Rain Words and Picture Words

Compare word strength and explain a figurative expression

Name: _____ Date: _____

Part 1: Choose the Exact Rain Word

Original classroom text - created for this worksheet, 2026

At 8:00, a **drizzle** tapped softly on the bus windows. By recess, the rain fell in thick sheets and made the sidewalk shine. At 10:00, a **downpour** splashed loudly in the gutters. Maya pulled her hood close and hurried inside.

1. The bold words both name rain. Which word tells about rain with less force? Which tells about rain with more force?

Less forceful rain	More forceful rain

2. Choose the better word to complete the sentence. Circle it.

A (drizzle / downpour) sent leaves spinning along the curb.

Explain why your choice is more exact.

3. How would the picture in your mind change if you used the other word instead?

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Part 2: Strength and Figurative Meaning

4. Put these rain descriptions in order from **least** strength to **greatest** strength. Write 1, 2, and 3.

Rain description	Order number
heavy rain	
torrential rain	
light rain	

5. Read this sentence.

The clouds opened their faucets, and rain rushed onto the playground.

Clouds do not really have faucets. What does the expression mean?

How does this expression make the rain seem different from simply saying, “It rained”?

Check your work. Did you use details about the amount or force of rain? Did you explain the picture made by the figurative expression?

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Answer Key and Teaching Notes

Answers

1. Less forceful: drizzle. More forceful: downpour. A drizzle is light rain; a downpour is heavy rain falling strongly.

2. Downpour. It is the more exact choice because enough strong rain is falling to send leaves spinning along the curb.

3. Sample: If “drizzle” were used, I would picture a small amount of gentle rain. The leaves would be less likely to spin or move quickly. Accept another comparison that accurately contrasts lighter rain with stronger rain.

4. light rain = 1; heavy rain = 2; torrential rain = 3.

5. Sample meaning: Rain began falling or pouring very heavily, as if water were coming from opened faucets. Sample effect: The expression makes the rain seem fast, powerful, and like a large amount of water. Accept responses that explain both the nonliteral meaning and a supported image or effect.

Exact setup: Print one copy of both student pages per student. Place pages face down with pencils available. Display no rain-word anchor chart during the independent attempt. Tell students they may reread the paragraph and use the printed choices. Allow approximately 12-15 minutes.

Materials: Supplied student pages; pencils; optional document camera for review after collection. No additional texts or sources are needed.

Teaching script: Say: “Today, you will notice how authors choose exact words. Read the short classroom text. When you compare rain words, think about the amount or force of rain, not whether the ground is wet. In Part 2, order the descriptions from least strength to greatest strength. Then explain what the clouds expression means even though clouds do not truly have faucets. Write enough to show the picture in your mind.”

Observation method: During work time, listen for students using comparison language such as lighter, stronger, more forceful, or greater amount. Do not supply an answer. For each student, inspect: item 1 correctly contrasts drizzle and downpour; item 2 selects downpour and gives a force/amount reason; item 4 orders all three terms correctly; item 5 states a nonliteral heavy-rain meaning and describes an image or effect. If a student selects a word based only on a wet sidewalk, prompt: “Which word tells about the rain itself?”

Brief review script: After students finish, say: “A word can be related to rain without describing its strength. Here, our evidence comes from the rain words themselves: drizzle is light, while downpour is much stronger. Figurative language helps readers picture an idea without meaning every word literally.”

Source credit: New York Next Generation English Language Arts Learning Standards, Grade 4 Language 5, https://lessonmakerpro.com/standards/ny-nextgen-ela/4l5. All student passage and items are original classroom content created for this worksheet, 2026.