The Missing Cue

Read a backstage mystery with pauses and expression

5.RF.2 "Orally read grade-level appropriate or higher texts smoothly and accurately, with expression that connotes comprehension."

NAME _____ DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

YOUR JOB Read the story aloud. In each paragraph, add one slash (/) where a short pause helps the meaning, and underline one phrase you would stress to show how Lina feels.

Two Minutes to Curtain

1. The school play was about to begin when the backstage bell vanished. Lina checked the hook beside the curtain. Empty. Without the bell, the actors would miss their cue to enter. From the audience came a low, restless murmur. "We have two minutes," whispered Mr. Vale. Lina took a breath and followed a faint metallic jingle toward the storage room.

2. Inside, cardboard trees leaned against shelves, and paper stars hung from the ceiling. The jingle came again, then stopped. Lina stepped around a painted castle and spotted a silver shape under a table. "There it is!" she cried. But when she reached down, the shape skittered away. A small gray mouse had dragged the bell by its ribbon.

3. Lina froze, afraid the mouse would dart deeper into the room. She pulled a cracker from her pocket, set it on the floor, and backed away. The mouse dropped the ribbon and hurried to the snack. Lina snatched up the bell. "Places!" called Mr. Vale from the stage. She rang it twice, clear and bright. The actors stepped through the curtain just as the audience fell silent.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. Read “Lina checked the hook beside the curtain. Empty.” Where would you pause, and how would you say “Empty” to show what Lina discovers?

2. In “The jingle came again, then stopped,” which word would you stress to show the change in sound? Why?

3. How should your voice change from “There it is!” to “But when she reached down, the shape skittered away”? Use words from the passage to explain.

4. How would you change your pace while reading the final two sentences? Use details from the story to explain.

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

Write two original sentences that continue the story after the audience falls silent. Add one slash (/) for a pause, underline a phrase to stress, and write a third sentence explaining how those choices help a listener understand the scene.

ANSWER KEY

The Missing Cue

GRADE 5 · 5.RF.2

PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Read the story aloud. In each paragraph, add one slash (/) where a short pause helps the meaning, and underline one phrase you would stress to show how Lina feels. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 · ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	Read "Lina checked the hook beside the curtain. Empty." Where would you pause, and how would you say "Empty" to show what Lina discovers?	**Pause before "Empty" and say it with surprise or worry to show that the bell is gone.**
2	In "The jingle came again, then stopped," which word would you stress to show the change in sound? Why?	**Stress "stopped" to make the sudden silence clear.**
3	How should your voice change from "There it is!" to "But when she reached down, the shape skittered away"? Use words from the passage to explain.	**Sound excited on "There it is!" Then sound startled or uncertain when the shape "skittered away."**
4	How would you change your pace while reading the final two sentences? Use details from the story to explain.	**Read the bell ringing briskly and clearly, then slow down as the actors enter and the audience falls silent.**

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

Lina slipped behind the curtain / as the first actor stepped forward. Then the mouse darted across the stage, and Lina whispered, Not again! The pause builds suspense, and the stressed words show Lina's sudden alarm.

Accept other pauses, stressed words, and changes in delivery when students connect them to details in the passage. For Your Turn, look for two original story sentences, one marked pause, one underlined phrase, and a third sentence explaining both choices.