

Storm Word Choices

Trace how figurative language and precise word choice shape a scene.

9-10L5 "Demonstrate understanding of figurative language, word relationships, and nuances in word meanings."

NAME _____

DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline figurative comparisons or personification, circle words that show how serious or uncertain the situation is, and write 1 beside *fragile/helpless* and 2 beside *inconvenient/disastrous*. These marks help you notice how word choices create meaning and tone.

Night in the Greenhouse

- ① By late October, the school greenhouse sounded like a small ship in a storm. Rain tapped the glass roof, and wind worried the loose vent above Mara's head. She had stayed after robotics practice to move the basil seedlings away from the draft. Outside, the parking lot shone black as ink, but inside, damp soil gave off a sharp, earthy smell. Mr. Ibarra said the plants were "thirsty for light," then switched on the grow lamps. Their pale leaves lifted toward the glow, cautious but not defeated.
- ② Mara checked the tray twice. The seedlings were fragile, yet they were not helpless, a difference she felt in her hands. A fragile stem could snap easily, while a helpless plant had no chance to recover. She propped each pot with a wooden stick and closed the vent. Her friend Devon arrived, dripping rainwater and grumbling that the weather had ruined his evening. Mara called the storm inconvenient, not disastrous. The distinction mattered. The team could postpone its test run, but the seedlings needed attention now. For them, waiting was a luxury they could not afford.
- ③ Near eight o'clock, the rain softened to a whisper. The greenhouse no longer seemed like a ship; it became a harbor, warm and still against the dark campus. Devon stopped complaining and watched a bead of water slide down the glass. "I guess we saved them," he said. Mara shook her head. "We gave them a better chance." She knew the lamps could not command the sun to rise, and one careful night could not guarantee spring. Still, rows of leaves faced the light, a quiet crowd refusing to bow.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE _____ Use the passage

1 What does the personification “wind worried the loose vent” suggest that the wind was doing?

2 Explain the difference between *fragile* and *helpless* as Mara uses the words.

3 Why does Mara call the storm *inconvenient* rather than *disastrous*? Use one detail from the passage.

4 What does the greenhouse becoming “a harbor” imply about it by the end of the passage?

3 YOUR TURN _____ Your own words

Write three sentences about a school place during difficult weather. Use one figurative comparison or example of personification, and use two related words with different strengths or meanings. Make the context show the difference between those two words.

PART 1 • READ AND MARK

Underline figurative comparisons or personification, circle words that show how serious or uncertain the situation is, and write 1 beside *fragile/helpless* and 2 beside *inconvenient/disastrous*. These marks help you notice how word choices create meaning and tone. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 • ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	What does the personification “wind worried the loose vent” suggest that the wind was doing?	It suggests that the wind was pushing, shaking, or rattling the loose vent.
2	Explain the difference between <i>fragile</i> and <i>helpless</i> as Mara uses the words.	Fragile means easily broken or damaged. Helpless means unable to recover or do anything to improve the situation.
3	Why does Mara call the storm <i>inconvenient</i> rather than <i>disastrous</i> ? Use one detail from the passage.	The storm disrupts the team's test run, which can be postponed, but it is not a total catastrophe. The seedlings can be protected by moving them, supporting them, and closing the vent.
4	What does the greenhouse becoming “a harbor” imply about it by the end of the passage?	It implies that the greenhouse has become a warm, protected refuge from the storm and dark campus.

PART 3 • YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

During the power outage, the library held its breath beneath the gray windows. It was quiet, not silent: students turned pages and whispered plans while the usual machines slept. The building became an island, steady in the noisy rain.

Accept equivalent explanations that connect each answer to the passage's language and context. For Part 3, accept varied figurative language and related word pairs if the writing clearly shows the words' different nuances.