Signal the Shift

Track how transitions guide a reader through time and place.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.7.3c "Use a variety of transition words, phrases, and clauses to convey sequence and signal shifts from one time frame or setting to another."

NAME _____ DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline every word, phrase, or clause that signals order or a shift in time or setting, then number the five main events in order.

A Prop With a Past

1. On Saturday morning, Lena unlocked the school theater's storage room and switched on the dusty lights. First, she searched the shelves for the blue lantern needed in that night's play. Behind a stack of cardboard moons, she found a box labeled "River Set, 2018." As she lifted the lid, a painted wooden boat slid into view. For a moment, the quiet room smelled like old paint and raincoats. Then Lena noticed a note tucked beneath the boat's broken oar.

2. The note sent Lena back to 2018, when she had watched her older brother perform in The River Thief. At that time, the boat had glided across the stage while a fan made its paper waves tremble. During the final scene, her brother had knelt beside it and sung a farewell song. Now, in the storage room, Lena read the note again. It said that the boat's makers had hidden a spare lantern inside its hull. Carefully, she turned the boat over and opened a small panel.

3. Inside, wrapped in silver paper, lay the missing lantern. A minute later, Lena carried it upstairs to the bright stage, where students were taping painted clouds to the wall. Meanwhile, the director tested the sound system in the auditorium. Before the audience arrived, Lena placed the lantern beside the boat and repaired the oar with tape. Finally, as the curtain rose that evening, the boat crossed the stage again. From the back row, Lena's brother, now home from college, recognized the old prop and waved.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. Which phrase signals that the second paragraph shifts to an earlier time?

2. Which transition returns the reader from 2018 to Lena in the storage room?

3. What does “A minute later” tell the reader about when Lena carries the lantern upstairs?

4. How does “Meanwhile” shift the reader's attention to another setting?

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

Write a four-sentence scene about preparing for an event. Use at least three transition words, phrases, or clauses, and signal a shift to another time or setting.

ANSWER KEY

Signal the Shift

PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Underline every word, phrase, or clause that signals order or a shift in time or setting, then number the five main events in order. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 · ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	Which phrase signals that the second paragraph shifts to an earlier time?	**"The note sent Lena back to 2018, when she had watched her older brother perform."**
2	Which transition returns the reader from 2018 to Lena in the storage room?	**"Now, in the storage room."**
3	What does "A minute later" tell the reader about when Lena carries the lantern upstairs?	**It tells that she carries the lantern upstairs shortly after finding it inside the boat.**
4	How does "Meanwhile" shift the reader's attention to another setting?	**It shows that while Lena is on the stage, the director is testing the sound system in the auditorium.**

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

First, I packed my sketchbook for the art fair. While I waited for the bus, I remembered last spring, when rain soaked my display. An hour later, at the library lobby, I set my drawings on a dry table. Finally, after the doors opened, I greeted visitors.

Accept accurate identification of transition language that signals sequence, time, or setting shifts. For the writing task, look for four sentences, at least three transitions, and a clear shift in time or place.