Basement Rescue Sequence

Study how a narrative uses sequence, transitions, and precise details to build action.

8.W.1.A "Write narratives to develop real or imagined experiences or to alter an existing text, using well-structured event sequences, precise words and phrases, and transitional words to develop the characters, convey sequence..."

NAME _____ DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline words or phrases that show when events happen. Then number the six major events in the order they occur to trace how the action builds.

The Library Pump

1. At 6:12 p.m., Maya stepped off the city bus and saw the library's front windows dark. Rain tapped the sidewalk, and the locked doors reflected a row of weak streetlights. She had promised to return a borrowed astronomy book before the storm worsened. For a moment, she gripped the book against her coat and considered turning back. Then, a thin beam of light moved across the basement window. Maya leaned closer and heard a faint metallic clatter below.

2. Instead of leaving, Maya hurried around the building to the side entrance. The door stood ajar, so she slipped inside and called for Mr. Chen, the evening librarian. From the stairwell, his voice answered, strained and breathless: "The emergency generator failed, and the basement pump is stuck." Maya followed the flickering exit sign downstairs. There, water curled around the floor drains while Mr. Chen wrestled with a red valve. Without the pump, the rising water could ruin the library's storage boxes.

3. First, Maya set the astronomy book on a dry shelf and grabbed the flashlight from Mr. Chen's tool cart. Next, she aimed its narrow white beam at the valve until she spotted a small brass latch beneath it. Mr. Chen pressed the latch, and the valve turned with a sharp groan. Immediately, the pump shuddered awake, pulling water through the drains in muddy spirals. As the basement quieted, Maya exhaled and smiled. The storm still hammered outside, but the library was safe.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. What happens after Maya hears the metallic clatter, and why does she go inside?

2. List the three actions that lead to the pump working.

3. Which transition signals that the pump begins working right away? What action follows it?

4. How do Maya's actions develop her character during the basement problem? Use one action from the passage as evidence.

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

Continue the story in 5 to 7 sentences. Imagine rain begins leaking through a front window frame, and show Maya making a choice to help. Use at least three transitional words or phrases and at least two precise sensory or action details.

ANSWER KEY

Basement Rescue Sequence

GRADE 8 · 8.W.1.A

PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Underline words or phrases that show when events happen. Then number the six major events in the order they occur to trace how the action builds. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 · ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	What happens after Maya hears the metallic clatter, and why does she go inside?	**She hurries to the side entrance and goes inside because she sees that the building is not empty and wants to find out what is happening.**
2	List the three actions that lead to the pump working.	**Maya finds the brass latch with the flashlight, Mr. Chen presses the latch, and the valve turns so the pump starts.**
3	Which transition signals that the pump begins working right away? What action follows it?	**"Immediately" signals this. The pump shudders awake and pulls water through the drains.**
4	How do Maya's actions develop her character during the basement problem? Use one action from the passage as evidence.	**Maya is helpful and quick-thinking. She uses the flashlight to find the brass latch that helps Mr. Chen start the pump.**

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

Minutes later, a cold stream of rainwater slid beneath the front window frame. First, Maya dragged a cart of empty plastic bins toward the entrance. Next, she and Mr. Chen stacked the bins under the leak, but water splashed across the tile in silver bursts. Then Maya remembered the thick canvas tarp stored beside the display cases. She spread it over the ledge and tucked its edges beneath the frame. Finally, the dripping slowed, and Maya checked the floor with a steady flashlight beam.

Accept equivalent descriptions of the sequence, transitions, and Maya's helpful, observant choices when supported by passage details. For the writing task, look for a clear event sequence, at least three transitions, precise details, and a character action that responds to the problem.