A Hasty Judgment

Read how a narrator's point of view shapes a scene.

9.CL.4 "Analyze how authors use characterization, connotation, denotation, figurative language, literary elements, and point of view to create and convey meaning in a variety of texts."

NAME _____ DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

YOUR JOB Circle two words or images that reveal the narrator's first judgment of Nico, then underline two details that challenge that judgment.

Before the Rain

1 The courtyard filled with folding tables for our neighborhood history fair. Each table held interview pages, photographs, and labels we had spent weeks writing. I stood beside our display, watching gray clouds gather above the gym. Nico, who rarely spoke during planning, stopped at our table and scanned the pages. Then he snatched the original interviews and pushed them into his backpack. He did not ask me. The wind combed the tables with cold fingers, but I barely noticed. I was busy deciding that Nico wanted to claim our best work as his own.

2 I followed him toward the covered walkway. "Those belong to everyone," I said. Nico tightened his grip on the backpack strap and kept walking. His silence looked like a locked door, and I felt foolish for ever trusting him with the display. A drop of rain struck my cheek. Behind us, a label peeled off a table and sailed across the courtyard. Nico stopped beneath the roof and pulled out a stack of clear plastic sleeves. "I meant to bring these earlier," he said, breathing hard. "The originals won't last five minutes out there."

3 We slid the interviews into sleeves while the first hard rain rattled against the roof. Nico held each page by its edges so the ink would not smear. He had noticed the clouds before anyone else, even though he had said almost nothing. When we carried the protected pages back, my friend Alia called him a hero. I wanted to agree, but the word felt too easy. I had seen the same hurried act as theft because I had already decided what his quietness meant. Nico had protected the voices we had promised our neighbors we would share.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. How does the narrator's first-person point of view affect what you believe about Nico at first?

2. What does "snatched" suggest about Nico's action that "picked up" would not?

3. Which two details show that Nico cares about protecting the interviews? Explain what each reveals.

4. What does the comparison "His silence looked like a locked door" reveal about the narrator's feelings at that moment?

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

Write a 4- to 5-sentence scene in which a first-person narrator misreads another person's action, then learns what it means. Include one word with a negative connotation and one original comparison that shows the narrator's feelings.

A Hasty Judgment

PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Circle two words or images that reveal the narrator's first judgment of Nico, then underline two details that challenge that judgment. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 · ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	How does the narrator's first-person point of view affect what you believe about Nico at first?	**Readers initially share the narrator's suspicion because they know the narrator's thoughts but not Nico's reason for taking the interviews.**
2	What does "snatched" suggest about Nico's action that "picked up" would not?	**"Snatched" suggests a sudden, possibly dishonest grab, while "picked up" sounds neutral.**
3	Which two details show that Nico cares about protecting the interviews? Explain what each reveals.	**Nico brings clear plastic sleeves to shield the pages from rain and holds each page by its edges to avoid smearing the ink.**
4	What does the comparison "His silence looked like a locked door" reveal about the narrator's feelings at that moment?	**The narrator feels shut out and assumes Nico's silence means he is hiding something.**

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

I watched Lena creep behind the stage and snatch our only microphone. Suspicion prickled like sand under my collar. I followed her, certain she meant to ruin the concert. Then I saw her swapping its dead batteries for fresh ones. She had taken it so our opening song would not fall silent.

Accept other passage-supported details and interpretations. In Part 3, look for a clear shift in the narrator's understanding, a negatively charged word, and a comparison that conveys feeling.