The Missing Seedling

Read a garden mystery through two characters' eyes.

4.LF.17 "Identify the narrator's point of view in a literary text and explain how it differs from a character's perspective. a. Explain the difference between first person and third person narration, including omniscient and third person limited..."

NAME _____ DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline two places that reveal what Nia thinks or feels, and circle two places that reveal what Mateo thinks or feels so you can see what the narrator knows.

The Twelfth Plant

1. At the school garden, Nia carried a tray of tomato seedlings toward the sunny fence. She had counted twelve plants before lunch, but now only eleven sat in the tray. Her stomach tightened. Across the path, Mateo tucked something green behind his back. Nia thought he had taken a plant. Mateo, however, was hiding a wilted leaf he had picked up from the ground.

2. Mateo wanted to tell Nia about the leaf, but he feared she would blame him for hurting her seedlings. He did not know where the leaf belonged. Nia watched him step toward the compost bin. To her, his quick steps looked like an escape. She marched after him, ready to ask for her plant back.

3. Before Nia could speak, a small voice called from the other side of the fence. A younger student held up a tomato plant in a paper cup. "It fell from your tray," the student said. "I picked it up so nobody would step on it." Nia felt her cheeks grow warm. Mateo opened his hand to show the leaf. He was relieved when Nia smiled.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. Is the story told in first person or third person? Give one clue from the passage.

2. Is this narrator third-person limited or third-person omniscient? Use one detail about each character to explain.

3. When Nia sees Mateo hide something, how does her view differ from what the narrator tells readers?

4. Do you think the author made a good choice by letting the narrator share both characters' thoughts? Support your opinion with an example from the story.

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

Rewrite the moment when Nia sees Mateo hide something as three first-person sentences from Nia's view. Then write one sentence explaining what your version cannot tell readers about Mateo's thoughts.

ANSWER KEY

The Missing Seedling

GRADE 4 · 4.LF.17

PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Underline two places that reveal what Nia thinks or feels, and circle two places that reveal what Mateo thinks or feels so you can see what the narrator knows. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 · ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	Is the story told in first person or third person? Give one clue from the passage.	**Third person. The narrator calls the characters Nia and Mateo and uses words such as "she" and "he," rather than telling the story as "I."**
2	Is this narrator third-person limited or third-person omniscient? Use one detail about each character to explain.	**Third-person omniscient. The narrator knows Nia thinks Mateo took a plant and also knows Mateo fears being blamed.**
3	When Nia sees Mateo hide something, how does her view differ from what the narrator tells readers?	**Nia thinks Mateo has taken a plant. The narrator tells readers that he is hiding a wilted leaf.**
4	Do you think the author made a good choice by letting the narrator share both characters' thoughts? Support your opinion with an example from the story.	**Yes. Knowing that Mateo fears being blamed while Nia thinks he took a plant helps readers understand why they might argue. Accept a different opinion supported by a story detail.**

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

I saw Mateo hide something green behind his back. My missing tomato plant popped into my mind. I hurried after him because I thought he had taken it. My version cannot tell readers that Mateo feared being blamed, because I did not know what he was thinking.

For question 4, accept either opinion if the student supports it with an accurate example. In Part 3, the first three sentences should stay within Nia's knowledge and use first person.