Signals in Storage

Read a mystery and examine how colons shape its clues.

9-10.L.2.b "Use colons correctly."

NAME _____ DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline the complete clause before each colon, then circle what the colon introduces. Use your marks to see how a colon connects two parts of a sentence.

The Radio in the Box

1. On Saturday, Mara found a box of broken radios in the theater's storage room. Each had a paper tag from a different decade, but none had a name. The oldest radio still held three objects: a train ticket stub, a bent key, and a photograph of two boys beside a lake. Mara wanted to know who had kept them. She carried the box to the repair table, where her grandfather was sorting screws into jars. He gave her one rule: never force a part that refuses to move. Then he handed her a small screwdriver and waited.

2. The radio's back panel came loose with a soft click. Inside, a folded note had been tucked between the wires and the wooden case. Mara read its first line aloud: 'If you hear the song, meet me where the trains used to stop.' Her grandfather pointed toward the old station across town, now a bicycle shop. One detail troubled him: the ticket's date fell ten years after the station had closed. Mara set the note beside the ticket stub and looked at its faded date. The handwriting seemed newer than the paper, as if someone had borrowed an older story.

3. By evening, they had a plan: check the ticket's date against the station's records before visiting the shop. Mara photographed the objects so they could return each one to its place. She also wrote down one question for the shop owner: 'Have you found other notes in the building?' Her grandfather turned the radio's dial, and a thin burst of music filled the room. The mystery had not been solved. Still, the sound made the box feel less like a pile of junk and more like an invitation to listen.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. In paragraph 1, which complete clause comes before the colon that introduces a list? What three objects does the list name?

2. In paragraph 2, what does the colon after 'aloud' introduce? Write the complete clause that comes before it.

3. Which colon in paragraph 2 introduces an explanation of a troubling detail? Write the clause before it and the explanation after it.

4. Based on paragraph 3, would a colon work in this sentence: 'Their plan included: checking the ticket's date against the station's records'? Explain why or why not.

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

Write three sentences about a small mystery you invent. Use one colon to introduce a list and another to introduce an explanation or a spoken line. Place each colon after a complete clause.

ANSWER KEY

Signals in Storage

HIGH SCHOOL · 9-10.L.2.b

PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Underline the complete clause before each colon, then circle what the colon introduces. Use your marks to see how a colon connects two parts of a sentence. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 · ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	In paragraph 1, which complete clause comes before the colon that introduces a list? What three objects does the list name?	**The clause is 'The oldest radio still held three objects.' The list names a train ticket stub, a bent key, and a photograph of two boys beside a lake.**
2	In paragraph 2, what does the colon after 'aloud' introduce? Write the complete clause that comes before it.	**It introduces the first line of the note. The preceding clause is 'Mara read its first line aloud.'**
3	Which colon in paragraph 2 introduces an explanation of a troubling detail? Write the clause before it and the explanation after it.	**The clause is 'One detail troubled him.' The explanation is 'the ticket's date fell ten years after the station had closed.'**
4	Based on paragraph 3, would a colon work in this sentence: 'Their plan included: checking the ticket's date against the station's records'? Explain why or why not.	**No. 'Their plan included' is not a complete clause; it needs the words after the colon to finish its meaning.**

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

I found three things inside the locked drawer: a red thread, a brass button, and a map of the attic. One detail bothered me: the map showed a door that no longer existed. My brother held the paper up to the window, searching for a hidden mark.

Accept equivalent wording in the short answers when students identify the correct clause and what follows the colon. For Your Turn, check for exactly three sentences and two correctly placed colons with the requested functions.