The Other Cut

A model narrative about sequence, voice, and choice

12.3.W.1 "Students will compose narratives reflecting real or imagined experiences that: • include engaging plots involving well-developed, complex characters resolving conflicts • establish narrator(s) that enhance(s) the narrative • are..."

NAME _____ DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

YOUR JOB Number the paragraphs in the order their events happen, underline a sentence that reveals the narrator's competing motives, and circle each "Click." Use your marks to track how the narrator builds tension and changes the sound's meaning.

The Story We Played

1. At seven, the auditorium lights dimmed, and my thumb rested on the laptop's space bar. Click. The speakers caught the soft hiss before Leila's voice came through: "When Dad came home that Friday..." I paused the recording before she could finish. In the front row, Leila stared at the floor, twisting the paper program until its edge curled. Our oral-history project needed a powerful ending, and her interview had one. I had even told Ms. Vale the story would make the room listen. Now every face turned toward the silent speakers. Behind me, Ms. Vale whispered, "Is the file broken?"

2. Four hours earlier, Leila and I had listened to the same file in the library. Click. She stopped it at the sentence about her father losing the shop. "Keep the part about the neighborhood helping us," she said. "Not that." I agreed, but when she left, I saved the original version. The shorter cut sounded flat to me; the longer one might win the city archive's youth prize. I told myself a good storyteller could decide what belonged in a story. Even then, I knew whose story I meant.

3. In the auditorium, I closed the file and spoke into the microphone. "I used a piece of Leila's interview she asked me to cut. I'm sorry." My voice scraped against the speakers. Ms. Vale asked the audience to wait while Leila and I stepped into the hall. I offered to end the presentation. Leila shook her head. "Play the part about the neighbors," she said, "and say I chose it." When we returned, I opened the shorter file. Click. This time the sound was a beginning, not a trap, and Leila stood beside me as her voice filled the room.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. Why does the story open in the auditorium before revealing what happened in the library? Explain the effect on the reader.

2. How does the first-person narrator make the conflict more complex than a simple choice between two audio files?

3. Compare the “Click” in the library with the final “Click.” What change does the repeated sound help show?

4. Which words or actions show that Leila helps resolve the conflict rather than simply accepting the narrator's apology?

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

Write one paragraph of 80 to 105 words about a character facing a different choice that affects someone else. Use a first-person narrator, begin at a tense moment, briefly move back in time, then resolve the conflict through action and dialogue; include one sensory detail and repeat a sound to give it a changed meaning.

ANSWER KEY

The Other Cut

GRADE 12 · 12.3.W.1

PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Number the paragraphs in the order their events happen, underline a sentence that reveals the narrator's competing motives, and circle each "Click." Use your marks to track how the narrator builds tension and changes the sound's meaning. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 · ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	Why does the story open in the auditorium before revealing what happened in the library? Explain the effect on the reader.	**The opening creates suspense about why the narrator pauses the recording and why Leila looks distressed. The library scene then reveals the broken promise behind that moment.**
2	How does the first-person narrator make the conflict more complex than a simple choice between two audio files?	**The narrator admits wanting a powerful ending and a prize while knowing the interview belongs to Leila. That admission exposes the narrator's self-justification and guilt.**
3	Compare the "Click" in the library with the final "Click." What change does the repeated sound help show?	**In the library, the click marks Leila's request to remove part of her story. At the end, it marks the start of the version she chose, showing a shift from disregarding her wishes to respecting them.**
4	Which words or actions show that Leila helps resolve the conflict rather than simply accepting the narrator's apology?	**Leila chooses the part about the neighbors, asks the narrator to say she chose it, and stands beside the narrator during the presentation.**

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

The gallery door rattled in its frame as I held my painting over the donation bin. Tap, tap: rain struck the skylight. At lunch, I had heard Niko call my portrait "too honest," and I had decided to hide it before the exhibit opened. Now he stood behind me. "I meant it shows what I never say," he said, looking at the painted empty chair. I wanted to believe him, but I also wanted to protect myself. Tap, tap. I set the painting on its easel and stepped aside so he could see it.

Accept supported interpretations of the narrator's motives and the changing meaning of "Click." For the original paragraph, check that the time shift, first-person voice, repeated sound, and resolution work together rather than appearing as isolated features.