When Darkness Speaks

Read how figurative language and precise word choice shape a neighborhood story.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.L.9-10.5 "Demonstrate understanding of figurative language, word relationships, and nuances in word meanings."

NAME _____ DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline each phrase that compares unlike things or gives a nonhuman thing a human action. Then circle "inconvenient" and "revealing" in paragraph 3, and label each T for trouble or M for meaning.

The Evening Grid

1. At 8:17 on a humid July evening, the lights in Marisol's apartment blinked twice and vanished. The refrigerator's steady hum stopped, leaving a silence that seemed to swell through the rooms. Outside, traffic signals went dark, and cars crept through the intersection like cautious beetles. Marisol stepped onto the fire escape. Across the block, windows opened one by one. Neighbors leaned out with flashlights, their small beams stitching the brick buildings together. The city had not gone to sleep, she thought. It was holding its breath.

2. Within an hour, word traveled faster than any official notice. Someone had tripped electrical equipment at a nearby substation, shutting off power to several neighborhoods. On the sidewalk, a grocery owner handed melting ice cream to children before it became soup. A nurse from the next building checked on an older resident whose oxygen machine needed electricity. Marisol noticed that people spoke more softly than usual, as if loud voices might make the dark heavier. Yet the street was not helpless. Extension cords, battery packs, and practical advice moved from doorway to doorway, creating a temporary network of care.

3. Near midnight, the utility company restored power in stages. Lamps flickered awake, air conditioners coughed, and a cheer rose from the block. Marisol's mother called the outage inconvenient, but Marisol chose a different word: revealing. In bright rooms, she had known her neighbors mostly as passing faces. During the blackout, their names, needs, and skills became clear. The event had stripped away routine without stripping away kindness. By morning, the intersection flashed red, yellow, and green again. Still, Marisol carried the evening's quiet lesson with her, a small lantern against the rush of ordinary days.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. What does the comparison of cars to “cautious beetles” show about how the cars moved?

2. What does Marisol mean when she thinks the city is “holding its breath”?

3. How does the word “revealing” differ from “inconvenient” as a description of the outage?

4. What does the “small lantern” represent in the final sentence?

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

Write 3 or 4 sentences about a familiar place during a sudden change, such as a storm, delay, or canceled event. Include one simile or personification, and use two contrasting words to describe the same event. Underline the figurative phrase and circle the contrasting words.

When Darkness Speaks

PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Underline each phrase that compares unlike things or gives a nonhuman thing a human action. Then circle "inconvenient" and "revealing" in paragraph 3, and label each T for trouble or M for meaning. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 · ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	What does the comparison of cars to "cautious beetles" show about how the cars moved?	**The cars moved slowly and carefully through the dark intersection.**
2	What does Marisol mean when she thinks the city is "holding its breath"?	**The city feels unusually quiet, tense, and waiting for something to happen.**
3	How does the word "revealing" differ from "inconvenient" as a description of the outage?	**"Inconvenient" focuses on the outage's trouble, while "revealing" focuses on how it exposed the neighbors' needs, names, and skills.**
4	What does the "small lantern" represent in the final sentence?	**It represents the lesson about kindness and community that guides Marisol during ordinary life.**

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

When rain canceled our soccer practice, the empty field swallowed our shouts. At first, the cancellation felt frustrating, but later it seemed useful because our team planned new plays in the gym. The rain turned a lost practice into a quiet reset.

Accept equivalent interpretations that connect each figurative phrase to the scene's mood, actions, or message. For the open response, accept varied situations if the student includes a clear figurative phrase and two genuinely contrasting descriptive words.