Pressure, Then Plan

Study how a narrative orders pressure, action, and reflection.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.9-10.3c "Use a variety of techniques to sequence events so that they build on one another to create a coherent whole."

NAME _____ DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline words or phrases that signal time or order, circle the sentence that returns to an earlier time, and draw arrows between events that lead to later actions. These marks show how the writer builds one connected sequence.

The Cold Greenhouse

1 At 6:40 on Saturday morning, Maya unlocked the school greenhouse with her sleeve pulled over one hand. Overnight, a hard frost had coated the glass, and the temperature inside had fallen far below what the seedlings needed. She checked the thermometer twice before calling Mr. Ortiz, the garden adviser. Then she moved from tray to tray, lifting plastic covers over the smallest plants. By the time he arrived, she had protected the tomatoes, peppers, and basil. Only after the urgent work was done did she notice the silent heater in the corner.

2 Earlier that week, Maya had tested the heater during a routine check. Its fan had rattled, then started, so she had written "watch" beside its name on the clipboard. Now that small note changed the next step. While Mr. Ortiz inspected the outlet, Maya carried jugs of warm water from the science room. The work felt slow because each trip took her past the dark courtyard and back through two locked doors. At 7:15, the heater clicked on briefly, then stopped again. Instead of waiting for it, they shifted the trays to the library, where the custodian had cleared a sunny table.

3 By noon, sunlight had warmed the library table, and the seedlings had begun to straighten. Maya made a list of the trays that had spent the longest time in the cold, planning to check them again on Monday. Before leaving, she returned to the greenhouse with Mr. Ortiz. They found a loose wire at the heater's plug, a problem the maintenance team could repair. The morning had begun with a locked, freezing room, but it ended with the plants safe and a clearer plan. On Monday, Maya would not simply test the heater. She would unplug it, inspect the cord, and record the result.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. What information does the brief return to the earlier week provide, and how does that information lead to Maya's next action?

2. Choose two time or order signals from the passage. For each one, explain which event comes before and which event comes after.

3. Which details slow down the middle of the narrative, and why is slowing the pace effective at that point?

4. How does the final paragraph create an ending that goes beyond the immediate rescue of the plants? Use two details from the paragraph.

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

Write a 120 to 150 word narrative about a student solving a new school or community problem. Begin during the problem, include one brief return to an earlier event that changes the response, slow down one important moment, and end with a next step or lasting result.

ANSWER KEY

Pressure, Then Plan

HIGH SCHOOL · W.9-10.3c

PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Underline words or phrases that signal time or order, circle the sentence that returns to an earlier time, and draw arrows between events that lead to later actions. These marks show how the writer builds one connected sequence. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 · ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	What information does the brief return to the earlier week provide, and how does that information lead to Maya's next action?	**It shows that the heater's fan had rattled and that Maya had marked it "watch." This makes the heater a likely problem, so she and Mr. Ortiz inspect the outlet while she brings warm water.**
2	Choose two time or order signals from the passage. For each one, explain which event comes before and which event comes after.	**"Only after the urgent work was done" places Maya's discovery of the silent heater after she covers the plants. "Instead of waiting for it" places the move to the library after the heater clicks on briefly and stops again.**
3	Which details slow down the middle of the narrative, and why is slowing the pace effective at that point?	**The repeated trips through the dark courtyard and two locked doors, along with the 7:15 heater failure, slow the pace. They show the difficulty and urgency before the trays are moved.**
4	How does the final paragraph create an ending that goes beyond the immediate rescue of the plants? Use two details from the paragraph.	**It explains the cause, a loose wire at the heater's plug, and gives Maya a future plan to unplug the heater, inspect the cord, and record the result on Monday.**

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

At 3:05, Jordan heard the final warning bell just as the model bridge snapped in half. For a second, he stared at the broken balsa wood on the lab floor. Then he gathered the longest pieces and carried them to the back table. Earlier that month, his partner had shown him how to reinforce a joint with crossed strips, but Jordan had ignored that step to save time. Remembering her advice, he measured two narrow supports and glued them beneath the break. The glue dried slowly, so he watched the clock while the judges entered the room. At 3:18, he placed the bridge on the testing stand. It held the first weight, then the second. Before packing up, Jordan wrote "cross supports first" in his notebook. Next time, the supports would be part of the original design.

Accept equivalent explanations that accurately connect an earlier event, a present action, and a later result. For the narrative, look for a coherent event sequence, a purposeful return to an earlier moment, pacing at a key moment, and an ending that shows consequence or follow-up.