

Boost Free Lessons - Year 8 English

Lesson 18: Reading Drama

Name: _____ Grade: _____ Date: _____

Read the script extract below carefully. Stage directions are shown in square brackets. The line numbers will help you refer to specific parts.

Script: The Interview

- 1 [A small office. Two chairs. PRIYA sits. MR OKAFOR stands, holding a
- 2 single sheet of paper. He does not sit down for the whole scene.]
- 3
- 4 MR OKAFOR: You understand why you're here.
- 5
- 6 PRIYA: I think so.
- 7
- 8 MR OKAFOR: You think so.
- 9
- 10 [He puts the sheet face down on the desk.]
- 11
- 12 PRIYA: The essay.
- 13
- 14 MR OKAFOR: The essay. [Pause.] It's very good, Priya.
- 15
- 16 PRIYA: Thank you.
- 17
- 18 MR OKAFOR: It's better than the one before it. Considerably better than
- 19 the one before that. [He turns the sheet over, does not look at it, turns
- 20 it back.] I've taught for nineteen years.
- 21
- 22 PRIYA: [quietly] I wrote it.
- 23
- 24 MR OKAFOR: I know.
- 25
- 26 [Long pause. PRIYA looks up.]
- 27
- 28 PRIYA: Then why am I here?
- 29
- 30 MR OKAFOR: Because on Thursday, somebody is going to ask me whether you
- 31 did. And I would like to have already asked you myself.
- 32
- 33 [He sits down at last.]
- 34
- 35 MR OKAFOR: Tell me how you wrote it. Take as long as you like.



Worked Example 1

Explain the significance of the stage direction in line 2, and its resolution in line 33.

1. Stage directions are deliberate. Ask what a movement, or its absence, shows.
2. Line 2 tells us Mr Okafor *does not sit down for the whole scene*, which puts him physically above Priya.
3. Standing signals authority and distance, so the scene begins as an interrogation.
4. In line 33 he sits at last, immediately before offering her time. The change in position marks a change in relationship.

Model: The direction that he “does not sit down” (line 2) places him above Priya and makes the scene feel like an interrogation. When he finally sits (line 33), the physical change marks the moment he stops questioning her and starts listening.

Remember: In drama, read **stage directions**, **pauses** and **what is not said** as carefully as the dialogue. Movement and position often carry the meaning the words avoid.



Question 1: Answer the following questions. Give the line numbers you used in your answers.

1. Where is the scene set?

2. What is Mr Okafor holding?

3. What does Mr Okafor do with the sheet of paper early in the scene?

4. How long has Mr Okafor been teaching?

5. What is going to happen on Thursday?

6. What is the last thing he says to Priya?



Question 2: Answer the following questions in full sentences.

1. Mr Okafor twice repeats Priya's own words back to her. Find both, and explain the effect.

2. Why does the writer include a pause in the middle of Mr Okafor's line about the essay?

3. Explain what the stage direction about turning the sheet over suggests about Mr Okafor.

4. What is the effect of Priya's line *Then why am I here?*

5. Do you think Mr Okafor believes Priya? Use evidence from the extract.





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

1. A small office with two chairs.
2. A single sheet of paper.
3. He puts it face down on the desk.
4. Nineteen years.
5. Somebody is going to ask him whether Priya wrote the essay.
6. *Tell me how you wrote it. Take as long as you like.*

Question 2

1. Model: Repeating *You think so* turns her uncertainty back on her without adding an accusation, which increases the pressure. Repeating *The essay* shows he was waiting for her to name it first, so she has committed to the subject before he does.
2. Model: The pause separates the accusation the audience expects from the compliment that actually arrives. It creates tension and then breaks it in an unexpected direction, which unsettles both Priya and the audience.
3. Model: He turns the sheet over, does not look at it, and turns it back. The action shows he does not need to read it, because he has already decided. It also shows he is uncomfortable, using the paper to occupy his hands.
4. Model: It is the first time Priya asks a question rather than answering one, which shifts the balance of the scene. Coming after a long pause, it forces Mr Okafor to explain himself, and his answer reveals the interview was never an accusation.
5. Model: Yes. He says "I know" immediately after she insists she wrote it (lines 22 to 24), without hesitation or pause. His concern is that somebody else will ask on Thursday (lines 30 to 31), so he is preparing a defence rather than testing her. Sitting down before asking her to explain (line 33) confirms he is on her side.

