Before the Broadcast

How setting, flashback, and point of view shape a story

12.3.R.3 "Students will evaluate how literary elements impact theme, mood, and/or tone, using textual evidence: • setting • plot structure (e.g., foreshadowing, flashback, in media res) • conflict (i.e., internal, external) • characters (e.g...."

NAME _____ DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline two setting details that create tension, circle the words that shift the story into the past, and number two details that make you question the narrator's account of the delay.

One Bar of Service

1 At 2:13 a.m., the flood siren stopped halfway through its second cry. Rain rattled the windows of the town's radio booth, and the river pressed against the sandbags outside. Noor held a handwritten evacuation notice beside the microphone. I told her the county would send an official message soon; I had no reason to alarm anyone without it. She pointed to the water seeping beneath the door. On the desk, the phone showed one bar of service, then none. I kept my finger on the switch that would put us on the air, waiting for a voice with a title.

2 An hour earlier, Noor had read the river gauge over the phone: six inches below the evacuation line and climbing. She had asked me to prepare the announcement. I said the gauge might be broken, though I had checked it myself that afternoon. I still remember her face when I put the blank form back in the drawer, or perhaps I remember the shame I felt later and give it her face. Now she slid the notice across the desk, its ink bleeding under her wet palm. "If we wait," she said, "we're choosing for them."

3 I pressed the switch. The speaker hissed, and for a moment I could hear only the rain finding its way through the ceiling. Then Noor read the street names and the route to the school on higher ground. I said the gauge reading was not confirmed and asked listeners to check on neighbors who could not walk alone. Across the river, a window brightened, then another. I cannot tell whether anyone heard our first words or simply saw the water coming. I can tell you that I did not let go of the switch until Noor finished.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. How do two details of the radio booth's setting create tension before the broadcast?

2. How does the flashback change your understanding of the narrator's decision to wait?

3. What do Noor's actions and words suggest about her, and how does that characterization develop a theme?

4. Where does the narrator admit uncertainty about a memory? How does that admission affect the tone of the account?

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

Write one paragraph of 85 to 110 words from Noor's first-person point of view, retelling the moment at the microphone. Include at least two details from the passage without claiming to know the other person's thoughts, and end with a sentence explaining how this point of view changes the tone.

ANSWER KEY

Before the Broadcast

GRADE 12 · 12.3.R.3

PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Underline two setting details that create tension, circle the words that shift the story into the past, and number two details that make you question the narrator's account of the delay. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 · ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	How do two details of the radio booth's setting create tension before the broadcast?	**The water seeping beneath the door makes the danger immediate, while the phone losing service suggests they may not receive an official message in time.**
2	How does the flashback change your understanding of the narrator's decision to wait?	**It reveals that Noor had already reported a rising gauge and asked for an announcement, so the narrator's delay appears less reasonable than the opening account suggests.**
3	What do Noor's actions and words suggest about her, and how does that characterization develop a theme?	**Noor prepares the notice, points out the rising water, and says waiting is a choice. Her actions develop the idea that people remain responsible for acting even without official instructions.**
4	Where does the narrator admit uncertainty about a memory? How does that admission affect the tone of the account?	**The narrator is unsure whether Noor's remembered expression is real or shaped by later shame. This admission gives the account a self-questioning, regretful tone.**

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

The switch clicked beneath my partner's finger, and the speaker filled with a hiss. Rain found its way through the ceiling while I held the wet notice close enough to read its bleeding ink. I named the streets, then the school on higher ground, trying to keep my voice steady for anyone listening alone. My partner gave the unconfirmed gauge reading and asked people to help neighbors who could not walk. Across the river, lights appeared in separate windows. I did not know whether those families had heard us, but I could finally hear a warning instead of silence. This point of view makes the silence urgent rather than defensive.

Accept interpretations supported by specific passage details. In the final task, look for a consistent first-person account from Noor that does not assign private thoughts to the original narrator.