

Sentence Spotlight

Notice how writers vary sentence length and structure for clarity and effect.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.L.5.3 “Use knowledge of language and its conventions when writing, speaking, reading, or listening.”

NAME _____

DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK _____ Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline the three sentences that have five or fewer words. Study how these brief sentences shape your attention as you read.

Maya at the Marsh Bridge

- ① At dawn, Maya stood beside the marsh bridge with a notebook tucked under her arm. Fog slid across the water and softened the far bank. A heron lifted off. Its wide wings beat slowly above the reeds. Maya waited for the bridge crew, listening for the first truck to rumble along the gravel road nearby.
- ② When the crew arrived, Maya opened her notebook and wrote the time. The oldest worker tested the wooden boards with a heavy mallet, while another worker tightened loose bolts. The bridge creaked. Maya recorded each sound, then sketched the workers as they moved carefully across the narrow span above the dark water. No one moved.
- ③ As clouds gathered, the workers placed bright cones at both ends of the bridge. Maya wrote a final note: the crew had found one cracked board, but they had repaired it before lunch. By noon, the fog had vanished, and sunlight flashed on the wet rails. Maya closed her notebook and headed home, carrying a page filled with clear details.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE Use the passage

1 Write the three short sentences you underlined.

2 In the sentence beginning "When the crew arrived," what happened first, and what happened next?

3 Why might the author use "No one moved." after the longer sentence before it?

4 Which wording gives a clearer picture of the bridge's sound: "The bridge creaked" or "The bridge made a sound"? Explain one reason.

3 YOUR TURN Your own words

Write three sentences about observing a place. Include one sentence with five or fewer words and one sentence that begins with When, After, or As and combines two actions. Use at least one precise verb.

PART 1 • READ AND MARK

Underline the three sentences that have five or fewer words. Study how these brief sentences shape your attention as you read. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 • ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	Write the three short sentences you underlined.	A heron lifted off. The bridge creaked. No one moved.
2	In the sentence beginning "When the crew arrived," what happened first, and what happened next?	The crew arrived first. Next, Maya opened her notebook and wrote the time.
3	Why might the author use "No one moved." after the longer sentence before it?	The short sentence creates a pause and emphasizes the workers' careful stillness.
4	Which wording gives a clearer picture of the bridge's sound: "The bridge creaked" or "The bridge made a sound"? Explain one reason.	"The bridge creaked" is clearer because creaked names a specific sound and suggests the old boards were under strain.

PART 3 • YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

After the final whistle blew, I folded my map and jogged toward the gate. The field emptied. Near the bus, I watched leaves swirl around the benches.

Accept the three exact short sentences in Question 1. For Questions 3 and 4, accept reasonable explanations about emphasis, pausing, tension, specificity, or clearer imagery. For Part 3, accept varied original writing that includes all requested sentence features.