

Theater of Motives

Trace a character's divided loyalties through a public decision.

12.RL.1.C "Analyze how complex characters—those with multiple or conflicting motivations—develop over the course of texts, interact with other characters, and advance the plot."

NAME _____

DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK _____ Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline words or actions that reveal Lena's competing motivations, circle her choices, and number the three moments that change her course. Use your marks to trace how her interactions move the conflict forward.

The Orion Reel

- ① On the morning the town planned to demolish the abandoned Orion Theater, Lena Ortiz unlocked its side door with the city engineer's borrowed key. As director of the historical society, she wanted proof that the building deserved protection. As the mayor's daughter, she also wanted the demolition delayed until after her mother's difficult reelection vote. Dust lifted around the orchestra seats. Behind a torn curtain, Lena found a metal film canister labeled with her grandfather's name, Arturo Ortiz. She knew he had once managed the theater, but her family rarely mentioned those years at dinner or in public.
- ② Her cousin Malik, a housing organizer, entered through the lobby and saw the canister in her hands. He had supported saving the theater only if it could become affordable apartments with a small performance hall. Lena asked him to keep the canister secret until she could learn what it contained. Malik refused. He argued that private family history should not decide a public project, especially when renters needed homes. Stung by his accusation, Lena nearly hid the film in her bag. Instead, she carried it to the council meeting, intending to show it herself before anyone could question her motives.
- ③ At the meeting, the canister proved to hold a silent 1938 newsreel. It showed Arturo accepting cash from a developer, then closing the theater for a week while workers removed neighborhood families from the adjoining boardinghouse. Lena's mother had built her campaign around Arturo's reputation as a civic benefactor. Lena could have played only the first minutes, which showed the theater's crowded opening night. Instead, she screened the entire reel and admitted that her request for a delay had been selfish. The council postponed demolition, not to protect the Ortiz legacy, but to consider Malik's housing plan and investigate the boardinghouse records.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE _____ Use the passage

1 What two motivations pull Lena in different directions at the beginning of the passage? Explain how they influence her first actions.

2 How does Malik challenge Lena's thinking? What choice does his challenge help cause Lena to make?

3 Compare Lena's response to the film in paragraph 2 with her response in paragraph 3. What does this contrast show about her development?

4 How does Lena's final decision advance the plot and change the reason the council delays demolition?

3 YOUR TURN _____ Your own words

Write a 120 to 150 word original scene about a character with two competing motivations. Include an interaction that pressures the character to make a choice, and end with a decision that changes what happens next in the plot.

PART 1 • READ AND MARK

Underline words or actions that reveal Lena's competing motivations, circle her choices, and number the three moments that change her course. Use your marks to trace how her interactions move the conflict forward. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 • ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	What two motivations pull Lena in different directions at the beginning of the passage? Explain how they influence her first actions.	Lena wants to preserve the historic theater, but she also wants to protect her mother's reelection campaign. These motives lead her to enter the theater secretly and search for evidence that could delay demolition.
2	How does Malik challenge Lena's thinking? What choice does his challenge help cause Lena to make?	Malik argues that a public project should not be decided by private family history and that renters need homes. His challenge helps push Lena to take the film to the council meeting rather than hide it.
3	Compare Lena's response to the film in paragraph 2 with her response in paragraph 3. What does this contrast show about her development?	In paragraph 2, Lena nearly hides the film to protect herself and her family. In paragraph 3, she shows the entire reel and admits her earlier motive was selfish, showing that she becomes more honest and willing to accept public consequences.
4	How does Lena's final decision advance the plot and change the reason the council delays demolition?	By screening the full newsreel, Lena exposes Arturo's harmful actions. The council delays demolition to consider Malik's housing plan and investigate the boardinghouse records, not to preserve the Ortiz family's reputation.

PART 3 • YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

At the river commission hearing, Dev stood with the final water report folded in his pocket. As a hydrologist, he wanted the council to publish its evidence that the new factory would contaminate the marsh. His sister managed the factory's hiring program, however, and Dev knew that a public report could cost her neighbors their jobs. When she asked him to remove the strongest findings, he almost agreed. Then an angler described finding dead frogs near the intake pipe. Dev submitted the complete report, but also proposed a delayed permit tied to cleanup funds and local hiring guarantees. The council ordered testing before construction, giving the town time to protect both livelihoods and the marsh from further damage during the review.

Accept answers that use relevant passage evidence and explain the connection between Lena's conflicting motivations, her interactions with Malik, her changing choices, and the plot outcome. For the open task, accept varied settings and outcomes if the response includes all required character and plot elements.