

Activity 3: "The Catalyst Kickstart"

Focus: The Inciting Incident (The Turning Point). **Duration:** 40 Minutes.

The Mission

The "Inciting Incident" is the lightning bolt that hits the story. In this exercise, students practice the "**Before and After**" technique to show how a prompt changes everything for a character.

Part 1: The Status Quo (10 Mins)

Assign the class a "Boring Task."

- *Example:* A character is waiting for a bus, washing dishes, or sitting in a boring History lesson.
- **The Task:** Write 3 sentences describing this ordinary moment. Make it feel mundane.

Part 2: The Catalyst (5 Mins)

Introduce a "Prompt Object" (show an image of a glowing envelope, a compass that spins backward, or a silver whistle). **The Rule:** The character must interact with this object *now*.

Part 3: The "Action-Reaction" Sprint (20 Mins)

Students must write the next "beat" of the story. Use the **Action-Reaction-Consequence** formula:

1. **Action:** The character touches/opens/speaks the prompt.
2. **Reaction:** Something magical or weird happens immediately.
3. **Consequence:** The "Boring Task" from Part 1 is now impossible to finish.

Example: "I reached for the soap, but my hand brushed the silver whistle on the counter. I blew it. Instead of a sound, the kitchen water froze into solid diamonds. I wasn't getting the dishes done today; I was going to be rich—or in a lot of trouble."

Part 4: The Cliffhanger (5 Mins)

Students must end their writing on a "Cliffhanger Sentence" that starts with the word "**Suddenly,**" "**However,**" or "**To my horror,**".

Why this helps for the assessment:

- It stops "Description Bloat." It forces the story to **move**.
- It teaches them how to use the **Prompt** as a gear-shift that changes the story's direction.
- It practices the "Story Mountain" transition from **Introduction** to **Rising Action**.