

Before the Curtain

Compare three tellings of one difficult admission.

11.T.T.1.b “Compare and evaluate how an author uses plot structures, conflict, narrative devices, word choice, and other craft techniques to impact audiences and create purpose in two or more texts. (I)”

NAME _____

DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK _____ Read it twice

YOUR JOB Read three original fictional versions of the same event. In each, underline any one detail showing Mara's conflict. Circle the words that locate Text B's flashback. In Text C, box both appearances of the repeated phrase “Say it.”

Three Ways to Tell the Truth

- ① **Text A.** Mara checked the envelope beside the stage manager's desk. The donated ticket money was gone. Then she remembered moving it to the locked cashbox that afternoon and leaving the envelope in its place. Onstage, the director was about to thank the audience for the donation. Mara wanted to stay invisible; she had ignored the manager's request to tell her about any transfer. She knocked on the office door. “I moved the money,” she said, and explained where. The manager opened the cashbox and checked the amount with her. Only then did Mara hear the music beginning beyond the curtain.
- ② **Text B.** The music was beginning beyond the curtain when Mara finally stopped gripping the empty envelope. The stage manager had just checked the donation in the locked cashbox and nodded. Ten minutes earlier, Mara had stood outside the office with the envelope pressed flat against her chest. She knew she had moved the money there that afternoon, but she had not reported the transfer. Admitting that meant admitting she had ignored an instruction. She remembered lifting her hand to knock, lowering it, then lifting it again. Now she set the envelope on the manager's desk and wrote down what she had moved.

③ **Text C.** You are Mara, standing outside the stage manager's office with an empty envelope. The donation is in the locked cashbox; you put it there that afternoon. You were supposed to report the transfer. You did not. Say it. Beyond the curtain, the director begins welcoming the audience. If you leave now, the manager will soon find the empty envelope and think the money is missing. Say it. Your thumb rubs the envelope's rough seam. You lift your hand toward the office door, then pause with your knuckles an inch from the wood.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE Use the passage

- ① Compare the order of events in A and B. Which gives readers certainty about the outcome earlier, and how does that affect attention?

- ② Compare Mara's conflict in A and C. How does C's voice and repetition alter the reader's experience of the same problem?

- ③ Evaluate how the music in B and the director's welcome in C work differently as timing cues.

- 4** Which version best serves a reader who should feel the cost of hesitation? Judge one choice and one limitation, using evidence from two texts.

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

Write a 70–90 word Text D about a person deciding whether to reveal an urgent warning. Use first-person or second-person narration and repeat a word or phrase for effect. Then write exactly two separate sentences comparing one craft choice in D with B or C and evaluating its effect. The comparison sentences are outside the scene word count.

Scene and explanation

Write the scene first. Leave a blank line before the explanation, which is outside the scene word count.

This image shows a blank 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

Read three original fictional versions of the same event. In each, underline any one detail showing Mara's conflict. Circle the words that locate Text B's flashback. In Text C, box both appearances of the repeated phrase "Say it." Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 • ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	Compare the order of events in A and B. Which gives readers certainty about the outcome earlier, and how does that affect attention?	B begins after the money is checked, then flashes back to Mara's hesitation; readers know the outcome and can focus on her shame. A follows discovery, admission and verification, keeping the result uncertain longer.
2	Compare Mara's conflict in A and C. How does C's voice and repetition alter the reader's experience of the same problem?	Both versions make Mara choose whether to admit an unreported transfer. C uses you and repeated Say it to place readers inside the stalled choice; A narrates the completed sequence from outside while giving access to her reluctance.
3	Evaluate how the music in B and the director's welcome in C work differently as timing cues.	B's music begins after verification and can signal release from pressure. C's welcome happens while Mara still hesitates, making the public event a deadline. Accept other evaluations supported by the specific placement.
4	Which version best serves a reader who should feel the cost of hesitation? Judge one choice and one limitation, using evidence from two texts.	C can intensify hesitation through repeated commands and the hand paused before the door, but its unresolved ending withholds consequences. A shows the result of speaking and checking the money but spends less time inside hesitation. Accept any supported comparison that names a strength and limitation.

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

I saw the loose backdrop cord just before the dancers reached the stage. Tell someone. The stage manager stood beside the curtain, reading her cue sheet. I had tied that knot myself and told her it was secure. Tell someone. I stepped toward her, then stopped as the music rose. "Wait," I said, pointing to the cord. She held up her hand to pause the entrance and called the crew member beside her.

Like C, D repeats a private command to prolong the narrator's hesitation before speaking. Unlike C's paused hand, D's warning reaches the manager, so the ending offers relief while still exposing the cost of admitting a mistake.

TEACHER ASSESSMENT NOTES

All three source texts describe the same transfer and the same conflict; B changes order, and C stops before the admission. Accept evidence-supported judgments, including criticism of an ending. The model scene has 70-90 words followed by exactly two comparison sentences outside that count. Do not count the comparison as part of D. Evaluate actual source choices as well as the student's imitation.