The Last Bus

Listen for what speakers say, show, and leave unclear.

12.1.L.2 "Students will actively listen in order to analyze and evaluate speakers' verbal and nonverbal messages by asking questions to clarify purpose and perspective."

NAME _____ DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline two spoken claims, circle two physical cues, and number two places where a question could clarify a speaker's purpose or perspective.

A Hearing on Route 6

1 At a public hearing on Route 6, transit director Elena Park stepped to the microphone and placed a folded schedule on the lectern. "I propose ending the 11:40 p.m. trip on weekdays," she said evenly. "The bus usually carries fewer than six people, and keeping it running costs money we could use for earlier service." She held up a page of ridership totals but did not show which months they covered. "This change protects the routes most people use." Several audience members leaned forward. Park's steady voice made the proposal sound settled, though the figures on her page remained hard to assess.

2 From the back row, hospital custodian Malik Ortiz raised his hand. He gripped the microphone with both hands and said, "My shift ends at 11:15. I can reach the 11:40 bus, but the earlier one leaves before I clock out." He paused when Park glanced at the clock, then continued, "I understand why six passengers might seem like a small number. To each of us, that trip is the way home." Ortiz asked whether the average included school holidays, when fewer people ride. He added that he could not speak for every late rider.

3 Park unfolded the schedule and traced a line with her finger. "I did not mean that those riders do not matter," she replied. "My budget covers the whole route, and I have to account for each trip." She spoke faster as she suggested moving the 11:40 trip to 11:25 instead of canceling it. Ortiz shook his head slightly. "My shift can run late when a room needs cleaning," he said. Park stopped tracing the line. "Then I need to know how often that happens before I call 11:25 a solution." The chair asked both speakers to submit more information before a vote.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. What would you ask Park to clarify whether her claim about "most people" includes late riders? Explain why the question matters.

2. Park glances at the clock while Ortiz speaks. What could you ask to clarify the meaning of that glance without assuming she dismissed him?

3. Ortiz grips the microphone and describes his shift. What would you ask to clarify which late-bus schedule would work for him?

4. At the end, what would you ask Park to clarify whether she is reconsidering cancellation or only testing a different departure time?

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

At a student council meeting, a speaker proposes recording every club meeting so absent members can catch up. She speaks quickly and keeps looking at the door. In four sentences, describe her possible purpose and what her behavior might or might not mean, then ask two distinct questions that clarify her purpose and perspective without assuming her feelings.

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PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Underline two spoken claims, circle two physical cues, and number two places where a question could clarify a speaker's purpose or perspective. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 · ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	What would you ask Park to clarify whether her claim about "most people" includes late riders? Explain why the question matters.	**"Do your ridership totals show how many late-shift riders depend on the 11:40 trip?" Park's claim about most riders may overlook their needs.**
2	Park glances at the clock while Ortiz speaks. What could you ask to clarify the meaning of that glance without assuming she dismissed him?	**"Were you checking the hearing's time, or were you thinking about the proposed bus schedule?" The glance alone does not establish her meaning.**
3	Ortiz grips the microphone and describes his shift. What would you ask to clarify which late-bus schedule would work for him?	**"How often does your shift run late, and what departure time would let you reach the bus?"**
4	At the end, what would you ask Park to clarify whether she is reconsidering cancellation or only testing a different departure time?	**"Are you considering keeping a late trip, or might you still cancel it after reviewing more information?"**

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

Her proposal may aim to help absent members follow club decisions. Looking at the door might mean she is watching the time, but it does not prove she wants to leave. Is your main goal to help absent members catch up, or to keep a lasting record of discussions? Whose needs did you consider when deciding that every meeting should be recorded?

Accept other questions grounded in the speakers' words or physical cues. Students should treat nonverbal behavior as evidence to clarify, not proof of a speaker's feelings or intentions.