

Greenhouse in Light

Trace how imagery, connotation, and allusion shape a story's tone.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.8.4 "Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text, including figurative and connotative meanings; analyze the impact of specific word choices on meaning and tone, including analogies or allusions to other texts."

NAME _____

DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK _____ Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline three phrases that are figurative or allusive, then circle two words with strong positive or negative feelings. In the margin, write H, D, or C beside each underlined phrase to show whether it makes the greenhouse seem hopeful, difficult, or changed.

The Greenhouse Project

- ① By October, the school greenhouse had become a glass graveyard. Dust filmed the panes, and dead vines clung to the shelves like old cobwebs. When Mara pushed open the door, the rusty hinge complained. Her science club planned to grow native plants there, but the room seemed to swallow their plans whole. Most students saw broken pots and a leaking roof. Mara saw a sleeping workshop, waiting for someone to strike a match. She wrote a repair list, though her pencil shook in the cold.
- ② At first, the work moved at a snail's pace. A storm had knocked loose several roof panels, and the club's small budget could not cover every repair. Mara called the local garden center, then the hardware store. Each refusal landed like a stone in her backpack. Still, she returned every afternoon, scraping paint and sorting seeds. "We are not building Eden," she told her friend Luis. "We are building a place where life can get a fair start." Luis looked at the cracked floor and laughed, but he stayed to help.
- ③ Two weeks before the fair, a delivery truck stopped beside the greenhouse. The garden center had donated panels after all. Sunlight poured through the new roof, turning the dusty air bright as river water. Mara's repair list became a map of finished tasks. On fair day, purple coneflowers stood in clean rows, and bees traced busy circles above them. Visitors entered quietly, as if the small room were a chapel. Mara remembered the first cold morning. The greenhouse had not been rescued by one hero. It had been lifted, hand by hand, into the light.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE _____ Use the passage

- 1** What does the phrase “glass graveyard” suggest about the greenhouse at the beginning of the passage? Explain the connotation of “graveyard.”

- 2** How does the phrase “swallow their plans whole” contrast with Mara's description of the greenhouse as “a sleeping workshop”?

- 3** What does Mara mean when she says, “We are not building Eden”? How does the allusion to Eden strengthen her point?

- 4** How do the final words, “lifted, hand by hand, into the light,” affect the tone and message of the ending?

3 YOUR TURN _____ Your own words

Write exactly 3 sentences about improving an ordinary place. Include one simile or metaphor and one allusion to a story, myth, historical event, or well-known figure, place brackets around each choice, and add a one- or two-word tone label in parentheses after each bracketed choice.

PART 1 • READ AND MARK

Underline three phrases that are figurative or allusive, then circle two words with strong positive or negative feelings. In the margin, write H, D, or C beside each underlined phrase to show whether it makes the greenhouse seem hopeful, difficult, or changed. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 • ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	What does the phrase “glass graveyard” suggest about the greenhouse at the beginning of the passage? Explain the connotation of “graveyard.”	It suggests that the greenhouse is neglected, lifeless, and abandoned. “Graveyard” has a dark, death-related connotation.
2	How does the phrase “swallow their plans whole” contrast with Mara's description of the greenhouse as “a sleeping workshop”?	“Swallow their plans whole” makes the greenhouse seem overwhelming and likely to defeat the club. “A sleeping workshop” makes it seem full of hidden potential that can be awakened.
3	What does Mara mean when she says, “We are not building Eden”? How does the allusion to Eden strengthen her point?	She means that the club is not trying to create a perfect paradise. The allusion to the biblical garden of Eden emphasizes the contrast between perfection and their realistic goal of giving plants a fair start.
4	How do the final words, “lifted, hand by hand, into the light,” affect the tone and message of the ending?	The words create a hopeful, respectful tone. They show that the greenhouse changed through shared effort, not through one person's actions.

PART 3 • YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

Our empty lot was a [blank page] (hopeful). Like [Johnny Appleseed], we planted saplings in neat rows (determined). By sunset, the lot no longer looked forgotten.

Accept accurate explanations that connect quoted language to connotation, tone, or meaning. For Part 3, accept varied subjects and allusions if the response has exactly three sentences, includes both required choices, and labels the tone of each choice.