

Greenhouse After Dark

Study how a first-person narrative builds suspense through details and figurative language.

ELA.7.C.1.2 "Write personal or fictional narratives using narrative techniques, a recognizable point of view, 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 build the setting or action, circle two examples of figurative language, and number 1, 2, and 3 beside three events that build suspense or move the plot.

The Silver Shape

- ① Rain tapped the greenhouse roof as I locked up after science club. Through the fogged glass, a silver shape slid between the tomato beds. My key froze above the lock. I told myself it was only a watering can, yet the shape scraped against a tray, making a thin, nervous squeal. The greenhouse smelled of wet soil and crushed basil. I stepped inside, holding my phone like a tiny lantern, while shadows gathered around my shoes.
- ② I should have called the custodian, but curiosity pulled me forward. At the far bench, the silver shape twitched again. I lifted a leaf and found a soaked kitten tangled in a strip of reflective gift ribbon. Its green eyes flashed, then narrowed at me. "Easy," I whispered, although my own voice shook. The ribbon had caught on a pot, pinning one small paw. Carefully, I loosened the knot. The kitten sprang free and knocked over a packet of seeds.
- ③ Then the kitten bolted toward the open door. I lunged, but my sneaker skidded on a puddle. Outside, rain hammered the pavement, a drumbeat that swallowed every sound. The kitten paused beside the fence, its ribbon shining like a signal flag. I crouched and held out the seed packet. After one long breath, it padded back to me. I wrapped it in my hoodie and carried it to the office, where the custodian found a box and called an animal shelter.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE _____ Use the passage

1 What point of view does the narrator use? Give one word or phrase from the passage that proves your answer.

2 Which two events build suspense before the narrator discovers what caused the silver shape?

3 What does the phrase “rain hammered the pavement, a drumbeat that swallowed every sound” suggest about the storm?

4 How does the narrator solve the main problem? Include at least two actions in the correct order.

3 YOUR TURN _____ Your own words

Write a 100–130 word first-person narrative about discovering an unexpected problem while helping at a school event. Use a clear beginning, middle, and ending, at least two precise sensory details, and one example of figurative language.

PART 1 • READ AND MARK

Underline three precise words or phrases that build the setting or action, circle two examples of figurative language, and number 1, 2, and 3 beside three events that build suspense or move the plot. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 • ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	What point of view does the narrator use? Give one word or phrase from the passage that proves your answer.	First-person point of view. The narrator uses “I,” such as “I stepped inside.”
2	Which two events build suspense before the narrator discovers what caused the silver shape?	The silver shape slid between the tomato beds, and it scraped against a tray, making a thin squeal.
3	What does the phrase “rain hammered the pavement, a drumbeat that swallowed every sound” suggest about the storm?	It suggests the rain was loud and forceful, making it hard to hear other sounds.
4	How does the narrator solve the main problem? Include at least two actions in the correct order.	The narrator loosens the ribbon from the kitten’s paw, then uses the seed packet to bring it back, wraps it in a hoodie, and takes it to the office.

PART 3 • YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

While setting chairs for the school concert, I heard a sharp snap behind the stage. The blue curtain sagged, and a metal hook rolled across the dusty floor. My hands turned cold, but I grabbed the step stool and called to Maya. Together, we pulled the curtain aside and found a loose cord rubbing against the light stand. The cord was a restless snake, ready to slide farther. Maya held the stand steady while I tied the cord to a safe hook with a strip of tape. When the first families entered, the curtain hung straight, and my heartbeat finally slowed.

Accept reasonable text evidence and explanations of how precise language, figurative language, or event order affects the narrative. For question 2, accept only suspense-building events that occur before the narrator identifies the animal.