The Beep Outside

How experience and surroundings shape perception

PS.3.2 "Describe principles of perception, including personal and environmental interactions."

NAME _____ DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline two details about Jordan's experience or attention, circle two details about the physical setting, and number Jordan's first guess and later revision to trace how perception changes.

What Made That Sound?

1. At the end of a school day, Jordan waits near the main entrance. A sharp beep sounds, and several students move toward the doors. Jordan looks up from a phone and assumes a fire alarm has started. A moment later, Jordan sees a delivery driver backing a van outside; the van makes the same beeping sound each time it reverses. The sound reached Jordan's ears before its source was clear. Perception is more than detecting a sound: the brain organizes sensory information and interprets what it might mean. Later details can change an early interpretation.

2. Jordan's first guess did not come from sound alone. Last month, a fire drill began during dismissal, so that memory made an alarm seem likely. Jordan was also tired and focused on getting home; attention to the phone meant less attention to the parking area. Another student, who had watched the van pull in, immediately linked the beep to the vehicle. The two students heard the same signal, but their prior experience and what each had noticed shaped different interpretations. An expectation can help someone respond quickly, but it can also lead to a mistaken first guess.

3. The setting shaped what was easy to perceive. Glass doors muffled traffic noise, and students talking nearby made it harder to tell where the beep came from. When Jordan stepped outside, the sound grew clearer and lined up with the van's movement. Jordan revised the first guess instead of insisting it was right. This does not mean one student has better senses than the other. Available cues changed, and the students had started with different information. When people disagree about what happened, asking what each person noticed and checking the surroundings can reveal why their accounts differ.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. Why was the beep alone not enough to tell Jordan what was happening, and what did Jordan first think it meant?

2. How did Jordan's experience and attention differ from the other student's? Explain how those differences shaped their interpretations.

3. Which two features of the setting made the beep's source harder for Jordan to identify?

4. How did stepping outside change Jordan's interpretation? What does this show about the role of surroundings in perception?

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

Imagine two people hear a brief announcement over a noisy school cafeteria speaker. In four to five sentences, describe how a personal factor and an environmental factor could lead them to interpret it differently, then explain what they could check to settle the difference.

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PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Underline two details about Jordan's experience or attention, circle two details about the physical setting, and number Jordan's first guess and later revision to trace how perception changes. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 · ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	Why was the beep alone not enough to tell Jordan what was happening, and what did Jordan first think it meant?	**The beep could have come from more than one source. Jordan first interpreted it as a fire alarm.**
2	How did Jordan's experience and attention differ from the other student's? Explain how those differences shaped their interpretations.	**Jordan remembered a fire drill at dismissal and had been looking at a phone, so an alarm seemed likely. The other student had watched the van arrive and connected the beep to it.**
3	Which two features of the setting made the beep's source harder for Jordan to identify?	**The glass doors muffled traffic noise, and nearby students' voices made it harder to locate the beep.**
4	How did stepping outside change Jordan's interpretation? What does this show about the role of surroundings in perception?	**Outside, the beep was clearer and matched the van's movement, so Jordan revised the fire-alarm guess. New cues from the surroundings can change an interpretation.**

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

A cafeteria speaker announces that buses are delayed, but chatter masks the word "delayed." Maya, whose bus left early yesterday, thinks buses are leaving now, while Eli, standing closer to the speaker, hears that they are delayed. Maya's memory shapes her guess, and the noise and distance limit what she hears. They check a written announcement on a hallway screen to settle the difference.

Accept other passage-supported explanations that distinguish a personal factor from a feature of the setting. For the open task, look for a plausible difference in interpretation and a specific way to check the announcement.