Stormy Library Secrets

Track figurative language and allusions in a stormy library scene.

ELA.7.R.3.1 "Analyze how figurative language contributes to tone and meaning and explain examples of allusions in text(s)."

NAME _____ DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline words or phrases that create an image beyond their literal meaning, circle the two allusions, and write A for anxious or H for hopeful beside each mark to show how the language shapes the story's tone.

The Centennial Box

1. Rain began just as Nia locked the doors of the neighborhood library. Inside, the emergency lights blinked, and the long rows of books seemed to hold their breath. Nia had volunteered to help Mr. Alvarez prepare for the library's centennial exhibit, but a storm had knocked out the power. The building was silent as a cave except for the rain tapping the windows. When Mr. Alvarez found an old wooden box in the storage room, Nia's curiosity woke like a struck match.

2. Mr. Alvarez brushed dust from the lid. "This box is no Pandora's box," he said, "but it may hold surprises." Nia grinned, remembering the Greek story in which a container releases troubles into the world. They lifted the lid and found letters written by children who had attended the library decades earlier. One letter described learning to read during a flood. Another thanked a librarian for delivering books by bicycle. The pages were small boats, carrying voices across years of time.

3. Then a car horn sounded outside, followed by Mr. Alvarez's laugh. "The volunteers are here," he said. "Our Paul Revere has spread the word." Nia watched neighbors hurry through the rain with flashlights and thermoses. The dark library changed from a worried giant into a warm campfire. As people read the letters aloud, the storm still rumbled, but it no longer ruled the room. Nia placed the box on a table and felt the past shake hands with the present.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. What does the phrase "the long rows of books seemed to hold their breath" suggest about the library's mood? Explain how this personification affects the tone.

2. What does the allusion to Pandora's box mean in this scene? How does it affect the tone when Mr. Alvarez says the box is "no Pandora's box"?

3. Who is Paul Revere, and what does the phrase "Our Paul Revere has spread the word" mean about the volunteers?

4. The library changes from a "worried giant" to a "warm campfire." Explain how these metaphors show a shift in tone and why the shift happens.

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

Write a three-sentence mini-scene about waiting for help during a problem. Include one figurative expression and one allusion, then explain in the third sentence how both choices build the tone.

ANSWER KEY

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GRADE 7 · ELA.7.R.3.1

PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Underline words or phrases that create an image beyond their literal meaning, circle the two allusions, and write A for anxious or H for hopeful beside each mark to show how the language shapes the story's tone. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 · ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	What does the phrase "the long rows of books seemed to hold their breath" suggest about the library's mood? Explain how this personification affects the tone.	**It suggests that the library is unusually still and tense. The personification creates an anxious, suspenseful tone.**
2	What does the allusion to Pandora's box mean in this scene? How does it affect the tone when Mr. Alvarez says the box is "no Pandora's box"?	**Pandora's box refers to a Greek story about a container that releases troubles. Mr. Alvarez means the box may have surprises but is not dangerous, which gives the scene a playful, curious tone.**
3	Who is Paul Revere, and what does the phrase "Our Paul Revere has spread the word" mean about the volunteers?	**Paul Revere is known for warning people that British forces were coming. The phrase means someone alerted the volunteers, who came to help at the library.**
4	The library changes from a "worried giant" to a "warm campfire." Explain how these metaphors show a shift in tone and why the shift happens.	**The worried giant creates an uneasy, threatening mood, while the warm campfire creates a safe, welcoming mood. The tone shifts because neighbors arrive and share the letters together.**

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

As the last bus pulled away, the empty lot became a giant mouth swallowing the light. I felt like Cinderella after midnight, suddenly alone and far from safety. The mouth image makes the setting seem threatening, while the Cinderella allusion shows that the speaker feels stranded and worried.

Accept equivalent explanations that connect the figurative language to a specific tone and meaning in the passage. For the open response, accept any accurate allusion and figurative expression if the student clearly explains how both shape the scene's tone.