Saving the Orion

Trace how a narrator's perspective shapes the meaning of change.

11.3.R.2 "Students will evaluate authors' perspectives and explain how those perspectives contribute to the meanings of texts."

NAME _____ DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline two details that show the narrator's attachment to the theater, circle two details that challenge that view, and number the sentence where the narrator decides to support the renovation. Use your marks to track how the narrator's perspective changes.

What We Keep

1 On the first hot Saturday of June, I stood outside the Orion, the movie theater where I once tore tickets after school. Its marquee still promised a film that had ended years ago. Inside, dust covered the velvet seats, and sunlight leaked through a crack above the screen. A notice on the door proposed turning the building into a public cooling center. I wanted to defend the theater before anyone touched it. When I was sixteen, its dark room had offered a place to sit beside strangers and feel less alone. A cooling center sounded useful, but it also sounded like an ending.

2 At the town meeting, a neighbor asked who could afford to treat the Orion like a museum. Her apartment held heat long after sunset, and she sometimes spent afternoons in the grocery store just to escape it. Another speaker argued that demolition would be cheaper than repairing the theater's aging roof. I disliked the word cheaper when it seemed to measure only bricks and labor, not what people had carried through those doors. Still, the neighbor's question followed me home. I had been protecting my own memory of shelter while someone else needed shelter now.

3 The next week, I went back with the architect who had drawn the new plan. The rows of seats would go, but the marquee could stay; the lobby would hold water fountains and tables. I pictured a child doing homework beneath the same gold ceiling that once made me stare upward before the lights dimmed. I still hated the thought of emptying the auditorium. Yet I signed the petition for the renovation, not because the old theater meant nothing, but because its promise of refuge might survive in a different form. Keeping a place, I decided, need not mean keeping every seat.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. How does the narrator's experience as a teenager shape the way the proposed renovation first appears to them? Use a detail from the first paragraph.

2. How does the neighbor's perspective challenge the narrator's idea of what the Orion should provide?

3. Why does the narrator object to the word *cheaper*? What does that reaction reveal about how they judge the theater's value?

4. By the final sentence, what does *keeping a place* mean to the narrator? Explain how their changed perspective gives the ending its meaning.

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

Write a 90 to 110 word paragraph from the neighbor's perspective about the proposed renovation. Use at least two accurate details from the passage, and end by showing what "saving the Orion" means to her.

ANSWER KEY

Saving the Orion

GRADE 11 · 11.3.R.2

PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Underline two details that show the narrator's attachment to the theater, circle two details that challenge that view, and number the sentence where the narrator decides to support the renovation. Use your marks to track how the narrator's perspective changes. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 · ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	How does the narrator's experience as a teenager shape the way the proposed renovation first appears to them? Use a detail from the first paragraph.	**The narrator remembers feeling less alone in the theater's dark room, so the renovation initially feels like an ending to a place of refuge.**
2	How does the neighbor's perspective challenge the narrator's idea of what the Orion should provide?	**The neighbor needs relief from a hot apartment now. Her situation makes the narrator reconsider whether preserving a remembered shelter matters more than providing shelter today.**
3	Why does the narrator object to the word *cheaper*? What does that reaction reveal about how they judge the theater's value?	**The narrator thinks cost alone leaves out the experiences people have had in the theater. They judge its value by its meaning to people as well as by its building materials.**
4	By the final sentence, what does *keeping a place* mean to the narrator? Explain how their changed perspective gives the ending its meaning.	**It means preserving the theater's ability to offer refuge, even if its seats are removed. The narrator comes to see renovation as a way to continue, rather than erase, what mattered about the Orion.**

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

I used to wait out hot afternoons in the grocery store because my apartment held heat after sunset. At the meeting, I wondered who could afford to keep the Orion as a museum. I know the theater holds memories for people who watched films there, and I would hate to see its marquee disappear. But the new plan keeps that sign and brings water fountains into the lobby. I would rather sit there with my neighbors than pace grocery aisles alone. To me, saving the Orion means making room for people who need shelter today, not just honoring the people who found it yesterday.

Accept interpretations that connect the narrator's changing perspective to specific passage details. For Part 3, look for a distinct neighbor's perspective, at least two accurate details, and a closing idea about what saving the theater means to her.