Light in the Fog

Trace how literary details shape mood, tone, and theme.

8.3.R.5 "Students will identify literary elements and devices that impact a text's theme, mood, and tone."

NAME _____ DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline two details that shape the mood, circle each use of the word *lantern*, and number two phrases that show the narrator's changing attitude in the order they appear.

The Harbor Lantern

1 By dusk, the harbor had vanished behind fog. The dock boards sweated under my shoes, and water slapped the pilings like impatient hands. At the end of the pier, the lantern hung dark. My grandfather had always lit it for the fishing boats, but tonight his injured ankle kept him home. I stared at the dead glass and muttered, "One little light won't matter out there." Then a horn sounded somewhere beyond the gray, low and lost. I gripped the cold rail and waited for someone else to act.

2 Footsteps thudded behind me. Mrs. Vale arrived with a box of dry matches; Theo carried the spare oil from his shed. I had thought the lantern was Grandfather's job, not ours. As Theo held its rusty frame steady, Mrs. Vale struck a match. The flame shivered in the wind, and I cupped my hands around it. Together we filled the lamp and touched fire to the wick. A small gold circle pushed against the fog. "Can they see it?" I asked, searching the blank water for a sign.

3 Another horn answered, closer this time. A boat's bow slid out of the mist, and its crew waved toward the lantern. Soon two more neighbors joined us on the pier, bringing a second lamp and a thick blanket for the cold. I had called the lantern useless, yet its light had given us a place to gather and the boats a point to follow. I stood beside it while Theo secured the second lamp. The fog still crowded the harbor, but I no longer felt alone inside it.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. How does the comparison of the water to “impatient hands” affect the mood at the start?

2. What does the phrase “A small gold circle pushed against the fog” suggest about the light? How does it affect the mood?

3. How does the lantern’s meaning change from the first paragraph to the last? What theme does that change support?

4. Compare “One little light won’t matter out there” with “I no longer felt alone inside it.” How do these lines show a change in the narrator’s tone?

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

Write a five-sentence scene set somewhere other than a harbor. Mention one object at least twice, use a sensory detail to shift the mood, and explain in your final sentence how the object helps reveal a theme.

ANSWER KEY

Light in the Fog

GRADE 8 · 8.3.R.5

PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Underline two details that shape the mood, circle each use of the word *lantern*, and number two phrases that show the narrator's changing attitude in the order they appear. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 · ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	How does the comparison of the water to "impatient hands" affect the mood at the start?	**The comparison makes the water seem restless and threatening, creating a tense mood.**
2	What does the phrase "A small gold circle pushed against the fog" suggest about the light? How does it affect the mood?	**It makes the light seem active against the fog, shifting the mood toward hope while danger remains.**
3	How does the lantern's meaning change from the first paragraph to the last? What theme does that change support?	**At first, the dark lantern seems like someone else's responsibility. Once the neighbors light it together, it represents how shared action can help a community.**
4	Compare "One little light won't matter out there" with "I no longer felt alone inside it." How do these lines show a change in the narrator's tone?	**The first line sounds doubtful and dismissive. The last sounds grateful and hopeful because the narrator has seen the neighbors work together.**

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

At the start of rehearsal, the metronome clicked through the empty music room like a stern judge. I kept losing the beat, and its silver arm seemed to point at every mistake. After Mia showed me where to tap my foot, I tried again while the metronome kept time. Soon its clicks sounded steady instead of sharp, and we played the final measure together. The metronome's changing sound shows that practice and help can turn frustration into confidence.

Accept other passage details when students explain their effects on mood, tone, or theme with textual support. For Part 3, look for five sentences, a repeated object, a sensory detail that shifts the mood, and a final sentence that connects the object to a theme.