What the Stage Reveals

Read a dramatic scene for clues that change its meaning.

11.2.R.2 "Students will identify characteristics of genres and analyze how they enhance comprehension of fiction, poetry, drama, and nonfiction."

NAME _____ DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline two stage directions that reveal urgency, and circle two lines of dialogue that explain why an object matters. Use your marks to track how this scene reveals its stakes without a narrator.

The Box Marked Copies

1 *A narrow storage room beneath the library. Water slips under the door and spreads across the tile. A red EXIT sign lights two metal shelves.* MARA: "The custodian is bringing a cart. We have five minutes before this room closes." ELI: "Then take the framed photograph first. It's the oldest thing here." *Mara lifts a cardboard box from the bottom shelf. A wet corner gives way, and papers slide toward the floor.* MARA: "Help me with these." ELI: "It says COPIES. Leave it and get the photograph." *Mara holds one page beneath the exit sign.*

2 MARA: "These are transcripts of the 1974 neighborhood interviews. Look at this note: 'Original recordings lost in the station fire.'" ELI: "So the copies are all that's left?" *He sets the photograph face down on a dry table and reaches for the loose pages.* MARA: "Don't lift the wet stack by its corners. Slide this tray underneath." *The sound of wheels comes from the hallway, then stops. Neither student moves.* ELI: "If the cart cannot get through the door, we carry the trays." MARA: "First, count the pages on the floor."

3 *The custodian calls from the hallway: "The cart fits, but the elevator is out." Mara looks toward the stairwell. Eli takes the tray, then waits.* ELI: "I'll carry the tray upstairs. You take the photograph." MARA: "We should take both trays. There may be more pages behind that box." *She points to a second cardboard box on the bottom shelf. A line of water reaches its base.* ELI: "We have time for one trip before the door gets locked." *Mara pulls the second box forward. Its label reads INTERVIEW INDEX. She carries it toward the stairs.*

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. How do the stage directions about the water change your understanding of the characters' time limit?

2. How does Eli's dialogue change what the label COPIES suggests to the audience?

3. How does the pause after the sound of wheels stops affect your reading of Eli's next line?

4. How does the final stage direction, rather than a narrator's explanation, show what else may need saving?

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

In a different everyday setting, write four lines of dialogue between two characters and include one stage direction that reveals a conflict they do not state outright. Add one sentence explaining how that stage direction helps a reader understand the conflict.

ANSWER KEY

What the Stage Reveals

GRADE 11 · 11.2.R.2

PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Underline two stage directions that reveal urgency, and circle two lines of dialogue that explain why an object matters. Use your marks to track how this scene reveals its stakes without a narrator. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 · ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	How do the stage directions about the water change your understanding of the characters' time limit?	**Water first spreads across the tile and later reaches a box on the bottom shelf. These directions show that the documents face increasing danger, making the time limit feel urgent.**
2	How does Eli's dialogue change what the label COPIES suggests to the audience?	**His question reveals that the transcripts may be the only surviving record of the interviews. The label no longer means the papers are easily replaceable.**
3	How does the pause after the sound of wheels stops affect your reading of Eli's next line?	**The pause creates uncertainty about whether the cart will reach them. Eli's offer to carry the trays reads as a backup plan.**
4	How does the final stage direction, rather than a narrator's explanation, show what else may need saving?	**Mara finds a box labeled INTERVIEW INDEX and carries it toward the stairs. Her action shows that another record may be important and at risk.**

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

At the bus stop, Nia folds an unopened envelope until its edges crease.
NIA: "The scholarship office said they mailed every decision."
TOM: "You can read it before the bus comes."
NIA: "My mother expects me to leave in August."
TOM: "She would still want to know what the letter says."
The stage direction shows Nia's anxiety about opening the decision, which makes her reluctance to read it more understandable even though she never admits she is afraid.

Accept interpretations supported by specific dialogue or stage directions. For Part 3, look for four dialogue lines, a stage direction that conveys an unstated conflict, and a sentence explaining its effect.