Words That Restore

Analyze how comparison and connotation shape a changing place.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.L.11-12.5 "Demonstrate understanding of figurative language, word relationships, and nuances in word meanings."

NAME _____ DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline three figurative comparisons or examples of personification, and circle three words whose connotations shape the mill's mood or meaning. In the margin, label each underlined example as a simile, metaphor, or personification.

The Mill by the River

1 At dawn, the old textile mill stood beside the river like a patient animal, its brick walls warmed by a thin wash of sun. For decades, its windows had stared blankly across the water, and weeds had threaded through cracks in the loading dock. Yet the building was not merely ruined. Its tall smokestack, though silent, held the sky like a raised finger. Residents called the mill abandoned, a word that suggested neglect, but the structure seemed watchful, as if it were storing the town's unfinished stories in its dark rooms.

2 That autumn, volunteers cleared the grounds, but they did not try to erase every scar. They left a rusted pulley near the entrance, not as debris but as evidence. Inside, architects planned studios, a library, and a small museum. Their work was often described as renewal, not replacement. Renewal implies that something valuable continues, while replacement suggests that the past can be discarded. When workers opened boarded doors, dust rose in pale clouds, and the echoing halls seemed to exhale. The mill was changing, yet its history remained a foundation rather than a chain.

3 By spring, students sketched the river from the mill's upper windows, and musicians rehearsed where looms once clattered. The new activity did not make the building younger. It gave its age a different meaning. To call the mill reborn would be partly true, but reborn can imply a complete break from what came before. The mill was better described as reawakened: altered, active, and still connected to its earlier life. The river, which had once carried dyed water away from the factory, now reflected lights from evening events. Its current became a quiet metaphor for the town, moving forward without denying where it had been.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. What human action is given to the mill's windows in paragraph 1? What does the word "blankly" suggest about the mill at that time?

2. How does the passage distinguish between "renewal" and "replacement" in paragraph 2?

3. Why does the author say "reawakened" describes the mill better than "reborn"?

4. What does the river's current metaphorically represent in the final sentence?

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

Write 3 or 4 sentences about a familiar place that is changing. Include one simile, metaphor, or example of personification, and use two related words with different connotations to show whether the place is being renewed, replaced, restored, or changed in another way.

ANSWER KEY

Words That Restore

HIGH SCHOOL · L.11-12.5

PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Underline three figurative comparisons or examples of personification, and circle three words whose connotations shape the mill's mood or meaning. In the margin, label each underlined example as a simile, metaphor, or personification. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 · ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	What human action is given to the mill's windows in paragraph 1? What does the word "blankly" suggest about the mill at that time?	**The windows are said to have "stared." "Blankly" suggests the mill was vacant, lifeless, or neglected.**
2	How does the passage distinguish between "renewal" and "replacement" in paragraph 2?	**Renewal means something valuable continues, while replacement suggests discarding the past and substituting something else.**
3	Why does the author say "reawakened" describes the mill better than "reborn"?	**"Reawakened" shows that the mill is active and changed while still connected to its past. "Reborn" can imply a complete break from what came before.**
4	What does the river's current metaphorically represent in the final sentence?	**It represents the town moving forward while still acknowledging its history.**

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

The closed train station waited at the edge of downtown like a clock holding its breath. Workers restored its stone arches, but they did not replace the worn ticket window. Restoration suggests careful preservation, while replacement would suggest that the station's original character no longer mattered. Now the station hums with commuters while carrying its earlier life in every echoing hallway.

Accept accurately identified figurative language and reasonable explanations of connotation that are supported by the passage. For the open response, look for a clear figurative comparison and a meaningful distinction between related words.