Garden Mood Tracker

Track how word choices build and change a scene's mood.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.6.4 "Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text, including figurative and connotative meanings; analyze the impact of a specific word choice on meaning and tone"

NAME _____ DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline two phrases that are not meant literally, and circle four words that create a worried, calm, or mysterious feeling. Number your marks 1 through 6 so you can find them easily.

Maya's Evening Garden

1 At dusk, Maya unlocked the gate to the school garden. The paths, usually busy with boots and backpacks, lay still beneath a violet sky. She had promised to water the beans during the long weekend, but the dry soil had cracked like old paint. As she carried the heavy can, the garden seemed to hold its breath. Even the tomato leaves drooped, waiting for the first cool splash against their dusty stems of the evening.

2 Water darkened the ground in widening circles. Maya worked slowly, listening to the soft glug of the can. Then she heard a sharp rustle near the fence. Her hands froze. A raccoon stepped from the shadows, its mask bright against the dim grass. It did not charge or growl. Instead, it sniffed one fallen peach, then shuffled away. Maya laughed quietly. The frightening sound had been only a small visitor searching for supper in the garden.

3 Before leaving, Maya filled a shallow dish for birds and set it beside the fence. The moon rose above the roof, silvering the wet paths. Now the garden no longer felt like a place that held its breath. It hummed with hidden life, from beetles under stones to wings brushing the air. Maya locked the gate and walked home. Behind her, the beans stood taller, and the garden glimmered like a secret worth keeping through the night.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. What does the phrase "the garden seemed to hold its breath" mean in paragraph 1?

2. What does the word "sharp" suggest about the rustle near the fence? How does it affect the mood?

3. How does the description "its mask bright against the dim grass" affect the way the raccoon is presented?

4. Compare "held its breath" in paragraph 1 with "hummed with hidden life" in paragraph 3. How do these phrases show a change in the garden's mood?

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

Write exactly three sentences about an ordinary place at dusk. Underline one figurative phrase and circle two connotative words that create a tense or peaceful tone.

ANSWER KEY

Garden Mood Tracker

GRADE 6 · RL.6.4

PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Underline two phrases that are not meant literally, and circle four words that create a worried, calm, or mysterious feeling. Number your marks 1 through 6 so you can find them easily. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 · ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	What does the phrase "the garden seemed to hold its breath" mean in paragraph 1?	**The garden is very still and quiet, as if it is waiting.**
2	What does the word "sharp" suggest about the rustle near the fence? How does it affect the mood?	**It suggests a sudden, noticeable sound. It creates a worried or tense mood.**
3	How does the description "its mask bright against the dim grass" affect the way the raccoon is presented?	**It makes the raccoon stand out from the dark setting, making it seem mysterious or startling.**
4	Compare "held its breath" in paragraph 1 with "hummed with hidden life" in paragraph 3. How do these phrases show a change in the garden's mood?	**The first phrase makes the garden seem silent and tense. The second makes it seem active, alive, and peaceful.**

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

At dusk, the library grew (silent) as rain tapped the windows. The empty hallway __stretched like a tunnel__, and each (eerie) creak made me listen. When the lamps glowed, the room felt calm.

Accept equivalent explanations when students connect a quoted word or phrase to its meaning and effect on mood. For Part 3, check for exactly three sentences, one marked figurative phrase, two marked connotative words, and a clear tense or peaceful tone.