Storm Signal

Track how word choices shape a tense lighthouse scene.

7.T.SS.2.a "Explain how figurative language, connotative language, and/or literary device choices contribute to meaning, mood, or tone in a wide variety of texts. (I)"

NAME _____ DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

YOUR JOB Circle each example of figurative language. Underline three other words or phrases with strong connotations, then number three of your markings and write a one- or two-word margin note telling the mood or tone each helps create.

The Lighthouse Keeper

1 By late afternoon, the island lighthouse had become a pale finger against the bruised sky. Mara climbed the spiral stairs with a can of lamp oil bumping against her knee. Below, the harbor boats looked like toys, but the waves were no child's game. They slammed the rocks and flung white spray at the windows. Each step groaned beneath Mara's boots, as if the tower itself were warning her to turn back before nightfall arrived.

2 At the lantern room, Mara struck a match. Its tiny flame trembled, then stood up straight. She lit the wick, and warm gold poured across the glass panes. For a moment, the room felt less like a trap and more like a watchful eye. Mara remembered her father's rule: Keep the light steady, especially when fear makes loud promises. She tightened the metal cover and listened to rain drumming its impatient fingers on the roof.

3 When the light swung over the water, a fishing boat answered with one brief horn call. Mara could not see the people aboard, yet she imagined them leaning toward the beam as it crossed the black water. The storm still roared, but its voice no longer filled every corner of her mind. She held the rail and watched the lighthouse send its bright message again and again. Outside, the sea remained wild. Inside, Mara's fear had shrunk to a small, cold pebble.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. What does the phrase “bruised sky” suggest about the setting? Explain how it affects the mood.

2. How does the personification in “the tower itself were warning her” affect the scene’s meaning or mood?

3. The lantern room first feels “like a trap” and later “like a watchful eye.” How does this comparison change the mood of the scene?

4. What does the final comparison of Mara’s fear to “a small, cold pebble” show? How does it shape the ending’s tone?

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

Write four sentences about a person facing an outdoor challenge. Use at least one example of figurative language and two connotative words in the first three sentences, then explain in the fourth sentence how your choices create a mood or tone.

ANSWER KEY

Storm Signal

GRADE 7 · 7.T.SS.2.a

PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Circle each example of figurative language. Underline three other words or phrases with strong connotations, then number three of your markings and write a one- or two-word margin note telling the mood or tone each helps create. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 · ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	What does the phrase "bruised sky" suggest about the setting? Explain how it affects the mood.	**It suggests a dark, stormy, possibly threatening sky. It creates an uneasy, ominous mood.**
2	How does the personification in "the tower itself were warning her" affect the scene's meaning or mood?	**It makes the lighthouse seem alive and adds suspense, as if danger is urging Mara to leave.**
3	The lantern room first feels "like a trap" and later "like a watchful eye." How does this comparison change the mood of the scene?	**The mood shifts from trapped and anxious to safer and more protective as the light is lit.**
4	What does the final comparison of Mara's fear to "a small, cold pebble" show? How does it shape the ending's tone?	**Her fear has become smaller but has not disappeared. The ending has a calmer, cautiously relieved tone.**

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

The trail vanished beneath a blanket of thick fog. Jordan stepped past jagged stones while the wind whispered through the pines. A weak beam from his flashlight cut a narrow path ahead. The personification and the words "jagged" and "weak" create a tense, uneasy mood.

Accept interpretations that name a reasonable mood or tone and support it with quoted or clearly identified language from the passage. For Part 3, accept any four-sentence response that includes figurative language, at least two connotative words, and an accurate explanation of their effect.