The Opening Beat

Mark clues that help your voice tell the story.

4.2.F.2 "Students will orally and accurately read grade-level text at a smooth rate with expression that connotes comprehension."

NAME _____ DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline two words you will stress, and circle two punctuation marks that tell you when to pause or change your voice as you read aloud.

The Drum That Went Thump

1 On the morning of the school play, Milo lifted his drumsticks. The curtain was still closed, but the audience had begun to whisper. He tapped the drum once. Thump. He tapped it again, harder. Thump. "That is not our big opening beat," he said. "It sounds like someone knocking on a pillow!" Across the stage, Nia stopped tying the ribbons on her costume.

2 "Wait, don't hit it again," Nia said. She bent beside the drum and peered underneath. A folded scarf was tucked beneath it, pressing against the bottom. Milo pulled it free and set it on a chair. "Try now," Nia whispered. Milo raised one stick, but he held it still. From beyond the curtain came the sound of feet shuffling into place.

3 The curtain began to rise. "Now!" Nia called. Milo struck the drum. BOOM! The sound rolled across the stage, and a few people in the front row sat up straight. Milo grinned at Nia, then played the next three beats at a steady pace. Nia stepped forward to say her first line, clear and calm: "Welcome, travelers, to the edge of the sea."

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. How should you say the two “Thump.” sentences? What clue in the passage helps you decide?

2. Where should you pause in Nia’s line, “Wait, don’t hit it again,” and why?

3. How should Nia’s voice sound when she calls “Now!”? What is happening at that moment?

4. How should Nia’s voice change for her final line, compared with “Now!”? Give a clue from the passage.

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

Write three sentences about a new moment right after the play ends. Include dialogue and underline one word to stress, then read your sentences aloud at a smooth pace with expression.

ANSWER KEY

The Opening Beat

GRADE 4 · 4.2.F.2

PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Underline two words you will stress, and circle two punctuation marks that tell you when to pause or change your voice as you read aloud. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 · ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	How should you say the two "Thump." sentences? What clue in the passage helps you decide?	**Say them softly or dully. Milo says the drum sounds like someone knocking on a pillow.**
2	Where should you pause in Nia's line, "Wait, don't hit it again," and why?	**Pause briefly after "Wait," at the comma. Nia is stopping Milo so she can check the drum.**
3	How should Nia's voice sound when she calls "Now!"? What is happening at that moment?	**She should sound urgent and loud because the curtain is rising and it is time for Milo to play.**
4	How should Nia's voice change for her final line, compared with "Now!"? Give a clue from the passage.	**Her voice should change from urgent to clear and calm. The passage says she speaks her first line "clear and calm."**

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

The curtain fell, and Milo heard the crowd clap. "Did they love it?" he whispered. Nia smiled as the applause grew louder.

Accept different marked words or punctuation when students can explain how the marks guide their reading. For Part 3, listen for a smooth pace and expression that fits the student's dialogue.