them. Grandma was outside filling her watering can. I held my breath and stepped around a stack of empty pots. Last week, a frog had surprised me in this same spot, and I was not ready to meet its whole family.

2. The tapping stopped. I leaned toward the largest pot, certain something would leap out. Instead, a green vine brushed my ear. I jumped anyway and bumped the shelf. A wooden plant label slid down and landed at my feet. Behind the pots, a loose window latch swung in the breeze. Each time it hit the frame, it made that sharp little tap.

3. I pressed the latch closed, and the greenhouse went quiet. Grandma came in and asked if I had found a frog. "Not today," I said, trying to sound brave. Then the tomato leaves shook again. I stared at them until a beetle crawled out, no bigger than my thumbnail. I laughed so loudly that Grandma came to look. Even a beetle seemed enormous when I was busy imagining frogs.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. Do you think the opening makes the tapping sound seem mysterious? Explain your opinion using a detail from the opening.

2. How does hearing the narrator's thoughts about frogs affect the story? Give your opinion and a detail from the text.

3. Does the way the narrator tells about the vine make that moment more surprising? Support your opinion with an example.

4. Do you think the narrator's final thought makes the ending funnier? Explain using an earlier detail from the passage.

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

Would the story be more or less exciting if Grandma told it instead? Write three or four sentences stating your opinion and using two details from the passage to explain why.

ANSWER KEY

Taps and Thoughts

GRADE 4 · 4.LF.17.b

PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Underline two places where the narrator shares a thought, and circle two details you could use to support an opinion about how the story is told. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 · ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	Do you think the opening makes the tapping sound seem mysterious? Explain your opinion using a detail from the opening.	**Yes. The repeated "Tap. Tap. Tap." makes the sound stand out before the narrator can see what causes it.**
2	How does hearing the narrator's thoughts about frogs affect the story? Give your opinion and a detail from the text.	**It makes the story funny because the narrator worries about meeting a whole family of frogs after seeing just one frog the week before.**
3	Does the way the narrator tells about the vine make that moment more surprising? Support your opinion with an example.	**Yes. The narrator expects something to leap out, but a vine brushes their ear instead, and they jump anyway.**
4	Do you think the narrator's final thought makes the ending funnier? Explain using an earlier detail from the passage.	**Yes. The narrator admits that imagining frogs made a tiny beetle seem enormous, just as an ordinary vine had made them jump.**

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

I think Grandma telling the story would make it less exciting. She was outside filling her watering can when the tapping began, so she could not tell us what it felt like to step around the pots. The child expects a frog and jumps when a vine touches their ear, and hearing those thoughts makes the mystery exciting.

Accept different opinions when students explain how a narration choice affects the story and support their reasoning with accurate passage details. For Your Turn, look for two distinct details and an explanation of how Grandma's point of view would change the telling.