Motives in Motion

Trace how a character's choices shape plot and theme.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.9-10.3 "Analyze how complex characters (e.g., those with multiple or conflicting motivations) develop over the course of a text, interact with other characters, and advance the plot or develop the theme."

NAME _____ DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline details that reveal Lena's motivations, then number the choices she considers or makes to track how her thinking changes.

The Thirty-Day Vote

1 On the morning the town council was scheduled to vote on closing the public library, Lena Ortiz unlocked the building before sunrise. The library's roof leaked, and its repairs would cost more than the town had saved. Lena had promised her father, who had taught evening classes there, that she would protect the place. Yet she also knew that selling the building could fund a clinic her younger brother desperately needed. She carried the council's offer in her bag and avoided looking at the children's room.

2 Her former friend, Malik, arrived with a petition to keep the library open. He accused Lena of hiding the sale plans, and his anger made her want to defend herself. Instead, she showed him the clinic estimates and admitted that she had not told anyone about her brother. Malik softened, but he refused to withdraw the petition. He suggested asking residents to repair the roof themselves. Lena doubted that volunteers could finish before winter, but Malik's proposal gave her a third choice: delay the sale and test the town's commitment.

3 At the council meeting, Lena began by recommending the sale. Then she saw Mr. Bell, a retired mason who had once helped her father, place his name on Malik's petition. Lena asked the council for thirty days instead. If residents repaired the roof and raised part of the clinic fund, the library would remain. If they failed, she would accept the sale. Her choice did not erase the risk to her brother, but it changed her from a private protector into someone willing to trust others. The uncertain vote left the town facing a shared question: what must a community preserve?

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. What two goals pull Lena in opposite directions at the beginning of the passage? Give one passage detail for each goal.

2. How does Lena's interaction with Malik change the choices she sees? Use two details from their conversation.

3. How does Lena's request for thirty days show that she has developed as a character?

4. What theme about community develops by the end of the passage? Explain how Lena's final choice supports it.

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

Write a 4-5 sentence scene about a character with two conflicting motivations. Include an interaction with another character that changes or complicates the choice, then show how the final decision advances the plot or reveals a theme.

ANSWER KEY

Motives in Motion

HIGH SCHOOL · RL.9-10.3

PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Underline details that reveal Lena's motivations, then number the choices she considers or makes to track how her thinking changes. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 · ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	What two goals pull Lena in opposite directions at the beginning of the passage? Give one passage detail for each goal.	**Lena wants to protect the library because she promised her father she would, but she also wants to sell it to help fund a clinic her younger brother needs.**
2	How does Lena's interaction with Malik change the choices she sees? Use two details from their conversation.	**After Lena explains the clinic estimates and her brother's need, Malik suggests residents repair the roof. His suggestion gives Lena an alternative to choosing only between an immediate sale and keeping the library open without a plan.**
3	How does Lena's request for thirty days show that she has developed as a character?	**She moves from privately carrying the problem and recommending a sale to trusting the community to help repair the library and raise clinic money, while still accepting responsibility if the plan fails.**
4	What theme about community develops by the end of the passage? Explain how Lena's final choice supports it.	**A community must share responsibility for what it values. Lena asks residents to help preserve the library and support the clinic rather than making the difficult decision alone.**

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

Jae wanted to reveal that the school newspaper had printed false test scores, but he feared that correcting them would embarrass his sister, the editor. When his sister admitted that she had rushed the story to impress a college recruiter, Jae understood that silence would protect her only for a moment. He proposed a correction that named the newspaper's error without blaming her alone. His choice begins a conflict over responsibility and suggests that loyalty includes telling the truth.

Accept supported answers that identify Lena's conflicting motives, explain Malik's influence, and connect Lena's changed decision to plot or theme. For the open task, accept varied situations when the response includes conflicting motivations, a meaningful interaction, and a decision with a clear effect.