

Theater Word Choices

Notice how precise language builds a changing mood.

6R4 "Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text, including figurative and connotative meanings. Analyze the impact of specific word choices on meaning, tone, and mood, including words with multiple meanings. (RI&RL)"

NAME _____

DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK _____ Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline the sentence that describes the theater as doing a human action, circle both uses of *stage*, and box "stale and closed" and "fresh air" to track literal, figurative, and mood-building choices.

The Rialto Opens Again

- ① On Saturday morning, Maya entered the old Rialto Theater with a crew of volunteers. Dust floated above the seats, and faded velvet curtains sagged beside the stage. A narrow beam of sunlight crossed the floor. In that light, the theater seemed to wake from a long sleep. Maya pictured the room filled again, not with dust, but with voices and music. Still, loose boards creaked under her shoes, and the air smelled stale and closed.
- ② The crew was in the first stage of a month-long repair project. Mr. Ortiz, the carpenter, tested each seat and replaced splintered wood. He called the work slow, but not hopeless. When volunteers brushed paint from the stage, a bright blue border appeared beneath the gray. That hidden color felt like a small promise. Even the dim lobby began to look less gloomy as windows opened and fresh air moved through it by noon that day.
- ③ By afternoon, neighbors paused at the open doors. Some remembered films they had watched there years earlier. Others had never been inside, yet they stepped in quietly, as if entering a place with secrets. Maya heard a hammer tap, a broom swish, and a low murmur of plans. The sounds were ordinary, but together they made the theater feel alive. Its future was not certain, but the work had changed the building from a forgotten shell into a place people wanted to claim.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE _____ Use the passage

1 What does “the theater seemed to wake from a long sleep” mean? How does this figurative phrase affect the mood?

2 What does *stage* mean in “the first stage of a month-long repair project”? What does it mean in “paint from the stage”?

3 How do “stale and closed” in paragraph 1 and “fresh air” in paragraph 2 create different moods?

4 What does “a forgotten shell” suggest about the theater before repairs? How does its contrast with “a place people wanted to claim” affect the passage's tone?

3 YOUR TURN _____ Your own words

Write two sentences about a place becoming more welcoming or more unsettling. In the first sentence, use one figurative phrase and underline two words or phrases that create a mood. In the second sentence, explain how one underlined choice shapes that mood.

PART 1 • READ AND MARK

Underline the sentence that describes the theater as doing a human action, circle both uses of *stage*, and box “stale and closed” and “fresh air” to track literal, figurative, and mood-building choices. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 • ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	What does “the theater seemed to wake from a long sleep” mean? How does this figurative phrase affect the mood?	The theater is not literally waking. The phrase suggests that it is becoming active again, creating a hopeful mood.
2	What does <i>stage</i> mean in “the first stage of a month-long repair project”? What does it mean in “paint from the stage”?	In the first use, stage means a step or period in a process. In the second use, stage means the platform where performers appear.
3	How do “stale and closed” in paragraph 1 and “fresh air” in paragraph 2 create different moods?	“Stale and closed” creates a neglected, unpleasant mood. “Fresh air” creates a more open, renewed, and hopeful mood.
4	What does “a forgotten shell” suggest about the theater before repairs? How does its contrast with “a place people wanted to claim” affect the passage's tone?	“A forgotten shell” suggests the theater was empty, neglected, and no longer valued. The contrast creates a tone that shifts from loss to hope and community renewal.

PART 3 • YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

The library's lamps glowed like small moons, and a gentle hush settled over the room. The word “gentle” creates a calm, safe mood because it makes the quiet seem comforting rather than empty.

Accept equivalent explanations that connect each quoted choice to its meaning and effect on mood or tone. For the open response, check for two sentences, a figurative phrase, two underlined mood-building choices, and an explanation of one underlined choice.