

Before the Doors Close

Analyze how a model scene uses craft to develop tension and purpose.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.11-12.3b "Use narrative techniques, such as dialogue, pacing, description, reflection, and multiple plot lines, to develop experiences, events, and/or characters."

NAME _____

DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK _____ Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline the dialogue, circle two details that speed up or slow down the scene, and label each of the two plot lines with a different number. Your marks should show how the writer builds tension and develops Nia's purpose.

The Photographs

- ① At 6:12, Nia stood outside the closed library with a cardboard box of rescued neighborhood photographs balanced against her hip. Rain tapped the awning, then hardened into a rapid drumming. "The council meeting starts in eighteen minutes," her brother Malik said, checking his phone. Inside, the librarian had promised a projector for Nia's presentation about the flooded Eastside homes. But the building was dark. Nia pictured Mrs. Alvarez, who had lent her the water-stained photographs, waiting in the council chamber. She had said, "People forget a street when they cannot see who lived there."
- ② Malik circled the side entrance and tugged once, twice, three times at its metal handle. On the third pull, it opened. "Go find the projector," Nia said. "I'll sort the photos." Her fingers moved quickly through images of porches, barbershops, and children jumping through a fire hydrant's spray. Then she stopped at a picture of her grandfather on a stoop, holding a toolbox. He had repaired roofs after the flood of 1998, before Nia was born. Until that moment, the presentation had felt like an assignment. Now it felt like a promise to carry his work forward.
- ③ By 6:27, Malik had found the projector, but its lamp flashed a red warning light. He knelt beside it, unscrewing the panel while Nia arranged photographs along the hallway floor. A custodian paused. "Those deserve an audience," she said, and handed Nia a roll of clear tape. Nia fastened the first photograph to the council chamber door just as voices gathered beyond it. Malik looked up, his hands blackened with dust. The lamp flickered, steadied, and filled the wall with her grandfather's face. Nia breathed out. She understood that remembering was not looking backward. It was deciding what to protect next.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE _____ Use the passage

1 How does Malik’s statement that the meeting starts in eighteen minutes establish the scene’s pacing and Nia’s immediate problem?

2 How does the sequence “tugged once, twice, three times” affect the pacing in paragraph 2?

3 Which description changes Nia’s view of the presentation, and what reflection follows it?

4 What are the two plot lines in the scene, and how do they come together at the end?

3 YOUR TURN _____ Your own words

Write a 180 to 210-word scene in two paragraphs about two characters facing the same deadline with different problems. Use at least one line of dialogue, at least two paced action moments, concrete description, and a final reflection that shows how the two plot lines connect.

PART 1 • READ AND MARK

Underline the dialogue, circle two details that speed up or slow down the scene, and label each of the two plot lines with a different number. Your marks should show how the writer builds tension and develops Nia's purpose. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 • ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	How does Malik's statement that the meeting starts in eighteen minutes establish the scene's pacing and Nia's immediate problem?	It creates a short deadline, making Nia's need to prepare the presentation feel urgent.
2	How does the sequence "tugged once, twice, three times" affect the pacing in paragraph 2?	The counted attempts briefly slow the action and build suspense before the entrance opens.
3	Which description changes Nia's view of the presentation, and what reflection follows it?	The photograph of her grandfather holding a toolbox changes her view. She realizes the presentation is a promise to continue his work, not merely an assignment.
4	What are the two plot lines in the scene, and how do they come together at the end?	One plot line follows Nia as she prepares the photographs and presentation. The other follows Malik as he finds and repairs the projector. They meet when the projector displays the photograph of Nia's grandfather.

PART 3 • YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

At 4:45, Tomas waited beside the empty bus shelter, gripping the cardboard model he had built for the engineering fair. Across the street, his cousin Imani crouched over a bicycle chain, trying to free the wheel of the food-delivery cart. "The judges close the doors at five," Tomas said. Imani pulled the chain loose, but black grease streaked her sleeve. The rain began as a mist. Tomas watched water bead on the model's tiny solar panels and imagined them collapsing before anyone saw them. Then Imani lifted the cart's front wheel and pointed toward the fairgrounds. "Put your model inside. I can pedal with one hand." Tomas hesitated only long enough to wrap his jacket around the cardboard. They crossed at a run, the cart rattling over each crack in the pavement. At the entrance, a guard reached for the lock. Tomas held up the model. Imani rang the cart bell once, sharply. The guard glanced at the rain, then opened the door. Inside, Tomas set the model beneath bright lights. He realized Imani had not saved only his project. She had shown him that an invention matters when it helps someone keep moving.

Accept equivalent explanations that use specific evidence from the passage and accurately connect a narrative technique to its effect. For Part 3, accept varied situations if the response has two connected plot lines, purposeful pacing, dialogue, description, and a reflective ending.