



Reading Comprehension Worksheet

Grade 11

Name: _____

Date: _____

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?

- a) To gain work experience for a college application
- b) Because the family needed the extra income
- c) Because a school counselor required it

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

- a) Relieved and comfortable
- b) Lonely, missing familiar roles like student or friend
- c) Angry at coworkers for ignoring them

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

- a) That it is never too late to pursue who you truly want to be
- b) That college is unnecessary for success
- c) That working nights is more valuable than working days

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

- a) How to operate warehouse equipment professionally
- b) That important reflection can happen in unglamorous places and unexpected people can reshape your thinking
- c) That night shifts are better than day shifts for productivity

True or False

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

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

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

Fill in the Blank

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

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

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.

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.
