After the Last Ticket

Read closely where actions leave room for interpretation

11-12.RL.1 "Accurately cite strong, relevant, and thorough textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly and inferentially, including determining where the text is open for interpretation."

NAME _____ DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline two details that establish what happens, circle two details that suggest an unstated motive, and mark 1 and 2 beside details that support different interpretations of the final action.

The Rialto

1 By ten o'clock, the Rialto had sold its last ticket. Tomorrow the city would begin turning the theater into offices. Nora, who had torn tickets there for thirty years, stood beneath the cracked ceiling and counted the empty seats. On the counter lay a paper bag with her name on it, a gift from the manager: a brass letter R from the old marquee. She did not open the bag. Instead, she straightened the stack of programs that no one had taken. Outside, a boy pressed his face to the glass, watching the blank screen through the lobby doors.

2 The manager, Mr. Chen, came back for his coat. "You can go," he said. "The crew will lock up." Nora pointed to the boy. Mr. Chen glanced at the clock and shook his head. "The projectionist already shut everything down." Nora had watched that boy come every Saturday with his grandmother, who always bought one ticket and asked him to sit on her lap. Since the grandmother's funeral in spring, he had not returned. Now he held a small envelope against the glass. Mr. Chen paused, then set his ring of keys on the counter and went out the side door.

3 Nora unlocked the front doors. The boy stepped inside but did not offer the envelope. He walked to the back row, where his grandmother used to sit when the theater was nearly empty, and placed it on a seat. Nora stayed by the doors. When he returned, she turned off the lobby lights, all but the lamp above the ticket window. "That one costs us even when the doors are shut," Mr. Chen had told her last winter. She slid the brass R into her coat pocket and left the ticket-window lamp burning.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. What does the passage explicitly establish about the Rialto's future? Cite two details that show both its immediate and planned changes.

2. Why might the boy have returned? Cite two details, and distinguish what the passage states from what you infer.

3. What does Mr. Chen's decision to leave his keys on the counter suggest about his response to Nora? Support your inference with two details.

4. Give two plausible interpretations of why Nora leaves the ticket-window lamp burning. Cite a different detail for each, and explain why neither interpretation is certain.

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

Make a claim about why Nora leaves the brass R in its bag at first but later puts it in her pocket. Support your claim with three distinct details from the passage, then explain one other plausible reading of her choice.

ANSWER KEY

After the Last Ticket

HIGH SCHOOL · 11-12.RL.1

PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Underline two details that establish what happens, circle two details that suggest an unstated motive, and mark 1 and 2 beside details that support different interpretations of the final action. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 · ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	What does the passage explicitly establish about the Rialto's future? Cite two details that show both its immediate and planned changes.	**The Rialto is closing as a theater and will become offices: it "had sold its last ticket," and the city would begin turning it into offices tomorrow.**
2	Why might the boy have returned? Cite two details, and distinguish what the passage states from what you infer.	**The passage states that he used to visit with his grandmother, has not returned since her funeral, and leaves an envelope on her usual seat. These details suggest he came to remember her or leave something for her, though the envelope's contents are unknown.**
3	What does Mr. Chen's decision to leave his keys on the counter suggest about his response to Nora? Support your inference with two details.	**He likely decides to let Nora admit the boy. Although he first says the projectionist has shut everything down, he pauses after Nora points to the boy and leaves the keys where she can use them.**
4	Give two plausible interpretations of why Nora leaves the ticket-window lamp burning. Cite a different detail for each, and explain why neither interpretation is certain.	**She may be leaving a sign of welcome for others, as the boy came to the doors even after the last ticket was sold. She may instead be resisting the theater's closure, since she keeps the lamp on despite Mr. Chen's warning about its cost. Nora never explains her choice, so neither motive is confirmed.**

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

Nora may not be ready to accept that her years at the Rialto are ending. She leaves the farewell gift unopened and straightens programs that no one has taken, as if ordinary work might delay the goodbye. After she lets the boy visit his grandmother's seat, she puts the R in her pocket. Seeing him use the theater to remember someone may help Nora see the letter as something she can carry away. Another reading is that she simply waits until her work is done to take the manager's gift.

Accept interpretations grounded in precise, relevant details, including plausible readings different from the samples. Students should distinguish stated events from inferred motives and acknowledge when the text does not settle a question.