The Visible Seam

Three stories, one event, different ways to tell it

8.RC.3 "Compare and contrast the structure of two or more related works of literature (e.g., similar topic or theme), and analyze and evaluate how the differing structure of each text contributes to its meaning and style."

NAME _____ DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

YOUR JOB Read and mark each story. Underline its first and last sentences, then circle words that move the story backward or forward in time.

A Tear in the Backdrop

1. **Story A: The Seam** Jo pushed a cart toward the stage before rehearsal. Its wheel caught the painted backdrop, and the canvas split beside a paper moon. Jo could have rolled the cart away. Instead, Jo told Ms. Chen what had happened. She handed Jo a needle and blue thread, and they stitched the tear while the cast practiced lines. When the curtain rose, the blue seam showed under the stage lights. Jo watched the actors continue without a pause. The repair did not hide the mistake, but the play went on.

2. **Story B: Under the Lights** From the back row, Jo saw a blue seam flash beneath the stage lights while the actors spoke. An audience member laughed at a joke, but Jo wondered whether anyone had noticed the seam. Before rehearsal, Jo had stitched the torn canvas with blue thread and a needle from Ms. Chen. Just before that, Jo had told Ms. Chen about the tear instead of hiding it. Earlier still, a wheel on Jo's cart had caught the backdrop beside the painted moon.

3. **Story C: Blue Thread** The blue seam ran across the backdrop. At first, Jo stared at it from the back row with a frown. That morning, a cart wheel had torn the canvas beside the painted moon. Jo had told Ms. Chen, and together they had stitched the split with blue thread. Now the actors spoke beneath the lights, and no one stopped the play. Jo looked again. The seam was still easy to see, but it no longer looked like a warning. The blue seam ran across the backdrop.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. How does Story A's order differ from Story B's? Use an event from each story to show the difference.

2. Stories B and C both begin with the seam. How does each story organize what happens after that opening?

3. Story C repeats its opening sentence at the end. What does that repetition show about Jo's view of the seam?

4. Which ending, Story A's or Story B's, puts more weight on Jo's mistake? Explain how the ending creates that effect.

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

Rewrite Story B in 3 or 4 sentences so its events happen in the order they occurred. Then write 2 sentences explaining how your new order changes the effect of the ending.

ANSWER KEY

The Visible Seam

GRADE 8 · 8.RC.3

PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Read and mark each story. Underline its first and last sentences, then circle words that move the story backward or forward in time. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 · ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	How does Story A's order differ from Story B's? Use an event from each story to show the difference.	**Story A moves from the cart tearing the backdrop to the performance. Story B starts at the performance and moves backward, ending with the cart tearing the backdrop.**
2	Stories B and C both begin with the seam. How does each story organize what happens after that opening?	**Story B moves backward through the repair, Jo's admission, and the accident. Story C moves back to the accident, then returns to Jo looking at the seam during the play.**
3	Story C repeats its opening sentence at the end. What does that repetition show about Jo's view of the seam?	**The seam has not changed, but Jo's view has. Jo first stares at it with a frown and later no longer sees it as a warning.**
4	Which ending, Story A's or Story B's, puts more weight on Jo's mistake? Explain how the ending creates that effect.	**Story B's ending puts more weight on the mistake because it ends with the cart catching the backdrop. Story A ends with the actors continuing and the play going on despite the visible repair.**

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

A wheel on Jo's cart caught the backdrop beside the painted moon. Jo told Ms. Chen about the tear, then stitched the canvas with the needle and blue thread she gave Jo. During the performance, Jo saw the seam flash beneath the stage lights while the actors spoke. An audience member laughed at a joke, but Jo wondered whether anyone had noticed the seam. The original ends with the accident, keeping Jo's mistake in focus. My version ends with Jo's worry during the play, putting more attention on how others might see the repair.

Accept answers that identify the stories' different event orders and explain an effect using a specific detail. For Your Turn, the rewrite should use only events supported by Story B and place them in chronological order.