Teacher Answer Key

Case Study

1. Salt is an amplifier that suppresses bitterness and makes ingredients taste more like themselves, and no herb performs that job. Adding oregano only stacked one more flavor on top of a dish whose existing flavors were still muted, so the sauce tasted strongly of oregano and remained flat underneath.

2. Acid supplies brightness and cuts through richness, and it makes every other flavor in the dish read as sharper and more distinct. A properly salted sauce that still tastes heavy or muddy is usually missing acid, which is the element most commonly absent from home cooking.

Multiple Choice

1. B

2. D

3. A

Matching

1-B, 2-D, 3-E, 4-A, 5-C

Fill-in-the-Blank

1) teaspoon, 2) blooming, 3) acid

Short Answer (Sample Responses)

Q1: Dried herbs and whole spices are dense and need time and moisture to rehydrate and release flavor into the dish, so early addition gives them that time. Fresh basil's aromatic compounds are volatile and evaporate within minutes of heat, so adding it early wastes it entirely.

Q2: Salt suppresses bitterness and sharpens sweetness and sourness, which makes the ingredients already present taste more strongly like themselves. A correctly salted dish does not taste salty, it tastes more like tomatoes or more like chicken, which is a different job from adding a new flavor.

Q3: Changing several things at once makes it impossible to know which adjustment helped or hurt, so the cook learns nothing and can easily overshoot. Adding one element and tasting isolates the effect, and since salt and acid can be added but not removed, small single steps prevent ruining the dish.