Tide of Meaning

Track how language shapes tension and hope.

9.T.SS.2.a "Analyze how the use of figurative, connotative, and/or rhetorical language contributes to the development of meaning, tone, or mood in a wide variety of texts. (I)"

NAME _____ DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline three phrases that use figurative or strongly connotative language, and circle both rhetorical questions. These choices help create the passage's mood and develop its meaning.

Before High Tide

1 At 4:30 a.m., Mara followed the boardwalk to the beach with a clipboard pressed against her coat. The wind worried at the dune grass, and the Atlantic rolled beyond the dark sand like a restless animal. Volunteers had gathered to protect a nest of loggerhead turtle eggs before the rising tide reached it. Their flashlights made small islands of light. Could they save every egg? No one answered. Instead, Mara listened to the surf's warning hiss and felt the morning tighten around the group. The work ahead seemed fragile, urgent, and larger than any one pair of hands.

2 Near the nest, the sand looked ordinary, a plain patch among thousands of plain patches. Yet it held a silent future. Mara knelt beside the marked spot while Ms. Chen, the wildlife biologist, explained that loggerhead nests are often laid above the high-tide line, but storms can reshape a beach quickly. The phrase above the high-tide line sounded safe until a wave clawed at the shore. Was the ocean offering a warning or making a threat? Mara pictured the nest as a locked room with the key slipping farther away.

3 Then the volunteers lifted the eggs one at a time into padded containers, keeping each egg in the same position. Their careful movements turned the beach into an operating room, quiet except for names, numbers, and the scrape of tools. When the last container was sealed, the eastern sky opened a narrow band of orange. The tide still advanced, stubborn and silver, but Mara no longer saw it as an unbeatable giant. It was a force to respect. As the group carried the containers toward higher ground, their footsteps wrote a new ending across the wet sand.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. How does the personification in “The wind worried at the dune grass” affect the mood in paragraph 1?

2. What does the phrase “a silent future” suggest about the nest, and why does it matter to the passage's meaning?

3. How does the rhetorical question about the ocean being a warning or a threat shape the reader's view of the tide?

4. What does the figurative phrase “their footsteps wrote a new ending” mean, and how does it change the tone at the end?

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

Write a four-sentence micro-scene about a person doing a real task outdoors. Use figurative language in sentence 1, a strongly connotative word in sentence 2, and a rhetorical question in sentence 3. In sentence 4, explain the mood these choices create.

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PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Underline three phrases that use figurative or strongly connotative language, and circle both rhetorical questions. These choices help create the passage's mood and develop its meaning. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 · ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	How does the personification in “The wind worried at the dune grass” affect the mood in paragraph 1?	**It makes the setting feel uneasy and tense, as if the wind is actively troubling the beach.**
2	What does the phrase “a silent future” suggest about the nest, and why does it matter to the passage's meaning?	**It suggests that the ordinary-looking sand holds future turtle hatchlings. The phrase emphasizes the nest's hidden value and the need to protect it.**
3	How does the rhetorical question about the ocean being a warning or a threat shape the reader's view of the tide?	**It presents the tide as dangerous and uncertain, increasing suspense about whether the eggs can be saved.**
4	What does the figurative phrase “their footsteps wrote a new ending” mean, and how does it change the tone at the end?	**It means the volunteers' actions may change the eggs' outcome. It shifts the tone from tense to hopeful and determined.**

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

The trail swallowed Lena's boots as she climbed toward the fire lookout. A bitter wind shoved cold rain through her jacket. Who would choose this lonely ridge after sunset? These choices create a tense, isolated mood by making the weather seem hostile and the climb seem uncertain.

Accept other supported explanations of how the language creates tension, urgency, uncertainty, hope, or determination. For Part 3, accept varied scenes if all four sentences meet the requested language and explanation requirements.