Before the Storm

Trace how a narrator builds a scene and connects events.

C.6.3 "Compose narratives to develop real or imagined experiences or multiple events, memories or ideas, using effective technique, relevant descriptive details and well-structured event sequences..."

NAME _____ DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

YOUR JOB Circle three phrases that show time passing, underline two details that help you picture the scene, and box the sentence where the narrator decides what to do.

The Greenhouse Key

1. That afternoon, the school courtyard smelled of wet soil and orange peels from lunch. I had promised Ms. Vega that I would carry our class's tomato seedlings into the greenhouse before the storm. My friend Nia balanced two trays against her hip while I searched my pockets for the door key. Nothing. The first drops tapped the metal watering cans. "Tell me you have it," Nia said. I remembered leaving the key beside the sink in our classroom, three hallways away. Thunder rolled, and the seedlings shook in the wind.

2. Minutes later, we hurried back through the empty hallway, our sneakers squeaking on the floor. The classroom door was locked. I pressed my forehead against its cool window and spotted the key beside the sink. "Could we ask the custodian?" Nia whispered. I wanted to hide my mistake, but the seedlings needed help. I decided to find Mr. Ortiz, who was mopping the library. We ran past the trophy case and nearly collided with him as he pushed a mop bucket.

3. The next morning, our shoes left muddy prints as we stepped into the greenhouse. The storm had passed, and pale sunlight warmed the glass. Every seedling stood in its tray, though one leaf had torn in the wind. Yesterday, Mr. Ortiz had opened our classroom, and we had raced the key back to the courtyard just before the rain poured down. Nia touched the torn leaf. "They made it," she said. I returned the key to Ms. Vega, then wrote "check key" on our class's greenhouse list.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. How does "Minutes later" connect the second paragraph to the first?

2. How does the locked classroom door change what the narrator does next?

3. How do the first drops, thunder, and shaking seedlings affect the pace or mood of the scene?

4. Why does the narrator shift back to "Yesterday" after describing the next morning?

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

Write a 6 to 8 sentence scene about a small mistake that changes a plan. Introduce a narrator and another character, use at least two time transitions, include one line of dialogue and two sensory details, and end with a result of the mistake.

ANSWER KEY

Before the Storm

GRADE 6 · C.6.3

PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Circle three phrases that show time passing, underline two details that help you picture the scene, and box the sentence where the narrator decides what to do. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 · ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	How does "Minutes later" connect the second paragraph to the first?	**It shows that Nia and the narrator hurry from the courtyard to the classroom soon after the narrator remembers where the key is.**
2	How does the locked classroom door change what the narrator does next?	**The narrator decides to find Mr. Ortiz, who can open the classroom so they can get the key.**
3	How do the first drops, thunder, and shaking seedlings affect the pace or mood of the scene?	**They create urgency because the storm is getting closer while the seedlings remain outside.**
4	Why does the narrator shift back to "Yesterday" after describing the next morning?	**The shift fills in what happened after they found Mr. Ortiz: he opened the classroom, and they got the key back to the courtyard before the heavy rain.**

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

Before the bake sale, I opened my bag and found paper cups instead of the price signs I had made. The gym smelled of cinnamon, and folding tables rattled as students rushed past. "No signs?" Jada asked. I showed her the cups, and she handed me a marker. A few minutes later, we turned the cups upside down and wrote prices on their sides. When the doors opened, customers could see each price without lifting a tray. I kept one marked cup to remind myself how Jada and I had solved the problem.

Accept other accurate time phrases and sensory details for the marking task. For the questions, accept answers that explain how a detail, choice, or time shift shapes the sequence, even if students use different wording.