The Quiet Tour

How a narrator's praise can expose what it hides

RL.11-12.6 "Analyze how point of view and perspective are used to manipulate the reader for a specific purpose or effect, including but not limited to satire, sarcasm, irony and understatement."

NAME _____ DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline the ambassador's praise, circle details that challenge it, and number the place where the ambassador's perspective begins to shift.

A Tour of Quiet Lunch

(1) As the school's student ambassador, I was asked to record a cheerful tour of our new "Quiet Lunch" program. "Notice how peacefully everyone eats," I told the microphone, stepping around a line of students waiting to surrender their phones. Each table had a white card explaining that conversation was permitted at a volume "comparable to turning a page." In the corner, two monitors held little meters that flashed red whenever the room grew too lively. I described the red lights as festive. My friend Nia raised her eyebrows at me, but eyebrows, fortunately, did not register on the meters.

(2) The principal had said the program would help us "hear one another better." At the table nearest mine, Luis tried to tell his sister that their ride home had changed. The meter flashed; a monitor walked over and asked him to save the news for later. I angled the microphone toward the soft scrape of plastic forks. "Listen," I said, "to the sound of students connecting." Nia passed Luis a napkin and wrote something on it. I kept the microphone away from her hand. An ambassador's job, I reasoned, was to showcase the room, not every tiny act of communication inside it.

(3) When the recording ended, Nia asked whether I would leave the tour as it was. "It sounds like everybody chose this," she said. I replayed the part about connecting. Beneath my voice, barely audible, a chair scraped as Luis hurried after the monitor to ask about his ride. I had called the lunch quiet, which was true in the way an empty theater is quiet after the actors are sent home. I deleted the scrape, then paused over the save button. On tomorrow's tour, I decided, I could at least point out that the meters had excellent hearing.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. How does the ambassador's role shape what the narrator says into the microphone? What does the reader notice that a listener to the tour might miss?

2. How does the scene with Luis make "the sound of students connecting" ironic?

3. Why does the narrator call Nia's note a "tiny act of communication"? How might that choice of words affect a reader?

4. How do the empty-theater comparison and the final comment about the meters change the effect of the narrator's praise?

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

Retell the moment when Luis tries to speak to his sister from Nia's first-person perspective in 70 to 100 words. Use irony or understatement to shape the reader's view of Quiet Lunch, then add one sentence explaining the effect of your choice.

ANSWER KEY

The Quiet Tour

HIGH SCHOOL · RL.11-12.6

PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Underline the ambassador's praise, circle details that challenge it, and number the place where the ambassador's perspective begins to shift. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 · ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	How does the ambassador's role shape what the narrator says into the microphone? What does the reader notice that a listener to the tour might miss?	**The ambassador is expected to promote the program, so the narration calls the lunch peaceful and the red lights festive. The reader also sees students surrender phones and face limits on conversation.**
2	How does the scene with Luis make "the sound of students connecting" ironic?	**Luis is stopped from telling his sister about their changed ride, while Nia communicates by writing on a napkin. The ambassador's praise calls attention to how the rule prevents conversation.**
3	Why does the narrator call Nia's note a "tiny act of communication"? How might that choice of words affect a reader?	**Calling the note tiny downplays evidence that students must work around the rule to communicate. Readers may question why the ambassador keeps the microphone away from it.**
4	How do the empty-theater comparison and the final comment about the meters change the effect of the narrator's praise?	**The comparison suggests the quiet is imposed, not freely chosen. The final comment sounds complimentary but points out that the meters hear students better than the adults listen to them.**

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

At lunch, Luis leaned toward his sister, trying to explain that their ride home had changed. The meter turned red before she could answer. A monitor told him to save it for later, as if the ride would wait for permission too. I wrote a message on my napkin and slid it to him while our ambassador praised the sound of students connecting. She pointed her microphone at the forks and away from my hand. Apparently, this room had room for everyone's voice, provided no one used one. Nia's sarcasm makes the rule sound absurd rather than comforting.

Accept interpretations supported by specific details from the passage. In Part 3, look for a consistent Nia perspective, an ironic or understated choice that influences the reader, and an explanation of that effect.