Signals on Stage

Use phrases and clauses to make a scene clear.

9.5.W.2 "Students will add clarity, variety, and/or style to their writing and presentations with parts of speech and various types of phrases and clauses."

NAME _____ DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline the opening prepositional phrase that shows location in each paragraph. Circle one dependent clause in each paragraph that explains when or why something happens.

The Silent Microphone

1 Behind the auditorium curtain, Lena waited with the debate team's borrowed microphone. The room smelled faintly of paint, and voices rose from the crowded seats. When the house lights dimmed, she stepped toward the podium and tapped the microphone. Instead of her opening sentence, the speakers gave a brief hiss and fell silent. Lena glanced at the audience, then set the microphone down before anyone could see her hands shaking. Across the stage, her teammate Amir lifted a sheet of paper, ready to read aloud if the sound system failed.

2 At the sound booth, Amir's sister Jo watched the sound meter stay flat. Because the microphone cable had slipped from its socket, the signal could not reach the speakers. Jo crouched, found the loose plug, and pressed it firmly into place. She raised one thumb toward Lena, but a burst of applause made the gesture easy to miss. Then Jo flicked the microphone switch off and on, checking the meter before she signaled again. This time, a green bar rose on the display. She could see Lena's shoulders relax from across the room.

3 Beside the stage stairs, Lena saw Jo's second signal and returned to the podium. After Jo restored the connection, the microphone carried Lena's first sentence to the last row. She skipped the apology she had planned and described the debate team's proposal instead. A few students in the audience leaned forward, while others put away their phones. The interruption had lasted less than a minute, yet Lena remembered every second of it. As she finished, she looked toward the booth and gave Jo a small nod that no one else seemed to notice.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. What does the opening location phrase in paragraph 1 tell you before Lena acts?

2. Which dependent clause in paragraph 2 explains why the sound meter stays flat? How does it clarify the problem?

3. Which dependent clause in paragraph 3 tells when Lena's voice reaches the last row? How does it link two events?

4. How do the opening location phrases in paragraphs 2 and 3 help you follow the action between Jo and Lena?

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

Write four or five sentences about a sudden problem and its solution in a setting you choose. Begin two sentences with prepositional phrases that show location, and include a dependent clause that explains when or why something happens. Underline the location phrases and circle the dependent clause.

ANSWER KEY

Signals on Stage

GRADE 9 · 9.5.W.2

PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Underline the opening prepositional phrase that shows location in each paragraph. Circle one dependent clause in each paragraph that explains when or why something happens. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 · ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	What does the opening location phrase in paragraph 1 tell you before Lena acts?	**"Behind the auditorium curtain" places Lena backstage before she approaches the podium.**
2	Which dependent clause in paragraph 2 explains why the sound meter stays flat? How does it clarify the problem?	**"Because the microphone cable had slipped from its socket" identifies the loose connection as the cause.**
3	Which dependent clause in paragraph 3 tells when Lena's voice reaches the last row? How does it link two events?	**"After Jo restored the connection" shows that Jo's repair comes before Lena's voice reaches the audience.**
4	How do the opening location phrases in paragraphs 2 and 3 help you follow the action between Jo and Lena?	**"At the sound booth" shifts attention to Jo as she repairs the connection. "Beside the stage stairs" returns attention to Lena as she moves toward the podium.**

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

At the greenhouse door, Mila found that the latch would not close. Beside the workbench, she spotted a loose screw in the hinge. **Because the screw had backed out**, the door sagged against its frame. Mila tightened the screw with a screwdriver, then tested the latch twice. The door clicked shut, keeping cold air away from the seedlings.

Accept other accurate when or why clauses in each paragraph for the marking job. In the sample response, bold indicates the clause to circle.