Fireflies After Dark

Study how details and comparisons shape a narrative scene.

ELA.6.C.1.2 "Write personal or fictional narratives using narrative techniques, precise words and phrases, and figurative language."

NAME _____ DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline three precise words or phrases that help you picture the scene, circle two examples of figurative language, and number four key events in order. These choices show how the writer builds a vivid narrative.

The Firefly Count

1 On Saturday evening, Lila carried a glass jar to the community garden, where volunteers were preparing for the firefly count. The air smelled of wet soil and crushed mint. Lila had promised to record each flash, but her pencil shook against the clipboard. Last year, she had counted only three fireflies and worried that she had done the job wrong. Beside her, Mr. Chen unfolded a map as carefully as a sailor opening a chart.

2 At dusk, the first green blink appeared near the bean trellis. Lila wrote "one" and waited. Then flashes sparked above the tomato rows, tiny lanterns rising and falling in the dark. She moved slowly along the gravel path, listening for the click of Mr. Chen's counter. When a dog barked beyond the fence, Lila almost dropped her jar. Instead, she took a breath, checked the map, and kept her eyes on the silver-blue grass beside her.

3 Near the end of the count, a warm breeze bent the tall sunflowers. The fireflies vanished for a moment, and Lila's stomach tightened like a drawn knot. Then one light winked from a leaf, followed by another and another. Lila grinned and called the numbers to Mr. Chen. By the time the moon cleared the rooftops, her page held forty-seven marks. Walking home, she realized the garden had not asked her to be perfect. It had asked her to notice.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. What does the detail “her pencil shook against the clipboard” show about Lila at the beginning of the narrative?

2. Write two precise words or phrases that help you picture the garden. Explain what each detail helps you imagine.

3. What comparison does the writer use to show Lila’s worry near the end of the count? What feeling does it create?

4. How do Lila’s actions after the dog barks show a change in her response to the challenge? Use details from the passage.

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

Write a 5-6 sentence personal or fictional narrative about noticing something outdoors. Include a clear beginning, middle, and ending, at least two precise sensory details, and one simile.

ANSWER KEY

Fireflies After Dark

GRADE 6 · ELA.6.C.1.2

PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Underline three precise words or phrases that help you picture the scene, circle two examples of figurative language, and number four key events in order. These choices show how the writer builds a vivid narrative. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 · ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	What does the detail "her pencil shook against the clipboard" show about Lila at the beginning of the narrative?	**It shows that Lila feels nervous and unsure about doing the firefly count correctly.**
2	Write two precise words or phrases that help you picture the garden. Explain what each detail helps you imagine.	**Possible answers: "wet soil" helps the reader imagine the smell and damp ground, and "gravel path" helps the reader picture where Lila walks.**
3	What comparison does the writer use to show Lila's worry near the end of the count? What feeling does it create?	**The writer says Lila's stomach "tightened like a drawn knot." It creates a feeling of tense worry.**
4	How do Lila's actions after the dog barks show a change in her response to the challenge? Use details from the passage.	**Instead of giving up, Lila takes a breath, checks the map, and keeps watching. Later, she confidently calls the numbers to Mr. Chen.**

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

Rain tapped the metal shelter while I waited for my sister after soccer practice. Cold drops slid down my sleeves, and the sidewalk shone under the yellow streetlights. When I saw her red backpack across the parking lot, I stepped off the curb too quickly. A passing car splashed a fan of muddy water near my shoes. My worry burst like a balloon when she waved and laughed. We hurried home, leaving wet footprints on the porch.

Accept reasonable evidence-based explanations of Lila's feelings, setting details, and change over time. For the writing task, look for a connected narrative with a sequence of events, precise details, and a simile that adds meaning.