When Duties Collide

Trace how expectations create different kinds of pressure.

S.4.5 "Explain how roles and role expectations can lead to role conflict and role strain."

NAME _____ DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline the competing expectations in each of Nia's four situations. Write C beside a clash between two roles and S beside a clash within one role.

Nia's Crowded Week

1 A social role is a position a person holds in a group or community. People attach expectations to a role, including duties, behavior, and use of time. Role conflict happens when expectations from two different roles compete. Role strain happens when expectations inside one role compete. Both pressures can happen even when a person takes every responsibility seriously. A choice may disappoint someone, not because the person lacks effort, but because time and attention are limited. Nia, a high school student, works at a neighborhood cafe and captains her school's debate team.

2 On Thursday, Nia's debate team schedules its final practice for 4:30. As captain, she is expected to lead the session, but her cafe manager schedules her to start a shift at 4:30. Neither group can change its time. Later, Nia learns that her younger sister's school concert begins at 7:00 that evening. Her family expects Nia to be in the audience, while the cafe expects her to stay until closing at 8:00. Nia cannot be at both places at either time. She cares about her teammates, coworkers, and sister, but caring does not make the schedules fit.

3 Even when Nia is in just one place, expectations can compete. At debate practice on Wednesday, the captain must give every speaker useful feedback before the tournament. She is also expected to keep the whole team on a strict thirty-minute schedule. Three speakers ask for extra time, so she must choose between detailed feedback and staying on schedule. At the cafe on Friday, the manager expects Nia, as cashier, to move the line quickly. The same job also requires her to check each order carefully before taking payment. When the line grows, speeding up leaves less time to catch mistakes.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. At 4:30 on Thursday, what does each of Nia's roles require, and why is this role conflict?

2. At 7:00 on Thursday, how do Nia's family and work expectations create role conflict?

3. At Wednesday's debate practice, which expectations compete, and why is this role strain?

4. On Friday at the cafe, how does Nia face role strain as a cashier?

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

Create a situation in which one person faces role conflict between two roles. Then describe a different situation in which that person faces role strain within one of those roles, naming the competing expectations and explaining each label.

When Duties Collide

PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Underline the competing expectations in each of Nia's four situations. Write C beside a clash between two roles and S beside a clash within one role. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 · ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	At 4:30 on Thursday, what does each of Nia's roles require, and why is this role conflict?	**As debate captain, Nia must lead practice. As a cafe worker, she must start her shift. The two roles require her to be in different places at 4:30.**
2	At 7:00 on Thursday, how do Nia's family and work expectations create role conflict?	**Her family expects her at her sister's concert, but her cafe shift lasts until 8:00. Expectations from her family and worker roles compete.**
3	At Wednesday's debate practice, which expectations compete, and why is this role strain?	**Nia must give every speaker useful feedback and keep practice to thirty minutes. Both expectations belong to her captain role, and extra feedback takes time.**
4	On Friday at the cafe, how does Nia face role strain as a cashier?	**She is expected to move the line quickly and check each order carefully. Both duties belong to her cashier role, but working faster leaves less time to catch mistakes.**

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

As a parent and a lifeguard, Malik is expected to attend his child's school play while covering a pool shift at the same time. This is role conflict because the two roles require him in different places. During his pool shift, Malik is expected to watch swimmers continuously and immediately write a detailed incident report, with no one available to take over. This is role strain because both expectations belong to his lifeguard role and compete for his attention.

Accept other supported explanations that identify the competing expectations and distinguish between two roles and one role. For the open task, both situations must concern the same person.