Sounds That Reveal

How punctuation brings hidden details into focus

12.5.W.7 "Students will use a colon or dash to reveal information in a sentence."

NAME _____ DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

YOUR JOB Circle each colon and dash in the passage. Underline the information each mark reveals.

A Storm Made Indoors

1 At the community radio station, the cast recorded a storm scene without recording a storm. The sound crew had a modest inventory: a metal tray, dried beans, a sheet of cardboard, and a bowl of water. When the actor announced that the fishing boat was taking on water, someone tipped the bowl beside the microphone. The microphone picked up every splash – including the small one that sounded enormous through a listener's headphones. Nothing in the studio was visible to the audience; the crew had to make a convincing world out of noises alone.

2 The script called for a cabin door to slam just as the captain spotted land. A real door, however, would have brought in traffic noise from the hallway. The crew found another solution: they shut a thick dictionary on a padded desk. The sound carried the weight of a heavy door without disturbing the recording room. One noise proved harder to fake – the steady creak of a boat's wooden hull. After several trials with chairs and floorboards, a volunteer slowly twisted a leather belt near the microphone, and the actor's voice rose with each creak.

3 During playback, the director noticed a problem: the belt's creaks were louder than the captain's warning. The editor lowered those sounds, then listened again through ordinary speakers rather than studio headphones. That second test revealed the real weakness – the water splashes were now too faint to register. Instead of recording new effects, the crew adjusted the balance among the existing tracks. By the final mix, the scene contained no ocean, no boat, and no storm, yet listeners could follow the danger because each sound arrived at exactly the right moment.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. In paragraph 1, what information does the colon reveal about the crew's inventory?

2. What detail does the dash reveal after “every splash,” and why does that detail matter to the scene?

3. In paragraph 2, what solution does the colon reveal? Why did the crew need it?

4. In paragraph 3, how does the information after the dash change the problem first named after the colon?

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

Write three sentences about creating a sound effect for a new scene, not the boat scene. Use a colon to reveal the objects you use and a dash to reveal a surprising result or contrast.

ANSWER KEY

Sounds That Reveal

GRADE 12 · 12.5.W.7

PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Circle each colon and dash in the passage. Underline the information each mark reveals. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 · ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	In paragraph 1, what information does the colon reveal about the crew's inventory?	**It names the four items: a metal tray, dried beans, cardboard, and a bowl of water.**
2	What detail does the dash reveal after "every splash," and why does that detail matter to the scene?	**Even a small splash sounded enormous through headphones, helping an indoor sound effect suggest a boat taking on water.**
3	In paragraph 2, what solution does the colon reveal? Why did the crew need it?	**The crew shut a thick dictionary on a padded desk to make a door-slamming sound without letting hallway traffic noise into the recording.**
4	In paragraph 3, how does the information after the dash change the problem first named after the colon?	**The first problem was that the belt's creaks covered the captain's warning. After the editor lowered the creaks, the dash reveals a new problem: the water splashes were too faint.**

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

For our school's mystery podcast, I brought two objects into the booth: a handful of gravel and an empty tin. I shook the tin while a friend scattered gravel across a baking sheet. The recording sounded like hail battering a roof – even though the sky outside was clear.

Accept accurate paraphrases that identify the information introduced by each mark. For Part 3, look for three sentences, a colon introducing the objects, and a dash introducing a meaningful surprise or contrast.