

Promise Above Water

Analyze how scene arrangement develops a character's choice.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.7.5 "Analyze how a drama's or poem's form or structure (e.g., soliloquy, sonnet) contributes to its meaning"

NAME _____

DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK _____ Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline every stage direction. Circle Mara's lines spoken when no other character is onstage, and write 1, 2, and 3 beside the paragraphs to track the scene's arrangement.

The Archive

- ① [The town library basement. Rain taps the small windows. A metal box rests on a table.] LEO: The flood warning says we have one hour. We should carry the old maps upstairs. MARA: These maps belong here, in the archive. If we move them, visitors will not find them tomorrow. LEO: Tomorrow will not matter if water reaches the shelves. [He lifts a map case. Mara blocks the stairs.] MARA: Put that down. I promised Mr. Ibarra I would protect this room.
- ② [Leo exits to find carts. Mara faces the metal box.] MARA: Mr. Ibarra trusted me because I never left the archive. But he did not ask me to guard paper while people carry wet books through rising water. [She opens the box and finds a brass key.] MARA: This key opens the display cabinet upstairs. The rare maps can go there, above the flood line. I can keep my promise by changing what protection looks like. [She grips the key and calls toward the door.] LEO, wait!
- ③ [Leo returns with two carts. Water trickles beneath the basement door.] LEO: I found help, but the stairs are narrow. MARA: Then take the map cases first. I will unlock the cabinet and lead the way. LEO: You are leaving the archive? MARA: I am saving it. [They lift the first case together. The rain grows louder, but they climb.] At the landing, volunteers pass cases hand to hand. Mara locks the cabinet after the last map is safe. Below, water slides across the empty archive floor.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE Use the passage

1 How do the opening stage directions and first exchange arrange the conflict Mara faces?

2 What does Mara's speech alone reveal that the first conversation with Leo does not reveal?

3 How does placing Mara's solo speech between Leo's two appearances contribute to the meaning of the scene?

4 How do the short final lines and closing stage directions affect the ending?

3 YOUR TURN Your own words

Write an 8-10 line dramatic scene about a character making a difficult choice. Include dialogue, at least two stage directions, and one short speech the character gives alone, then write exactly two sentences explaining how the placement of the solo speech helps show the character's change or decision.

PART 1 • READ AND MARK

Underline every stage direction. Circle Mara's lines spoken when no other character is onstage, and write 1, 2, and 3 beside the paragraphs to track the scene's arrangement. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 • ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	How do the opening stage directions and first exchange arrange the conflict Mara faces?	The rain and flood warning create urgency, while Leo wants to move the maps and Mara initially refuses because of her promise to protect the archive.
2	What does Mara's speech alone reveal that the first conversation with Leo does not reveal?	It reveals that Mara realizes protecting the archive can mean moving the maps to safety, not staying in the room.
3	How does placing Mara's solo speech between Leo's two appearances contribute to the meaning of the scene?	The placement shows Mara thinking through the conflict on her own before she makes a new decision and gives Leo directions.
4	How do the short final lines and closing stage directions affect the ending?	They make the ending quick and active, showing that Mara and Leo now work together and that saving the archive requires leaving the basement.

PART 3 • YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

[The school greenhouse, after a hot afternoon.] JUNE: The seedlings are dry, but the science fair display needs its water tank. OMAR: We can fill only one container before the bell. [Omar exits to find the faucet key.] JUNE: [alone] Winning a ribbon will not matter if our plants die. I know what to choose. [Omar returns with the key.] OMAR: Which container should I fill? JUNE: Fill the watering cans. We can rebuild the display tomorrow. The solo speech appears after Omar leaves and before he returns. It lets readers hear June make her decision before she says it aloud.

Accept answers that use specific evidence about the order of dialogue, the solo speech, and stage directions. For Part 3, accept varied scenes if they include the required form elements and a two-sentence explanation connecting placement to meaning.