Beyond the Frame

Trace how a narrator's perspective changes.

9-10.RC "Students analyze the author's technique, structure, main ideas, purpose, and perspective in grade-level fiction and nonfiction text, using textual evidence to support analysis."

NAME _____ DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline the narrator's initial goal, circle two details that challenge it, and number the paragraphs to track how the narrator's perspective changes.

The Blue Bench

1 At seven on Saturday morning, I carried a can of blue paint to the bus stop. The bench there had faded to the color of dishwater, and one plank wore a dark scar where someone had scratched a name. I had asked the transit office for permission to repaint it, hoping the bench would look the way it did in the photograph of my grandfather waiting beside it. He had driven this route for twenty years. In the photograph he is grinning, one hand on the bench, as if the whole block belongs to him. I wanted that block back.

2 As I brushed primer onto the seat, a woman with a grocery cart stopped beside me. She glanced at the wet primer and stayed standing. I apologized, but she pointed to the far end, where a narrow strip was still dry. "Could you leave that part open until the bus comes?" she asked. I remembered a winter afternoon when my grandfather had stepped off his bus to help a rider lift a cart onto the curb. In the photograph, I had noticed only his smile. Standing beside the bench, I finally wondered who had been just outside the frame.

3 I set the brush down and moved my supplies off the dry end. The woman sat while I worked on the backrest, telling me which buses came late and which drivers waited when they saw her cart. When her bus arrived, I noticed the scratched name again. I had planned to cover every mark, but the letters were too deep for paint to hide. I left them and finished the empty end after she boarded. By noon, the bench was blue, though not the spotless blue in my grandfather's picture. From the sidewalk, it looked less like a monument and more like a place someone might use.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. What does the contrast between the faded bench and the photograph reveal about the narrator's goal at the start? Use a detail from the first paragraph.

2. Why does the author place the winter memory after the woman asks for a place to sit, rather than at the start of the story?

3. What does the narrator mean by wondering who was "just outside the frame"? How does this phrase connect to the photograph?

4. What main idea emerges by the end? Support your answer with two actions the narrator takes after the woman arrives.

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

Write four to five sentences. First, retell the bus-stop encounter in the woman's first-person voice; then explain how her viewpoint shifts the story's emphasis. Include two details from the passage.

Beyond the Frame

PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Underline the narrator's initial goal, circle two details that challenge it, and number the paragraphs to track how the narrator's perspective changes. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 · ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	What does the contrast between the faded bench and the photograph reveal about the narrator's goal at the start? Use a detail from the first paragraph.	**The narrator wants to restore the bench to its earlier appearance and recover a connection to the grandfather. The bench has faded, but the narrator hopes to make it look as it did in the photograph.**
2	Why does the author place the winter memory after the woman asks for a place to sit, rather than at the start of the story?	**The woman's request prompts the memory. Its placement shows the narrator beginning to think about the grandfather's actions toward riders, not just his appearance in the photograph.**
3	What does the narrator mean by wondering who was "just outside the frame"? How does this phrase connect to the photograph?	**The narrator wonders about the riders the grandfather helped, people who would not appear in the photograph. The phrase contrasts what a picture shows with what it leaves unseen.**
4	What main idea emerges by the end? Support your answer with two actions the narrator takes after the woman arrives.	**Caring for a place means considering the people who use it, not just preserving a memory of it. The narrator moves supplies so the woman can sit and waits until she boards to paint the rest of the seat.**

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

I reached the stop with my grocery cart and found a student painting the bench where I hoped to sit. When I asked for a dry place, the student moved the supplies and worked on the backrest until my bus arrived. From my viewpoint, the unfinished seat matters more than the old photograph because I need a place to rest. My account emphasizes what the bench does for a rider rather than what it preserves from the student's past.

Accept interpretations that connect specific passage details to the narrator's changing perspective. For the open task, look for a consistent first-person voice and an explanation of how the woman's priorities shift the emphasis.