# The Silent Watch

Analyze how setting, imagery, and contrast shape meaning in a literary passage.

**ELA.12.R.1.1** "Evaluate how key elements enhance or add layers of meaning and/or style in a literary text and explain the functional significance of those elements in interpreting the text."

NAME _____ DATE _____

## 1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

**YOUR JOB** Underline three details that create the passage's mood, circle references to silence or sound, and number three moments when the narrator's understanding changes. Use your marks to explain how these elements build meaning.

### The Repair Shop

1 On the evening the town lost power, I found my father in the darkened repair shop, holding a pocket watch beneath the window. Rain tapped the glass, and the watches along the walls had fallen silent. He turned the watch over in his palm as if it were a small animal. "Your grandfather carried this watch through the war," he said. "It stopped the morning he came home." I had heard that story before, usually at family dinners, when it seemed polished and harmless. Tonight, with the shop's clocks blank and the streetlights gone, the stopped watch sounded less like an heirloom than a question no one had answered.

2 Father set the watch on the counter beside a jar of tiny brass gears. In the beam of his flashlight, the gears shone like wet seeds. He opened the back case, then stopped. "I can replace the spring," he said, "but I cannot make it tell the truth." Outside, the rain eased. A bus passed, its headlights sweeping across the room and waking each glass face for a second. I wanted to ask what truth a watch could hold, but he was listening to the quiet, as though the silence had begun speaking first.

3 At dawn, Father placed the watch in my hand and led me outside. The outage had ended, but the shop remained unlit behind us. Across the square, the courthouse clock resumed its measured striking, one note after another. Father did not repair the pocket watch. Instead, he slipped it into my coat and said, "Some things keep time by what they refuse to forget." As I walked home, the watch pressed against my ribs, useless and heavy. For the first time, I understood that its silence did not erase my grandfather's return. It made me hear the cost of it.

## 2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. How do the power outage and the silent watches in the first paragraph change the meaning of the pocket watch? Explain their function in establishing the passage's mood.

2. What does the comparison of the brass gears to "wet seeds" add to the style and meaning of the second paragraph?

3. What is the effect of describing the bus headlights as "waking each glass face" and the silence as beginning to speak?

4. Evaluate the contrast between the courthouse clock resuming its striking and the pocket watch remaining unrepaired. What larger idea does this contrast develop?

## 3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

Choose one key element that Questions 1 through 4 do not address, such as a line of dialogue, an action, or a word choice. Write exactly three sentences explaining how it adds meaning or style and why it matters to your interpretation of the passage.

ANSWER KEY

# The Silent Watch

GRADE 12 · ELA.12.R.1.1

## PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Underline three details that create the passage's mood, circle references to silence or sound, and number three moments when the narrator's understanding changes. Use your marks to explain how these elements build meaning. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

## PART 2 · ANSWERS

| # | QUESTION | ANSWER |
|---|---|---|
| 1 | How do the power outage and the silent watches in the first paragraph change the meaning of the pocket watch? Explain their function in establishing the passage's mood. | **The darkness and silence make the watch seem mysterious and unresolved rather than simply valuable. They create an uneasy mood that turns the family story into an unanswered question.** |
| 2 | What does the comparison of the brass gears to "wet seeds" add to the style and meaning of the second paragraph? | **The comparison makes the gears seem small, delicate, and almost living. It emphasizes the watch's fragility and creates an intimate, careful tone.** |
| 3 | What is the effect of describing the bus headlights as "waking each glass face" and the silence as beginning to speak? | **The personification makes the shop and its silence seem alive and meaningful. It suggests that the objects and the quiet communicate a truth that Father does not state directly.** |
| 4 | Evaluate the contrast between the courthouse clock resuming its striking and the pocket watch remaining unrepaired. What larger idea does this contrast develop? | **The courthouse clock represents public, measurable time continuing normally, while the unrepaired watch represents personal memory and emotional cost. The contrast shows that lived experience cannot always be fixed or measured like a clock.** |

## PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

The line, "Some things keep time by what they refuse to forget," gives the watch a meaning beyond its mechanical purpose. It suggests that memory can preserve an event even when people avoid speaking about it. Placed just before the narrator carries the watch away, the line turns the transfer into a responsibility to remember the family story.

Accept supported interpretations that identify a specific textual element, explain its effect, and connect that effect to a larger meaning. Responses may use different details if the reasoning is grounded in the passage.