



Reading Comprehension Worksheet

Grade 11

Answer Key

Lessons from the Night Shift

For the last six months of my senior year, I worked the ten-p.m.-to-six-a.m. shift stocking shelves at a grocery store two towns over from my high school. I took the job because my family needed the extra income, not because I imagined it would teach me anything beyond how to operate a pallet jack. I was wrong about that, though it took me most of those six months to realize it.

The store at night is a different world than the one customers see during the day. Fluorescent lights hum over empty aisles. The only voices are the radio in the break room and the occasional exchange between coworkers passing in the cereal aisle. I worked alongside people twice or three times my age, most of them supporting families of their own, none of them particularly interested in whether I finished my homework or got into college. At first, this anonymity felt lonely. I missed being someone's student, someone's friend, someone with a name people used casually in the hallway.

Somewhere around month three, I stopped minding the quiet, and eventually, I started to value it. There is a particular kind of clarity that comes from repetitive, physical work at three in the morning, when your mind is too tired to perform for anyone and too awake to sleep. I thought about things I had been avoiding: whether I actually wanted to study engineering, as I had told everyone since freshman year, or whether I had simply chosen it because it sounded impressive at family gatherings. I thought about my coworker Denise, who was getting her associate's degree in early childhood education at forty-three, taking night classes around her shifts because, she told me once while we unloaded a truck of canned vegetables, "it's never too late to become who you actually are."

I did not change my college major because of one conversation in a stockroom at four in

the morning. But I did start asking myself harder questions, ones I might have avoided if my life had stayed comfortable and predictable. The night shift did not teach me anything about pallet jacks that mattered in the long run. It taught me that the most important thinking often happens in the least glamorous places, and that the people who seem least connected to your future are sometimes the ones who reshape it.

Circle the Correct Answer

1. Why did the narrator originally take the night shift job?

Answer: b) Because the family needed the extra income

2. How did the narrator initially feel about the anonymity of the night shift?

Answer: b) Lonely, missing familiar roles like student or friend

3. What did Denise's comment suggest to the narrator?

Answer: a) That it is never too late to pursue who you truly want to be

4. What does the narrator ultimately conclude the night shift taught them?

Answer: b) That important reflection can happen in unglamorous places and unexpected people can reshape your thinking

True or False

5. The narrator changed their college major immediately after talking with Denise.

Answer: False

6. The narrator worked alongside people mostly older than themselves.

Answer: True

7. The narrator says the quiet of the night shift eventually became something they valued.

Answer: True

Fill in the Blank

8. Denise said, "it's never too late to become who you actually _____."

Answer: are

9. The narrator describes a particular kind of _____ that comes from repetitive work late at night.

Answer: clarity

Think and Explain

10. What is the author's purpose in this personal narrative, and how does the anecdote about Denise support that purpose? Use evidence from the text in your response.

Sample answer: Accept reasonable answers noting that the author's purpose is to reflect on how an unglamorous job led to unexpected personal growth and self-questioning, and that the Denise anecdote reinforces this by showing a real example of someone pursuing self-discovery later in life, directly connecting to the essay's closing reflection.

11. Identify the tone of this personal narrative (for example, reflective, nostalgic, or matter-of-fact) and explain how specific word choices or details create that tone.

Sample answer: Accept reasonable answers identifying a reflective or contemplative tone, supported by details such as the narrator's description of 'clarity,' the slow realization over several months, and the measured, thoughtful concluding statement about what the experience taught them.