Station After Hours

Track how diction turns an abandoned station into a mood.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.9-10.4 "Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in the text, including figurative and connotative meanings; analyze the cumulative impact of specific word choices on meaning and tone (e.g.,..."

NAME _____ DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

YOUR JOB Circle three words or phrases that show the station's age or condition, and underline three that create its quiet, watchful mood. Number one figurative phrase that helps make the station seem alive or affected by time.

The Last Minute

1 At 5:40, Mara pushed through the warped door of the old station and stepped into a room smelling of rain, iron, and dust. The ticket windows stood dark behind their brass grilles. A timetable, yellowed at the edges, still promised trains to cities that no longer appeared on maps. Above the platform, the clock held its hands at 11:17, as if the building had caught one last minute and refused to release it. Outside, weeds threaded between the rails, and a crow lifted from the signal post with a rusty cry.

2 Mara had come because her grandfather once sold newspapers beside the eastbound track. He called the station a lung, drawing workers, soldiers, and schoolchildren through its wide doors each day. Now, his stories seemed to echo off the cracked tile. She imagined the morning rush: boots striking the floor, coins clicking onto counters, conductors calling destinations into clouds of steam. Yet the silence was not empty. It pressed around her, thick as the fog beyond the windows, making each small sound, her sleeve brushing a wall, a drop falling from the roof, seem loud and private.

3 On the far wall, Mara found a painted advertisement nearly hidden under peeling blue paper. A woman in a red coat smiled beneath the words, "THE FUTURE ARRIVES ON TIME." Mara traced the letters without touching them. The bright promise felt strange in the dim station, where afternoon light leaked through broken panes and pooled on the floor. For a moment, she pictured her grandfather as a boy, running toward a train that breathed smoke and possibility. Then a truck groaned on the road outside. The sound pulled her back to the present, but the station kept its patient, watchful silence.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. In paragraph 1, what does the word “warped” suggest about the station door and the station's condition?

2. What does the figurative description of the clock as holding “one last minute” suggest about the station?

3. How do the sound words “striking,” “clicking,” and “calling” affect the reader's picture of the station in its past?

4. How does the slogan “THE FUTURE ARRIVES ON TIME” affect the tone when it appears in the dim, broken station?

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

Write exactly three sentences describing a familiar place after it has closed or emptied. Use at least three precise word choices and one example of personification to create a quiet or uneasy tone.

ANSWER KEY

Station After Hours

HIGH SCHOOL · RL.9-10.4

PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Circle three words or phrases that show the station's age or condition, and underline three that create its quiet, watchful mood. Number one figurative phrase that helps make the station seem alive or affected by time. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 · ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	In paragraph 1, what does the word “warped” suggest about the station door and the station's condition?	**“Warped” suggests that the door is bent or misshapen from age and weather, helping show that the station has been neglected.**
2	What does the figurative description of the clock as holding “one last minute” suggest about the station?	**It suggests that time seems frozen at the station, as if the building is preserving its final active moment.**
3	How do the sound words “striking,” “clicking,” and “calling” affect the reader's picture of the station in its past?	**They create a lively, crowded picture of the station's former rush and make the present silence feel stronger by contrast.**
4	How does the slogan “THE FUTURE ARRIVES ON TIME” affect the tone when it appears in the dim, broken station?	**The slogan creates irony. Its hopeful promise contrasts with the station's decay, creating a wistful, lost tone.**

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

After the final bell, the gym crouched beneath its high, shadowy rafters. A lone basketball whispered across the scuffed floor, then rolled into the silent bleachers. The cold, echoing room seemed to hold its breath.

Accept other supported interpretations when students connect a quoted word or phrase to its connotation, tone, or effect. For the open response, check for exactly three sentences, precise diction, personification, and a consistent quiet or uneasy tone.