Sounds of Courage

Notice how a writer brings a stage scene to life.

7.W.3.b "Use narrative and literary techniques, such as dialogue, pacing, rhythm, description, and poetic devices to develop experiences, events, and/or characters."

NAME _____ DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline Nia's two lines of dialogue, circle repeated sound words, and write 1 beside a moment that slows the action and 2 beside a moment that speeds it up.

The Storm Cue

1 The auditorium smelled of paint and damp coats. Behind the curtain, Nia gripped the edge of a thin metal sheet. She was supposed to shake it when the storm began in the school play. Across the stage, her brother Leo stood beneath a cardboard lighthouse, waiting for his cue. "I can't do this with everyone listening," Nia whispered. Leo glanced back. "They'll be watching the lighthouse, not you." The curtain rose, and Nia held her breath as the first scene unfolded.

2 A blue light washed over the cardboard waves. Leo lifted his paper telescope and called, "A storm is coming!" Nia raised the metal sheet, but her fingers locked. For a moment, the only sound was the soft scrape of a shoe backstage. Then Leo's telescope fell with a crack. The audience gasped. Nia shook the sheet once. Rumble. She shook it again, harder. RUMBLE! Leo ducked behind the lighthouse, and the children in the front row leaned forward.

3 Nia's hands were still trembling, but now she could feel the sheet answer every movement. She drew the metal closer and gave it three quick shakes: rumble, rumble, rumble. Behind the lighthouse, Leo whispered, "That sounds real." Nia smiled into the dim backstage corner. "Wait until they hear the rain," she said. She set the sheet down and drummed her fingertips on a wooden stool, first slowly, then faster, until the tiny taps filled the pause before Leo's next line.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. How do Nia's first and last lines of dialogue show a change in her?

2. Name two details that make the pause after Leo announces the storm feel tense. What do they suggest?

3. How do the short sentences around Nia's first two shakes of the sheet affect the pace?

4. How do the repeated "rumble" and the "tiny taps" help you hear the storm change?

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

Write a five- to six-sentence scene in which a character faces a small challenge and then acts. Include two lines of dialogue that show a change in the character, one repeated sound word, and a mix of short and long sentences to control the pace.

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PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Underline Nia's two lines of dialogue, circle repeated sound words, and write 1 beside a moment that slows the action and 2 beside a moment that speeds it up. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 · ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	How do Nia's first and last lines of dialogue show a change in her?	**At first, Nia says she cannot perform with people listening. Later, she eagerly plans the rain sound, showing growing confidence.**
2	Name two details that make the pause after Leo announces the storm feel tense. What do they suggest?	**Nia's fingers lock, and the only sound is a soft scrape backstage. These details suggest that she is frozen while everyone waits for the storm sound.**
3	How do the short sentences around Nia's first two shakes of the sheet affect the pace?	**They make each shake and sound a separate, quick beat. The second, louder sound shows Nia acting more boldly.**
4	How do the repeated "rumble" and the "tiny taps" help you hear the storm change?	**The repeated word suggests rolling thunder. The tiny taps suggest rain beginning after the thunder.**

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

At the crowded farmers' market, Eli stared at the wobbly stack of apple crates he had promised to move. "I can't carry these without dropping them," he told his aunt. Two apples tumbled off the top crate. Thump, thump! Eli put the fallen apples back, slid one crate onto a handcart, and steadied it with his palm. "I'll take them one at a time," he said, pushing the cart down the path.

Accept other passage details if students explain how they create tension or affect pace and sound. For the original scene, look for two contrasting lines of dialogue, a repeated sound word, and sentence lengths that shape the action.