

## The quiet rehearsal

Fiction | 6 questions

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Read once for the main idea. Look back at the passage while answering. Find words that support each answer.

The hall looked smaller without an audience. Rows of empty chairs faced the stage, and every scrape of a shoe seemed louder than it should. Ben stood at the microphone holding the programme with both hands.

During yesterday's rehearsal, he had rushed through the introduction. His teacher had asked him to leave a pause after each performer's name. Now he read the first sentence slowly, stopped, and looked towards the back row.

"You can take up more room than that," called Asha. She was sitting where the last listener would sit that evening. Ben stepped forward, thinking she meant the space on the stage.

"I mean your voice," she added. "Don't shout. Make the words reach me."

They tried again. Asha raised a hand whenever a word disappeared into the room. Ben noticed that he swallowed the ends of longer names. He marked those names lightly with a pencil, then read them once more.

When the doors opened that evening, the room seemed to change shape. Coats covered the chairs; conversations rose and fell. Ben's programme trembled a little, although he knew the words better than before.

He found Asha in the back row. She gave one small nod. Ben read the opening sentence, finished the final word, and waited. The pause that had felt enormous in the empty hall was just long enough for the audience to turn towards the stage.

# Questions

Choose one answer for each question. You can refer to the passage. The answer notes start on a separate page.

**1. Where did Asha sit during the rehearsal?**

- A. In the back row
- B. Beside the microphone
- C. Behind the stage curtains
- D. Outside the hall doors

**2. Which words did Ben mark with a pencil?**

- A. Every word in the opening sentence
- B. The title printed on the front cover
- C. The longer names whose endings he swallowed
- D. The names of people in the back row

**3. What does “swallowed” mean when used about the names?**

- A. Ate part of the paper
- B. Forgot which performer came next
- C. Read the names twice
- D. Failed to pronounce the endings clearly

**4. Why was sitting in the back row useful for Asha’s feedback?**

- A. She could check whether a distant listener would hear the words
- B. She could make the hall physically smaller
- C. She could keep Ben from seeing the programme
- D. She could practise introducing the performers herself

**5. What does the trembling programme show?**

- A. Ben has not learnt any of the words
- B. Asha is shaking his hands
- C. Ben is still nervous despite his preparation
- D. The microphone has stopped working

**6. What does the final comparison show about the pause?**

- A. Its useful length feels different in rehearsal and before an audience
- B. It is too long for anyone to listen
- C. It proves Ben should speak without pauses
- D. It gives Asha time to leave the hall

# Answers and explanations

Try the questions before reading these notes. A practice score is not an exam grade.

## 1. A. In the back row

She sits where the last listener will sit that evening, described as the back row.

## 2. C. The longer names whose endings he swallowed

He notices the ends of longer names disappearing and marks those names.

## 3. D. Failed to pronounce the endings clearly

The context is about words not reaching Asha, so “swallowed” describes unclear endings.

## 4. A. She could check whether a distant listener would hear the words

Her position lets her test what the furthest listeners will hear.

## 5. C. Ben is still nervous despite his preparation

He knows the words better, yet the programme trembles when the audience arrives, suggesting remaining nerves.

## 6. A. Its useful length feels different in rehearsal and before an audience

The same pause feels enormous in an empty room but lets a real audience turn and listen.

Original passage written for Trace Learn. Authored 2026-09-30. These teaching questions are not a school entrance paper.