

Before the Doors Close

Analyze how a model scene uses craft to develop tension and purpose.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.11-12.3b "Use narrative techniques, such as dialogue, pacing, description, reflection, and multiple plot lines, to develop experiences, events, and/or characters."

NAME _____

DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK _____ Read it twice

YOUR JOB This is a fictional scene. Underline the dialogue, circle two details that speed up or slow down the scene, and label each of the two plot lines with a different number. Your marks should show how the writer builds tension and develops Nia's purpose.

The Photographs

- ① At 6:12, Nia stood outside the closed library in the town hall with a cardboard box of rescued neighborhood photographs balanced against her hip. Rain tapped the awning, then hardened into a rapid drumming. "The council meeting starts in eighteen minutes," her brother Malik said, checking his phone. Inside, the librarian had promised a projector for Nia's presentation about the flooded Eastside homes. But the library wing was dark. Her scanned-photo slideshow was ready on her laptop. Nia pictured Mrs. Alvarez, who had lent her the water-stained photographs, waiting in the council chamber. She had said, "People forget a street when they cannot see who lived there."
- ② Malik circled the side entrance and tugged once, twice, three times at its metal handle. On the third pull, it opened. "Go find the projector," Nia said. "I'll sort the photos." Her fingers moved quickly through images of porches, barbershops, and children jumping through a fire hydrant's spray. Then she stopped at a picture of her grandfather on a stoop, holding a toolbox. He had repaired roofs after the flood of 1998, before Nia was born. Until that moment, the presentation had felt like an assignment. Now it felt like a promise to carry his work forward.

③ By 6:27, Malik had found the projector, but its lamp flashed a red warning light. He knelt beside it, unscrewing the panel while Nia arranged photographs along the hallway floor. A custodian paused. “Those deserve an audience,” she said, and handed Nia a roll of clear tape. Nia fastened the first photograph to the council chamber door just as voices gathered beyond it. Malik looked up, his hands blackened with dust. Nia connected her laptop. The lamp flickered, steadied, and projected her grandfather’s face from the slideshow onto the wall. Nia breathed out. She understood that remembering was not looking backward. It was deciding what to protect next.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE Use the passage

1 How does Malik’s statement that the meeting starts in eighteen minutes establish the scene’s pacing and Nia’s immediate problem?

2 How does the sequence “tugged once, twice, three times” affect the pacing in paragraph 2?

3 Which description changes Nia’s view of the presentation, and what reflection follows it?

4 What are the two plot lines in the scene, and how do they come together at the end?

Your own words

Your scene

This image shows a single sheet of white paper with horizontal ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There are no margins, text, or other markings on the paper.

PART 1 • READ AND MARK

This is a fictional scene. Underline the dialogue, circle two details that speed up or slow down the scene, and label each of the two plot lines with a different number. Your marks should show how the writer builds tension and develops Nia's purpose. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 • ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	How does Malik's statement that the meeting starts in eighteen minutes establish the scene's pacing and Nia's immediate problem?	It creates a short deadline, making Nia's need to prepare the presentation feel urgent.
2	How does the sequence "tugged once, twice, three times" affect the pacing in paragraph 2?	The counted attempts briefly slow the action and build suspense before the entrance opens.
3	Which description changes Nia's view of the presentation, and what reflection follows it?	The photograph of her grandfather holding a toolbox changes her view. She realizes the presentation is a promise to continue his work, not merely an assignment.
4	What are the two plot lines in the scene, and how do they come together at the end?	One plot line follows Nia as she prepares the photographs and presentation. The other follows Malik as he finds and repairs the projector. They meet when the projector displays the photograph of Nia's grandfather.

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

At 4:45, Tomas waited beside the empty bus shelter, gripping his cardboard model for the engineering fair. Across the street, his cousin Imani crouched over the jammed chain of her delivery bicycle. A cart of food boxes stood behind it. Both needed to reach the fair before its entrance closed at five: Tomas for judging, Imani to deliver the volunteers' supper. Rain began ticking on the shelter roof. Tomas watched a corner of his model soften. Imani pulled the chain once, then again. It stayed trapped. She wiped black grease from her fingers and stared toward the distant gate.

Then Tomas unhooked the cart from the bicycle. He tested its handle, lifted, and took one careful step. The wheels turned freely. Imani locked the bicycle to the rack. 'Put your model under the lid,' she said. Tomas wrapped it in his jacket and laid it above the sealed boxes. Together they pushed the cart along the pavement. At the gate, a guard reached for the lock. Imani called out; Tomas raised their entry passes. The guard paused and waved them through. Tomas realized that protecting his own work had begun with helping Imani finish hers.

Accept equivalent explanations that use specific evidence from the passage and accurately connect a narrative technique to its effect. For Part 3, accept varied situations if the response has two connected plot lines, purposeful pacing, dialogue, description, and a reflective ending. Require 180-210 words in two paragraphs and a shared deadline with distinct problems; the sample explicitly establishes both five o'clock obligations. The source and sample are fictional narratives.