The Stopped Clock

Track devices that turn clues into tension.

8.RL.2.D "Analyze how an author's use of literary devices including foreshadowing, flashback, symbolism, and irony are used to build mystery, suspense, or surprise."

NAME _____ DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline possible foreshadowing, circle the flashback, and box symbols or irony; beside each mark, write M for mystery, S for suspense, or U for surprise to show its effect.

The Map Room

1. At dusk, Nia unlocked the town museum to return a borrowed lantern. Rain tapped the high windows, and the old clock had stopped at 8:17, the time her brother vanished during last winter's storm. On the desk lay his silver compass, its needle spinning although the room was still. Nia remembered him laughing beside the harbor weeks earlier. "If it points nowhere," he had said, "follow the bell." In the hallway, a bell rang once.

2. She followed the sound to the map room, where a narrow door stood open behind a curtain. A brass sign on it read SAFE ROOM. Nia stepped inside and the door swung shut, locking with a click. The room was not safe at all, she thought, as water dripped through a cracked pipe onto shelves of charts. In the lantern's light, she saw a wet line of footprints ending at a painted wall. Beside them rested the compass, now pointing directly at a red X.

3. Nia pressed the X, and a panel opened. Inside was a waterproof radio and a note in her brother's handwriting: The storm took me to Gull Rock. I found shelter. Use this radio at midnight. Relief made Nia's knees weaken, but the radio crackled before midnight. "Nia," her brother said, "do not call the coast guard yet. Someone on shore cut the beacon." The compass needle settled toward the museum's front door, where the stopped clock suddenly began to tick.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. Identify one detail from paragraph 1 that foreshadows later events. How does it build mystery or suspense?

2. What does the flashback reveal, and how does it affect Nia's next action?

3. Explain the irony of the SAFE ROOM sign. How does this irony increase suspense?

4. How does the compass work as a symbol? Explain how its final movement creates surprise or suspense.

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

Write a 5 to 7 sentence mystery scene that uses at least two of these devices: foreshadowing, flashback, symbolism, or irony. After each device, label it in parentheses and make the devices build mystery, suspense, or surprise.

ANSWER KEY

The Stopped Clock

GRADE 8 · 8.RL.2.D

PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Underline possible foreshadowing, circle the flashback, and box symbols or irony; beside each mark, write M for mystery, S for suspense, or U for surprise to show its effect. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 · ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	Identify one detail from paragraph 1 that foreshadows later events. How does it build mystery or suspense?	**Possible answers include the stopped clock, the spinning compass, or the bell. Each signals that something unusual connected to Nia's missing brother is about to happen.**
2	What does the flashback reveal, and how does it affect Nia's next action?	**The flashback reveals that Nia's brother told her to follow the bell if the compass pointed nowhere. It leads her to follow the bell to the map room.**
3	Explain the irony of the SAFE ROOM sign. How does this irony increase suspense?	**A room labeled SAFE ROOM locks Nia inside and contains danger, including water damage and unexplained footprints. The contrast makes the reader worry that the place meant to protect her may trap her.**
4	How does the compass work as a symbol? Explain how its final movement creates surprise or suspense.	**The compass symbolizes Nia's search for direction and for her brother. When it points to the front door after his warning, it suggests that the danger may be close by, creating suspense.**

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

At closing time, Imani found a cracked theater ticket in her library book, a symbol of the night her sister disappeared. (symbolism) Three days earlier, her sister had whispered, "Meet me where the curtain never rises," before leaving for rehearsal. (flashback) The ticket's printed time, 11:59, warned Imani that someone expected her after midnight. (foreshadowing) Ironically, the library's new security lights, installed to make the building safer, went dark as she reached the stage door. (irony) From behind the door, her sister's voice said, "You came alone, right?"

Accept other well-supported examples of foreshadowing from paragraph 1 and equivalent explanations of their effects. For the open response, accept any accurate use of at least two labeled devices that clearly helps create mystery, suspense, or surprise.