Words on Stage

Read how figurative language reveals a character's feelings.

RL.4.4 "Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text, including but not limited to figurative language such as metaphors and similes, and describe and explain how those words and phrases shape meaning."

NAME _____ DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

YOUR JOB Circle two phrases that do not mean exactly what they say. For each phrase, underline nearby words that help you understand its meaning.

The Royal Messenger

1 Mara waited behind the curtain while the school play began. Through a narrow gap, she saw stage lights spill across the wooden floor. Her part had only three lines, but worry fluttered inside her like a moth in a jar. She rubbed the folded corner of her script. Onstage, her friend Leo set a cardboard crown on his head and called for the royal messenger.

2 That was Mara's cue. She stepped forward, but her first word hid somewhere in her throat. The room seemed to hold its breath. Leo did not laugh or look away. He lifted the cardboard crown and whispered, "The message, please." His gentle words were a bridge over the silence. Mara took one step closer to him. At last, she remembered what to say.

3 Mara delivered her message in a clear voice. Leo bowed so low that his crown slid onto his nose, and a few children giggled. Mara nearly giggled too, but she finished her lines. When the scene ended, applause rolled toward her like warm waves. She walked behind the curtain, still holding the wrinkled script. This time, she did not need to read it.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. What does it mean that worry fluttered inside Mara "like a moth in a jar"? What does this comparison show about her feelings?

2. Mara's first word "hid somewhere in her throat." What happened, and how does this phrase help you picture it?

3. Why are Leo's words called "a bridge over the silence"? Explain how this phrase shapes the moment.

4. What does the comparison "applause rolled toward her like warm waves" suggest about how the applause felt to Mara?

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

Write two sentences about Mara's feelings after she leaves the stage. In the first sentence, invent a new simile or metaphor. In the second, explain what your comparison helps a reader understand.

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PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Circle two phrases that do not mean exactly what they say. For each phrase, underline nearby words that help you understand its meaning. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 · ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	What does it mean that worry fluttered inside Mara "like a moth in a jar"? What does this comparison show about her feelings?	**Mara feels nervous and restless. The trapped moth suggests her worry is hard to calm.**
2	Mara's first word "hid somewhere in her throat." What happened, and how does this phrase help you picture it?	**Mara could not speak at first. The phrase helps the reader picture her trying to get a word out.**
3	Why are Leo's words called "a bridge over the silence"? Explain how this phrase shapes the moment.	**Leo's gentle prompt helps Mara move from silence to speaking. The phrase makes his help feel important.**
4	What does the comparison "applause rolled toward her like warm waves" suggest about how the applause felt to Mara?	**The applause felt welcoming and comforting, rather than frightening.**

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

As Mara stepped behind the curtain, pride glowed in her chest like a tiny campfire. This comparison shows that her pride felt warm and bright, even though she was still a little shy.

Accept explanations that use the scene to support a reasonable meaning for each phrase. For Part 3, look for a new comparison and an explanation of the feeling it conveys.