Name _____ Date _____

Dialogue That Reveals Character: The Bus Ride Home

Directions: Read the scene. Pay attention to what each character says and how they say it. Then answer each question.

The Bus Ride Home

The bus lurched away from the curb, and Nadia dropped into the seat beside Lucas with her usual thud, shoving her backpack under her feet. "So," she said, "auditions for the spring musical are on Thursday. You're signing up, right?"

Lucas kept his eyes fixed on the frosted window. "Musicals aren't really my thing," he said.

"Funny," Nadia said, "because you've hummed the opening number every single day since they announced the show."

"Everybody hums," Lucas muttered, picking at a loose thread on his backpack strap. After a long pause, he added quietly, "My cousin heard me sing at Thanksgiving, and he said I sounded like a goat stuck in a fence."

"Your cousin," Nadia said, "also thinks pineapple belongs in chili." Lucas snorted, but he still didn't turn away from the window.

Just then, a small voice spoke up from the seat behind them, where a sixth grader with an enormous purple backpack was leaning over the seat back. "Wait, are you the one who sang at the fall talent show? My whole lunch table said you were the best act."

Lucas spun around so quickly that one of his earbuds tumbled into his lap, and for the first time since he sat down, he looked away from the window. "Seriously?"

"Seriously," the girl said. "You made my friend cry, but in a good way."

Nadia didn't say anything. She simply held out a pen. Lucas stared at it for a long moment, and then he took it, pulled a crumpled audition flyer out of his jacket pocket, and began writing his name before the bus reached the next stop.

1. When Nadia asks about auditions, Lucas keeps his eyes on the window and answers, "Musicals aren't really my thing," without looking at her. What does this reveal about him?
   A. He is avoiding the subject instead of saying how he really feels.
   B. He is excited and can't wait to audition.
   C. He has never heard about the spring musical.
   D. He thinks Nadia should audition instead.

2. Nadia replies that Lucas has "hummed the opening number every single day since they announced the show." What does this line reveal about Nadia?
   A. She wants Lucas to stop talking about music.
   B. She has never paid much attention to Lucas.
   C. She notices small details and doesn't accept his excuse.
   D. She thinks Lucas should quit singing.

3. After a long pause, Lucas admits that his cousin "said I sounded like a goat stuck in a fence." What does this line reveal?

A. The real reason he won't audition: his cousin's insult made him afraid that he sings badly.

B. He agrees with Nadia that singing is boring.

C. His cousin is in charge of the spring musical.

D. He sang at Thanksgiving and won a prize.

4. Nadia answers that his cousin "also thinks pineapple belongs in chili." What is she doing with this line?

A. She jokes that his cousin's opinions are not worth trusting.

B. She is sharing a recipe she likes.

C. She agrees that Lucas sounds like a goat.

D. She is changing the subject to talk about dinner.

5. A sixth grader tells Lucas, "My whole lunch table said you were the best act." How does this moment move the action forward?

A. It gives Lucas outside proof that his singing is good, which pushes him toward signing up.

B. It reveals that the sixth grader is Lucas's cousin.

C. It starts an argument between Lucas and Nadia.

D. It makes Lucas decide to quit singing for good.

6. Which two details show that Lucas wanted to audition all along? Select two.

☐ A. "kept his eyes fixed on the frosted window"

☐ B. "you've hummed the opening number every single day since they announced the show"

☐ C. "pulled a crumpled audition flyer out of his jacket pocket"

☐ D. "picking at a loose thread on his backpack strap"

☐ E. "The bus lurched away from the curb"

7. Near the end, "Nadia didn't say anything. She simply held out a pen." What does her silence show?

A. She wants Lucas to write her a note.

B. She plans to sign his name for him.

C. She is too angry to speak to him.

D. She quietly encourages him and lets him make the choice himself.

8. How do the lines of dialogue work together to change Lucas over the course of the bus ride?

A. Lucas never changes; he writes his name only because Nadia forces him to.

B. The dialogue is mostly about the bus running late.

C. Nadia's teasing, his own confession and the sixth grader's praise move him from making excuses to writing his name on the flyer.

D. Each line makes Lucas more certain that he cannot sing.