The Loudest Guest

Use context to interpret figurative language and irony.

L.8.5.a "Interpret figurative language, including but not limited to irony, in context."

NAME _____ DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline two phrases that mean more than their literal words, and circle a nearby detail that helps you interpret each one.

Quiet Reading Night

1 On Friday, the library opened its doors for Quiet Reading Night. A hand-lettered sign asked visitors to leave their phones in a basket and let stories do the talking. Maya settled beside the window with a mystery novel. Outside, a storm pushed dark clouds over the playground, but inside, the room felt like a warm pocket. The librarian, Mr. Vale, switched off the overhead lights so everyone could read by small lamps. Then the new automatic announcement system crackled awake.

2 A cheerful recorded voice boomed, "PLEASE ENJOY OUR QUIET READING NIGHT." Heads lifted from books. The speaker repeated its message every five minutes, louder than the rain against the glass. "What a peaceful evening," Maya whispered as the third announcement rattled the lamp beside her. Mr. Vale frowned and reached behind the desk for the volume knob, but the cabinet was locked. The system, installed to help readers find their way, was now the one thing stopping them from reading. Several visitors began to laugh instead of complain.

3 Maya slipped a pencil from her bag and wrote a note on the back of a bookmark: "Our loudest guest has no library card." She held it up for Mr. Vale, who smiled and found the cabinet key in his coat. When the speaker finally went silent, rain still tapped the windows. Nobody asked for perfect quiet. They just returned to their books, and Maya noticed how the pages seemed to breathe again. At closing time, Mr. Vale hung the bookmark beside the sign as a reminder that silence sometimes needs defending.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. What does “a warm pocket” suggest about the library? Which detail helps you tell?

2. What does Maya really mean by “What a peaceful evening”? How can you tell?

3. Why is the announcement system’s effect ironic?

4. When the pages seem “to breathe again,” what has changed for the readers?

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

Write a three-sentence scene in a new setting. Include an ironic remark and a figurative description, then use your third sentence to explain what the remark really means.

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PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Underline two phrases that mean more than their literal words, and circle a nearby detail that helps you interpret each one. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 · ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	What does "a warm pocket" suggest about the library? Which detail helps you tell?	**The library feels sheltered and comfortable despite the storm outside. The contrast between the dark clouds and the lamp-lit room supports this meaning.**
2	What does Maya really mean by "What a peaceful evening"? How can you tell?	**She means the evening is not peaceful. The repeated, loud announcement has just rattled the lamp.**
3	Why is the announcement system's effect ironic?	**A system meant to help readers is interrupting their reading, especially at an event called Quiet Reading Night.**
4	When the pages seem "to breathe again," what has changed for the readers?	**With the speaker silent, the readers can relax and return their attention to their books.**

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

"What perfect weather for a picnic," Nia said as cold rain spilled through the bus shelter roof. The wind was a thief, snatching the paper bag from her hand. Nia meant the weather was awful for a picnic, not perfect.

Accept interpretations supported by details in the passage. For Part 3, look for a remark whose intended meaning contrasts with the situation, a figurative description, and an accurate explanation in the third sentence.