Storm in the Garden

Trace how word choices shape a story's meaning.

6.CL.4 "Describe the use of literary devices in prose and poetry, including simile, metaphor, personification, onomatopoeia, hyperbole, tone, imagery, irony, symbolism, and mood, and indicate how they support interpretations of the text."

NAME _____ DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline one phrase that gives something nonhuman a human trait, circle two sound words, and draw boxes around two mentions of the key. Use your marks to think about how the story's mood and meaning change.

The Garden Key

1 At the edge of the school garden, Mira held the small brass key to the gate. She had promised to water the bean plants after class, but the hose was dry and the soil had cracked. Above her, clouds gathered like a crowd waiting for a show. The garden was a thirsty mouth that no one could fill. Mira rubbed the key with her thumb. Her grandfather had given it to her when she took charge of the plot. Today, that job felt too big for her.

2 Wind whispered through the fence, urging Mira to leave. She could turn the key and hide in the shed, but the bean leaves hung low. Crack! Thunder split the air. Mira jumped and nearly dropped the key. Then a cold dot landed on her nose. Another tapped the metal watering can: ping, ping. She looked up at the dark clouds and waited. The first drops seemed too small to help, but the sound kept growing around her.

3 Rain poured across the beds, and the dry soil drank it in. Mira laughed at the twist: she had wanted the storm to stay away, yet it was doing the watering she could not do. She unlocked the gate and checked that the young plants still stood straight. Water ran down the brass key in her hand. It no longer felt like a heavy duty. To Mira, it felt like a promise she could keep, even when help came from a surprising place.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. What does the metaphor “The garden was a thirsty mouth” help you understand about the garden?

2. How does the wind's humanlike action affect the mood at the start of the second paragraph?

3. How do “Crack!” and “ping, ping” help show a change in the storm and the mood?

4. What does the key stand for by the end? How does the storm's surprising help change Mira's view of her job?

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

Write a four-sentence scene set somewhere other than a garden. Include personification, a sound word, and an object that stands for a feeling or idea. In your fourth sentence, explain how one of your devices shapes the mood.

ANSWER KEY

Storm in the Garden

GRADE 6 · 6.CL.4

PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Underline one phrase that gives something nonhuman a human trait, circle two sound words, and draw boxes around two mentions of the key. Use your marks to think about how the story's mood and meaning change. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 · ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	What does the metaphor “The garden was a thirsty mouth” help you understand about the garden?	**The soil and plants badly need water, and Mira cannot provide it with the dry hose.**
2	How does the wind's humanlike action affect the mood at the start of the second paragraph?	**The wind seems to urge Mira to leave, making the scene feel uneasy.**
3	How do “Crack!” and “ping, ping” help show a change in the storm and the mood?	**The loud crack of thunder startles Mira. The softer pings signal arriving rain, shifting the mood toward hope.**
4	What does the key stand for by the end? How does the storm's surprising help change Mira's view of her job?	**The key stands for Mira's promise to care for the garden. Although she feared the storm, its rain helps her keep that promise, so the job feels less heavy.**

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

In the empty gym, the bleachers stared at Leo as he waited for the final tryout list. Click, click went the clock above the door. He held his worn shoelace, a symbol of all the practice he had put in. The staring bleachers make the gym feel tense because Leo seems to have no place to hide.

Accept interpretations supported by details in the passage. For the open task, look for four sentences with all three requested devices and an explanation connecting one device to mood.