Storm at Gull Point

Track figurative language as a scene's mood changes.

ELA.9.R.3.1 "Explain how figurative language creates mood in text(s)."

NAME _____ DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline at least five examples of figurative language in the passage. Beside each one, write a mood word that tells how the language makes the scene feel.

The Lighthouse Report

1 By late afternoon, Mara reached the old lighthouse on Gull Point. Rain tapped the glass of her lantern, and the path behind her dissolved into a gray ribbon. The tower rose above the rocks like a watchman who had forgotten his post. Its white paint peeled in long strips, pale as fish bones. Mara had come to deliver a weather report to the caretaker, but no smoke curled from the chimney. Even the gulls had vanished. At the door, the wind pressed its cold hand against her back, urging her inside.

2 Inside, the entry room smelled of salt and damp rope. A clock on the wall coughed out one slow chime, then fell silent. Mara called for the caretaker. Her voice slipped up the spiral stairs and disappeared, as if the tower had swallowed it. She lifted her lantern. Light trembled across framed maps, turning their coastlines into thin, golden veins. From above came a scrape, then another. The sound crawled through the ceiling boards. Mara tightened her grip on the report, while shadows gathered in the corners like guests who did not wish to be seen.

3 At the top of the stairs, Mara found the caretaker kneeling beside a broken window. He was not injured. He was tying a canvas sheet over the frame, while rain scattered across the floor like thrown beads. “The radio failed,” he said, pointing to a silent set beside him. Mara handed him the report. Together, they fastened the canvas, and the wind's roar softened to a distant drum. Below them, the sea still tossed its black mane against the shore, but a narrow band of orange opened under the clouds. The lighthouse no longer seemed to hold its breath. It exhaled, warm and steady, around them.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. What mood does the comparison of the tower to "a watchman who had forgotten his post" create? Explain how the comparison creates that mood.

2. What mood does the personification in "A clock on the wall coughed out one slow chime" create? Explain your thinking.

3. How do the phrases "The sound crawled through the ceiling boards" and "shadows gathered in the corners like guests" build the mood in paragraph 2?

4. How does the figurative language in the final paragraph change the mood from earlier in the passage? Use two details from the paragraph.

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

Write a 3- to 4-sentence scene in a place different from a lighthouse. Use at least two examples of figurative language to create one clear mood, then name that mood in your final sentence.

ANSWER KEY

Storm at Gull Point

GRADE 9 · ELA.9.R.3.1

PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Underline at least five examples of figurative language in the passage. Beside each one, write a mood word that tells how the language makes the scene feel. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 · ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	What mood does the comparison of the tower to "a watchman who had forgotten his post" create? Explain how the comparison creates that mood.	**It creates an uneasy, lonely mood. The comparison makes the lighthouse seem neglected and unable to protect anyone.**
2	What mood does the personification in "A clock on the wall coughed out one slow chime" create? Explain your thinking.	**It creates an eerie, uneasy mood. Giving the clock a sickly human action makes the room feel strange and abandoned.**
3	How do the phrases "The sound crawled through the ceiling boards" and "shadows gathered in the corners like guests" build the mood in paragraph 2?	**They build suspense and fear. The sound and shadows seem alive and threatening, making Mara's surroundings feel dangerous.**
4	How does the figurative language in the final paragraph change the mood from earlier in the passage? Use two details from the paragraph.	**The mood shifts toward relief and hope. The wind's roar becomes "a distant drum," and the lighthouse "exhaled, warm and steady," so the danger feels less immediate.**

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

The empty subway station yawned beneath the street, its tiled walls cold and pale. Fluorescent lights buzzed like trapped insects, and a puddle held the ceiling upside down. These details create a tense, lonely mood.

Accept different mood words when students support them with accurate figurative-language details from the passage. For Part 3, accept any appropriate setting, at least two clear examples of figurative language, and a final sentence that accurately names the intended mood.