

Boost Free Lessons - Year 7 English

Lesson 14: Reading Narrative

Name: _____ Grade: _____ Date: _____

Read the extract below carefully. The line numbers will help you refer to specific parts of the text in your answers.

The Last Bus

- 1 Nadia had counted the coins twice before the driver even opened the door.
- 2 Three dollars and fifty cents. Enough, if the fare had not gone up again.
- 3
- 4 The bus hissed to a stop and the doors folded back. Inside, the lights were
- 5 the colour of weak tea, and only four people sat scattered down its length.
- 6 She climbed on, held out her hand, and waited.
- 7
- 8 "Four twenty," the driver said, without looking up.
- 9
- 10 Nadia's fingers closed over the coins. Behind her, the doors had not yet
- 11 shut, and the cold pushed in around her ankles. Outside, the shelter was
- 12 empty, the timetable behind its scratched plastic showing nothing more
- 13 until morning.
- 14
- 15 "It was three fifty last week," she said.
- 16
- 17 "It was." He shifted in his seat. The engine ticked over beneath them,
- 18 patient, indifferent. Somewhere further back a phone screen lit a face and
- 19 went dark again.
- 20
- 21 Nadia looked at the empty road, then at the coins, then at the driver. He
- 22 was younger than she had thought. There was a lunchbox on the dashboard
- 23 with a child's sticker peeling off the lid.
- 24
- 25 He sighed, and reached past her to pull the lever. The doors sighed too,
- 26 and closed.
- 27
- 28 "Sit down," he said. "Before I change my mind."
- 29
- 30 Nadia sat. She did not look at him again until the bus had pulled away,
- 31 and by then the sticker on the lunchbox was all she could think about.



Worked Example 1

How does the writer create tension in lines 10 to 13?

1. A question about **how** a writer creates something always needs three parts: a technique, a quotation, and the effect.
2. Find the technique first. The writer uses setting detail: the cold at her ankles, the empty shelter, the timetable showing nothing until morning.
3. Quote briefly and precisely, using line numbers. In line 12 the timetable shows *nothing more until morning*.
4. Explain the effect: these details show Nadia has no other way home, so the reader understands what she stands to lose.

Model: The writer builds tension through setting. The empty shelter and a timetable showing “nothing more until morning” (lines 11 to 13) make clear that Nadia has no alternative, so the reader feels the weight of the driver's decision.

Remember: In textual analysis, always give the **technique**, a short **quotation** with its line number, and the **effect** on the reader. Never quote more than a few words.



Question 1: Answer the following questions. Refer to line numbers where you can.

1. How much money does Nadia have, and how much is the fare? (lines 2 and 8)

2. How many other passengers are on the bus? (line 5)

3. What does Nadia notice on the dashboard? (lines 22 to 23)

4. What does the driver finally say to her? (line 28)

5. Why do you think the writer describes the lights as *the colour of weak tea* (lines 4 to 5)?

6. What does the word *indifferent* (line 18) suggest about the engine?



Question 2: Answer the following questions in full sentences.

1. What does the detail of the peeling sticker (line 23) suggest about the driver?

2. Why does the writer wait until line 22 to tell us the driver is young?

3. Explain the effect of the short sentence *Nadia sat.* (line 30) after the longer sentences before it.

4. The doors are described as sighing (line 25), just as the driver does. What is the effect of this?

5. What do you think the last line means? Use evidence from the text in your answer.





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Answers and Model Responses: Reading Narrative**Question 1**

1. Nadia has three dollars and fifty cents. The fare is four dollars and twenty cents.
2. Four.
3. A lunchbox with a child's sticker peeling off the lid.
4. *Sit down. Before I change my mind.*
5. Model: Weak tea is pale, dull and slightly unpleasant, so the comparison makes the bus feel tired and unwelcoming, which matches Nadia's situation.
6. Model: It suggests the engine, and by extension the world around her, does not care what happens to Nadia. The problem is hers alone.

Question 2

1. Model: It suggests he has a child of his own, which hints at why he might soften towards someone who cannot pay. It also makes him a real person rather than just an obstacle.
2. Model: Until then the reader sees him only as an authority figure blocking her. Learning he is young makes him more human, and prepares the reader for him changing his mind.
3. Model: After several long sentences the two-word sentence lands abruptly. It mirrors how quickly she obeys, and creates a pause after the tension breaks.
4. Model: Repeating the word links the driver and the doors, suggesting he gives in reluctantly, and that the decision costs him something.
5. Model: Nadia is thinking about the driver's child rather than her own relief, which suggests she has understood that his kindness came at a risk to him. The sticker stands for the private life behind the uniform, and it is what stays with her rather than the money.

