Lanterns and Voices

Dramatic voices, memory, and audience effect.

11.RL.1.D "Analyze and evaluate how dramatic conventions (e.g., soliloquy, aside, narration, direct address to the audience) contribute to the theme and effect of plays from various cultures."

NAME _____ DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline each soliloquy, aside, narration, or direct address to the audience. In the margin, label its effect on the audience with one or two words, such as "builds tension" or "shares private grief."

Lantern at Aonami

1 [NARRATOR steps before a paper-screen set. A distant drum sounds.] NARRATOR: In the fishing town of Aonami, families set lanterns on the harbor during Obon, when many Japanese families welcome the spirits of ancestors. Tonight, Mei has hidden her grandfather's lantern. [MEI enters, holding an unlit lantern.] MEI, to the audience: You may think a small lantern cannot matter. Grandfather taught me that a light can guide a boat, or a heart. [Her mother, RINA, calls from offstage.] RINA: Mei, bring the lantern. The tide is turning.

2 [RINA enters with a tray of rice cakes and flowers.] RINA: Your grandfather missed no Obon, even after the storm took his boat. MEI [aside to audience]: She says "storm" as if it were only weather. He chose the rough water to deliver medicine, and he never returned. If I send this lantern away, I must admit he is gone. [NARRATOR: The drum stops. Rina sees the lantern beneath Mei's coat.] RINA: Grief is not a door we lock. It is a room we enter together. [Mei looks toward the dark harbor.]

3 [UNCLE KENJI enters in a rain cape, carrying a repaired oar.] KENJI, alone: I blamed my brother for chasing one more duty. Yet I kept silent because anger was easier than fear. [He turns to the audience.] Will you carry a memory only when it is painless? [Rina places her hand on Mei's shoulder.] MEI: Then let us send the light, not to erase him, but to name what he gave us. [The three place the lantern on the water. The drum resumes, joined by voices from offstage.] NARRATOR: The harbor holds every light for a moment, and the family watches it travel.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. How does the narrator's opening and closing narration shape the audience's understanding of the family's lantern ritual?

2. What does Mei's aside reveal that the other characters do not yet know? How does this aside affect the audience's view of her choice to hide the lantern?

3. How do Kenji's speech while alone and his later question to the audience work together to develop the play's theme?

4. Evaluate the effect of the final stage action and the narrator's final line. How do they change the emotional effect of the scene?

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

Write a 6- to 8-line dramatic moment set during a real or imagined community tradition. Use at least one aside, soliloquy, narration, or direct address to the audience, then write exactly two sentences explaining how that convention develops a theme and affects the audience.

ANSWER KEY # Lanterns and Voices

GRADE 11 · 11.RL.1.D

PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Underline each soliloquy, aside, narration, or direct address to the audience. In the margin, label its effect on the audience with one or two words, such as "builds tension" or "shares private grief." Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 · ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	How does the narrator's opening and closing narration shape the audience's understanding of the family's lantern ritual?	**The opening gives the Obon setting and explains the lantern's importance. The closing turns the family's action into an image of shared remembrance.**
2	What does Mei's aside reveal that the other characters do not yet know? How does this aside affect the audience's view of her choice to hide the lantern?	**Mei admits that releasing the lantern means accepting her grandfather's death. The audience sees that her refusal comes from grief, not simple defiance.**
3	How do Kenji's speech while alone and his later question to the audience work together to develop the play's theme?	**His speech reveals that fear hides beneath his anger. His question invites the audience to consider their own painful memories, expanding the theme that grief must be faced rather than avoided.**
4	Evaluate the effect of the final stage action and the narrator's final line. How do they change the emotional effect of the scene?	**Placing the lantern on the water shows the family choosing to mourn together. The narrator's image of lights traveling creates a quiet, hopeful ending rather than an ending focused only on loss.**

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

[NARRATOR: At the neighborhood seed exchange, Leila hesitates beside an empty table.]
LEILA, aside to the audience: My grandmother saved seeds from every garden she loved.
MR. ORTIZ: Which packet will you share?
LEILA: None. I might need them all.
[She studies a packet labeled "beans."]
LEILA, to the audience: Can a memory grow if I keep it in a drawer?
LEILA: Take these. Plant some near the fence.

Leila's aside reveals that her refusal to share comes from fear of losing her grandmother's memory. Her direct address invites the audience to consider the theme that sharing a memory can preserve it.

Accept claims that identify a dramatic convention and explain its effect using a relevant detail from the passage. For the open task, accept varied traditions and themes if the script meets the line requirement, uses a convention clearly, and includes exactly two explanatory sentences.