

Speech and Staging

Analyze how a script uses speech and action to develop characters.

7.8.C “analyze how playwrights develop characters through dialogue and staging;”

NAME _____

DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK _____ Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline each spoken line that reveals what a character cares about or feels, and circle each bracketed stage direction that adds information about a character. Number the marks that show a change in either character.

The Lantern Signal

- ① [A harbor workshop before dawn. A lantern swings above a cluttered table. MIRA presses a brass key into a small box. JONAS enters, dripping rainwater from his coat.] “You said the signal had to be ready before the ferry leaves,” Jonas says. Mira keeps her eyes on the box. “It will be.” [The lantern flickers. Mira wipes soot from her hands onto her apron.] “If the light fails again,” Jonas says, “my grandmother will miss her medicine.”
- ② [Mira opens the box, revealing a broken wire. She inhales sharply, then reaches for a spool of copper. Jonas steps toward the door.] “I can ask Captain Reed to wait,” he says. “No.” Mira holds up the wire. “The ferry cannot wait for one family.” [Jonas grips the door handle but does not turn it.] “Then let me help,” he says quietly. Mira studies him. “You do not know circuits.” “I know my grandmother,” Jonas replies. [His voice shakes, though he stands still.]
- ③ [Mira pauses. Outside, a ferry horn sounds once. She twists the two wire ends together, and the lantern glows steadily. Jonas releases the handle and lets out a breath.] “Show me,” he says. Mira moves a second stool beside the table. “Hold this piece away from the flame.” [Jonas rolls up his sleeves and takes the tool carefully.] “Like this?” he asks. Mira nods. “Like that.” The light shines across both their faces as the horn sounds again outside the workshop.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE _____ Use the passage

1 What does Mira’s line, “The ferry cannot wait for one family,” reveal about her character?

2 How does the stage direction about Mira wiping soot onto her apron develop her character?

3 How do Jonas’s dialogue and actions change from the second paragraph to the third paragraph?

4 What does Mira’s choice to move a second stool beside the table show about her relationship with Jonas?

3 YOUR TURN _____ Your own words

Write a 6 to 8 line scene about a character who changes from nervous to ready. Include at least two spoken lines and three bracketed stage directions that show the character’s feelings and change.

PART 1 • READ AND MARK

Underline each spoken line that reveals what a character cares about or feels, and circle each bracketed stage direction that adds information about a character. Number the marks that show a change in either character. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 • ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	What does Mira's line, "The ferry cannot wait for one family," reveal about her character?	Mira is responsible and thinks about the needs of all the ferry passengers, not only Jonas's family.
2	How does the stage direction about Mira wiping soot onto her apron develop her character?	It shows that she has been working hard to repair the signal and is focused on the urgent task.
3	How do Jonas's dialogue and actions change from the second paragraph to the third paragraph?	At first, Jonas wants the ferry to wait and hesitates at the door. Later, he asks to help, rolls up his sleeves, and carefully takes the tool.
4	What does Mira's choice to move a second stool beside the table show about her relationship with Jonas?	It shows that Mira accepts Jonas as a helper and begins to teach him how to assist with the repair.

PART 3 • YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

[In the school auditorium, LEO stands behind a curtain, twisting his note cards.] "I cannot remember the first sentence," Leo whispers. [MS. CHEN points to the empty stage, then steps back.] "Start with the part you care about," she says. [Leo takes a slow breath and smooths the cards.] "I care about saving the river," Leo says. [He walks through the curtain as the audience quiets.]

Accept answers that make a reasonable claim about character and support it with specific dialogue or stage directions. For Part 3, accept varied scenes that include 6 to 8 lines, at least two spoken lines, three bracketed stage directions, and a clear nervous-to-ready change.