Lights Out, Voices In

Trace how poetic choices shape mood, pace, and meaning.

10.T.T.4 "Poetic Techniques: Evaluate and apply poetic techniques to enhance text's appeal to audiences or achieve specific purposes."

NAME _____ DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline comparisons and vivid images, circle personification, and number repeated words or phrases. In the margin, write one mood word beside each mark to show how the writer's choices affect the reader.

After the Lights

1 At 9:17, the apartment windows blinked out, one floor after another. Elevators stopped mid-thought, and refrigerators held their breath. On the sidewalk, people lifted phones like small, pale moons, but the screens offered only a little light. Then the city did something rare: it listened. No buses growled at the corner. No advertisements shouted from glass walls. In the dark, a child's laugh crossed the street clearly, followed by the quick tap, tap, tap of a dog's paws beside the curb. The silence was not empty. It was waiting while neighbors paused at windows.

2 Above the roofs, stars appeared one by one, shy at first, then steady. Maya leaned on the fire escape and watched her neighbor, Mr. Alvarez, carry candles to the lobby. Their flames trembled, tiny orange flags against the blue-black night. "We are still here," Maya whispered, and her brother repeated, "Still here." The words traveled down the stairwell as doors opened. A woman shared batteries. Someone brought a radio, whose soft music braided through the building. For one hour, the blackout turned strangers into a chorus, each voice adding warmth to the dark.

3 Before dawn, a transformer crew arrived, their yellow vests bright as marigolds under portable lamps. The workers moved carefully, checking cables and calling measurements to one another. Soon, a lamp glowed in the bakery window. Soon, the traffic signal woke and changed from red to green. Soon, apartment rooms flashed alive, square after square. The returning power brought relief, yet Maya missed the hush for a moment. She understood that the city had not disappeared when its lights went out. Beneath its usual roar, it had always held thousands of separate lives, close enough to hear.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. How does the personification in "Elevators stopped mid-thought, and refrigerators held their breath" affect the opening of the passage?

2. What does the repeated phrase "Still here" reveal about the people in the building, and how does it support the passage's purpose?

3. Compare the images of phones as "small, pale moons" and candle flames as "tiny orange flags." How do these images create a mood shift?

4. How does repeating "Soon" in the final paragraph affect the pace and meaning of the ending?

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

Write a 6 to 8 line poem about a familiar place changing suddenly, such as during rain, a crowd, or a power outage. Use at least two poetic techniques, including personification or repetition, to make readers feel unsettled at first and hopeful by the end.

ANSWER KEY

Lights Out, Voices In

GRADE 10 · 10.T.T.4

PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Underline comparisons and vivid images, circle personification, and number repeated words or phrases. In the margin, write one mood word beside each mark to show how the writer's choices affect the reader. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 · ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	How does the personification in "Elevators stopped mid-thought, and refrigerators held their breath" affect the opening of the passage?	**It makes the machines seem suddenly paused and alive, creating an eerie, suspended mood.**
2	What does the repeated phrase "Still here" reveal about the people in the building, and how does it support the passage's purpose?	**It shows that the neighbors are present and connected. It supports the idea that the blackout brings people together.**
3	Compare the images of phones as "small, pale moons" and candle flames as "tiny orange flags." How do these images create a mood shift?	**The pale phones suggest weak, uncertain light, while the orange candle flames suggest warmth and shared hope.**
4	How does repeating "Soon" in the final paragraph affect the pace and meaning of the ending?	**It speeds up the restoration of power and emphasizes the growing relief as the city comes back to life.**

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

At noon, the school courtyard emptied under rain. The bell swallowed its own bright voice. Puddles gathered at the gates like silver bowls. Wait, wait, wait, drummed the drops on lockers. The flagpole shivered beside the field. Then umbrellas bloomed, red, yellow, and blue. The courtyard breathed again, smaller but alive.

Accept varied interpretations when students identify a specific technique and explain a reasonable effect supported by the passage. For the poem, accept any 6 to 8 line response that uses at least two purposeful techniques and creates the requested mood shift.