The Open Door

Compare how prose, film, and radio shape one decision.

RL.9-10.7 "Analyze the impact of the representation of a subject or a key scene in different print and non-print mediums and evaluate what is emphasized or omitted in each treatment."

NAME _____ DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline one detail in each paragraph that shapes your view of Mara's decision. Beside each underline, write P for prose, F for film, or R for radio so you can compare the three treatments.

The Archive Door

1. By the time the flood reached the archive steps, Mara had dragged the oldest maps onto the high shelves. Through the glass door, she saw three neighbors stranded on the street, water curling around their knees. The door was locked to keep the collection dry. Her father had spent years repairing those maps, and she could almost hear him asking her to protect them. Then the smallest neighbor slipped. Mara pulled the bolt and held the door open while muddy water ran across the floor. She told herself paper could be repaired again; a person swept away could not.

2. In a film treatment of this scene, the camera begins outside, level with the rising water. A wide shot shows Mara behind the archive's glass door while the three neighbors struggle toward it. The smallest neighbor falls, and the film cuts to a close view of Mara's hand gripping the bolt. For several seconds she does not move. There is no voice-over and no mention of her father or the maps. When the bolt slides back, the camera stays outside: the neighbors rush past her into the building, and water pours through the doorway behind them.

3. In a radio treatment, listeners hear rain striking glass, then three voices calling from the street. A sharp splash interrupts one voice. Mara says, 'Hold on. The door sticks.' Her keys rattle; a bolt scrapes; footsteps hurry inside. One neighbor says, 'You let the water in.' Mara answers, 'I know.' The sound of dripping grows louder, but nobody describes the maps, the neighbors' faces, or the height of the water. A final thud suggests Mara has closed the door. The scene ends with a neighbor asking whether there is room for anyone else.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. How does the prose give Mara's pause at the door a meaning that the film's close-up of her hand does not?

2. What does the film's camera position outside the door emphasize about Mara's choice? Compare it with the prose's view of the scene.

3. How does the radio treatment make the neighbors' need urgent without describing what they look like? Compare one sound with a detail from the prose.

4. Both the film and radio treatments omit Mara's memory of her father. How might that omission change an audience's judgment of her decision?

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

Imagine a stage version of the same scene. In 80 to 110 words, describe two staging choices that emphasize Mara's conflict, identify one detail from the prose you would omit, and explain how that omission might change the audience's view of her decision.

ANSWER KEY

The Open Door

HIGH SCHOOL · RL.9-10.7

PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Underline one detail in each paragraph that shapes your view of Mara's decision. Beside each underline, write P for prose, F for film, or R for radio so you can compare the three treatments. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 · ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	How does the prose give Mara's pause at the door a meaning that the film's close-up of her hand does not?	**The prose reveals Mara's wish to protect maps her father repaired, so her pause shows a conflict between preserving them and helping her neighbors. The film shows the pause but omits its personal cause.**
2	What does the film's camera position outside the door emphasize about Mara's choice? Compare it with the prose's view of the scene.	**From outside, the film emphasizes the neighbors struggling in rising water and the flood entering when Mara opens the door. The prose also shows the danger but gives access to Mara's thoughts.**
3	How does the radio treatment make the neighbors' need urgent without describing what they look like? Compare one sound with a detail from the prose.	**The sharp splash interrupting a voice suggests someone has fallen, much as the prose states that the smallest neighbor slips.**
4	Both the film and radio treatments omit Mara's memory of her father. How might that omission change an audience's judgment of her decision?	**Without the memory, the audience may not realize that opening the door means risking work her father spent years repairing. Her hesitation may seem less understandable.**

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

I would set a dry map on a table beside the door and have Mara reach toward it before touching the bolt. Blue light would creep across the floor as the neighbors pound from offstage. These choices make the archive's contents and the neighbors' danger compete for her attention. I would omit the prose's memory of her father repairing maps. Without that memory, the audience would see the map as valuable but might miss why protecting it feels like a personal duty. Her pause could look like fear rather than loyalty.

Accept supported interpretations that distinguish what each medium emphasizes or omits. For the stage response, look for two specific staging choices and a plausible effect of the chosen omission.