

Behind the Curtain

Notice how a narrative builds a character's experience through events and details.

6.W.1.A "Write narratives to entertain, to share a personal experience, or to alter an existing story that uses narrative techniques to develop the characters, event(s), and experience(s)."

NAME _____

DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK _____ Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline sensory details, and circle Maya's thoughts, words, or actions that show how she changes from nervous to confident. Number 1, 2, and 3 beside the main events in the order they happen.

Maya's First Note

- ① On the morning of the school talent show, Maya stood behind the blue curtain with her violin case pressed against her knees. The auditorium smelled like dusty seats and popcorn from the lobby. Through a narrow gap, she saw rows of families talking and waving programs. Her fingers felt cold, even inside the warm room. "I should have practiced the fast part again," she whispered. Then the announcer called her name, and the curtain began to slide open.
- ② Maya walked to the center of the stage, but the bright lights erased the faces in front of her. For one long second, the first note would not come. She remembered her grandfather tapping the kitchen table while she played, saying, "Let the music tell the story." Maya lifted her bow and drew it slowly across the strings. A clear note floated into the quiet room. Her shoulders loosened. When she reached the fast part, she kept her eyes on the music and counted the beats in her head.
- ③ After the last note, the audience was silent, and Maya worried that she had made a mistake. Then her brother jumped up in the third row and clapped above his head. Applause rolled through the auditorium like rain on a roof. Maya bowed, smiling so hard that her cheeks hurt. Backstage, she hugged her violin case instead of hiding behind it. "The fast part sounded brave," her grandfather said when he found her. Maya laughed. Next year, she decided, she would play an even longer song.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE Use the passage

- 1 Choose one sensory detail from the first paragraph. How does it help you understand Maya's feelings before she performs?

- 2 What challenge does Maya face onstage, and what does she do to handle it?

- 3 How do Maya's actions show that she changes during the story? Use one action from early in the story and one from later in the story.

- 4 How does Maya's decision at the end help complete the narrative?

3 YOUR TURN Your own words

Write a three-paragraph narrative about facing a small challenge. Use sensory details, thoughts or dialogue, and a clear beginning, middle, and ending to show how you change during the experience.

PART 1 • READ AND MARK

Underline sensory details, and circle Maya's thoughts, words, or actions that show how she changes from nervous to confident. Number 1, 2, and 3 beside the main events in the order they happen. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 • ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	Choose one sensory detail from the first paragraph. How does it help you understand Maya's feelings before she performs?	Possible answer: "Her fingers felt cold" shows that Maya is nervous before performing.
2	What challenge does Maya face onstage, and what does she do to handle it?	She cannot play the first note at first. She remembers her grandfather's words, lifts her bow, and begins slowly.
3	How do Maya's actions show that she changes during the story? Use one action from early in the story and one from later in the story.	Early, Maya presses her violin case against her knees and worries. Later, she bows, smiles, and hugs her case instead of hiding behind it.
4	How does Maya's decision at the end help complete the narrative?	Her decision to play a longer song next year shows that she has gained confidence from her experience.

PART 3 • YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

At the community garden, I signed up to carry a tray of tomato seedlings to the back fence. The plastic tray bent in my hands, and wet soil dotted my shoes. I had never carried so many plants at once. "Take small steps," Mr. Cruz said, but the path looked much longer than it had before. Halfway there, my sneaker slid on a loose pebble. The seedlings tipped, and my stomach tightened. I dropped to one knee and grabbed the tray before it hit the ground. Two leaves shook, but no pots fell. I slowed my breathing, shifted my hands under the tray, and watched the path instead of the people watching me. At the fence, I set every seedling beside its hole. Mr. Cruz counted them and nodded. My arms ached, yet I felt taller as I walked back. I had thought being careful meant moving without mistakes. Now I knew it could also mean stopping, fixing a problem, and trying again.

Accept supported answers that identify accurate details from the passage and explain how those details develop Maya or the events. For the narrative, accept varied topics if the writing has three paragraphs, a clear sequence, narrative techniques, and a change in the narrator.