A Room of Listeners

Trace how details change a narrator's view.

6.RL.6 "Explain how an author develops the point of view of the narrator, speaker, and/or the audience."

NAME _____ DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline two details that show how the narrator views the audience at first. Circle two later details that help change that view, and number the four marks in the order they appear.

The Microphone

1 The microphone stood in the center of the cafeteria like a silver warning sign. I had signed up to read my poem at Family Night because Ms. Chen said poems were meant to be heard. Now I wished I had kept mine folded in my pocket. Chairs scraped as families found seats, and every scrape sounded like someone getting ready to leave. My brother lifted both thumbs from the back row. I stared at the exit instead. A room full of people, I decided, was a room full of judges.

2 When Ms. Chen called my name, I walked to the microphone and unfolded my page. The paper shook so hard that the first line came out twice. A little girl near the front whispered, "I do that, too," and held up her own crumpled sheet. Behind her, a man leaned forward, not toward the door, but toward me. I read the next line more slowly. The chairs stopped scraping. In the quiet, I could hear my brother mouthing each word, though his voice never reached the microphone.

3 My poem was about the tree outside our apartment, the one that kept growing even after a branch broke in a storm. When I reached the last line, I looked up. The little girl was smiling at her page, and the man in the front row nodded as if he knew that tree. Nobody had asked me to be perfect. They had come to listen. As I stepped away, the microphone no longer looked like a warning sign. It looked like a place where my words could land.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. How does the narrator interpret the scraping chairs at first? What does that interpretation show about how the narrator views the audience?

2. How do the little girl's words and crumpled sheet begin to change the narrator's view of the audience?

3. The narrator first imagines people leaving. How does the author use the man's movement in paragraph 2 to challenge that idea?

4. The microphone appears in both the first and last paragraphs. How does its description show that the narrator's point of view has changed?

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

Write a five-sentence first-person scene set somewhere other than a performance. Show your narrator's view of another person changing through an early judgment, a specific action or words that challenge it, and a final thought that reveals the new view.

ANSWER KEY

A Room of Listeners

GRADE 6 · 6.RL.6

PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Underline two details that show how the narrator views the audience at first. Circle two later details that help change that view, and number the four marks in the order they appear. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 · ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	How does the narrator interpret the scraping chairs at first? What does that interpretation show about how the narrator views the audience?	**The narrator thinks the scraping means people are getting ready to leave, showing that the narrator expects the audience to judge or reject the poem.**
2	How do the little girl's words and crumpled sheet begin to change the narrator's view of the audience?	**They show that someone in the audience feels nervous about sharing writing, too. The narrator begins to see a person who understands rather than a judge.**
3	The narrator first imagines people leaving. How does the author use the man's movement in paragraph 2 to challenge that idea?	**The man leans toward the narrator instead of toward the door, showing interest in the poem rather than a wish to leave.**
4	The microphone appears in both the first and last paragraphs. How does its description show that the narrator's point of view has changed?	**At first it looks like a warning sign because the narrator fears being judged. At the end, it seems like a place for words to land because the narrator sees the audience as willing to listen.**

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

At the bus stop, I thought the new neighbor was rude because she never answered my hello. When the wind snatched my math notes, she chased them across the sidewalk. She handed me the pages and said, "Sorry I missed your hello; I can't hear well over traffic." I stepped closer, and she smiled when I tried again. I had mistaken a noisy street for an unfriendly neighbor.

Accept different marked details if they show the narrator's initial fear and the later evidence that the audience is listening. For Part 3, look for a clear change in the first-person narrator's view that is supported by a specific action or words.