When Stars Appeared

Read a story's language and unexpected turn closely.

8.3.R.4 "Students will analyze literary devices to support interpretations of a text: • figurative language (i.e., simile, metaphor, personification, hyperbole, imagery, symbolism, idiom) • sound devices (i.e., onomatopoeia..."

NAME _____ DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

YOUR JOB Circle two figurative phrases, underline one sensory detail, and write 1 beside Mara's plan and 2 beside the surprising result. Use your marks to think about how the story's details shape its meaning.

Star Night

1 Mara had spent three weeks planning the school's Star Night. She drew a silver star on every program and tested the gym projector twice. On Friday, families crowded the folding chairs while rain tapped the roof like impatient fingers. Mara pictured constellations glowing across the screen, each one safely labeled. Outside, streetlights washed the playground in orange light. Her grandfather, who had brought his old telescope, offered to set it up. Mara shook her head. "The projector will show everything," she said, smoothing a stack of programs for the third time.

2 The first slide appeared, then the room went black. The projector coughed once and fell silent. Somewhere near the bleachers, a child whispered, "Did we break the sky?" Mara's cheeks burned. Through the open gym doors, she saw the streetlights were dark too. Her grandfather stepped beside her. "Well, this is going exactly as planned," he said. Mara almost argued, but he was already leading families toward the playground. The rain had stopped. Above the wet blacktop, the clouds pulled apart, and stars pricked the dark.

3 Grandfather aimed the telescope at a bright point above the trees. Mara looked through its narrow lens and saw Jupiter with four tiny moons, lined up like beads. No slide could have held the hush that spread through the group. A breeze lifted one of Mara's programs from her hand; its silver star flashed in the moonlight before the paper landed at her feet. She picked it up, folded it into her pocket, and let the next person take the telescope. For once, she did not need to tell anyone what to see.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. What does “The projector coughed once” suggest about its failure? How does this description affect the mood?

2. Why is Grandfather's statement “this is going exactly as planned” verbally ironic?

3. What makes the outcome of Star Night unexpected? What idea does this reversal suggest?

4. The silver star appears on the programs at the beginning and near the end. How might its meaning change for Mara?

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

Write a four-sentence scene set somewhere other than Star Night. Include a figurative phrase and an outcome that reverses a character's plan, then explain in your fourth sentence how both details support your scene's message.

ANSWER KEY # When Stars Appeared

GRADE 8 · 8.3.R.4

PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Circle two figurative phrases, underline one sensory detail, and write 1 beside Mara's plan and 2 beside the surprising result. Use your marks to think about how the story's details shape its meaning. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 · ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	What does “The projector coughed once” suggest about its failure? How does this description affect the mood?	**It makes the projector seem to sputter before failing, adding tension as Mara's plan falls apart.**
2	Why is Grandfather's statement “this is going exactly as planned” verbally ironic?	**He says the night is following the plan, but the projector and streetlights have failed. He means the opposite of his words.**
3	What makes the outcome of Star Night unexpected? What idea does this reversal suggest?	**Mara plans to show stars with a projector, but losing power lets the families see real stars outside. The reversal suggests an unplanned experience can be more meaningful than a carefully controlled one.**
4	The silver star appears on the programs at the beginning and near the end. How might its meaning change for Mara?	**At first, the star represents Mara's planned show. When she pockets the program after looking through the telescope, it can represent her memory of seeing real stars without directing the experience.**

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

I practiced my speech until every word felt nailed to the floor. When the microphone died, I expected the audience to miss my words. Instead, they leaned forward and listened more closely than they had during rehearsal. The nailed-down words show my need for control, while the microphone's failure suggests that an unexpected problem can create a stronger connection.

Accept interpretations supported by specific details from the passage. For Your Turn, look for a clear reversal, a figurative phrase, and an explanation connecting both to an idea.