

Light in the Stairwell

Trace how sound and imagery change what a shared space means.

9.RL.2.A "Analyze the use of rhyme, rhythm, sound, imagery, and other literary devices in poetry to convey a message and elicit a reader's emotions."

NAME _____

DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK _____ Read it twice

YOUR JOB This is an original classroom poem in three numbered stanzas. Read it aloud. Circle an end-rhyme pair and a repeated sound or phrase; underline two sensory images. Use those markings in Questions 1-4 and your final analysis to explain effects on mood and meaning.

During the Blackout

- ① The hallway clicks. The cables cease.
Our numbered doors keep perfect peace.
Tick, tick: the rain rehearses glass;
my brother grips a cone of light.
Beyond its edge, the dark looks back.
No one calls our names.
- ② Then Mrs. Alvarez lifts her lamp:
"Come down; the landing has some room."
We pass an orange hand to hand,
a little sun with borrowed heat.
Low and slow, low and slow,
our voices make the stairwell wide.
- ③ At dawn the pipes begin to sing.
Clang and hiss; clang and hiss.
The lamps return. We could go in.
My brother leaves our door ajar.
The last peel curls beside the rail;
its sharp small sun stays on my thumb.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE _____ Use the passage

- 1** How does the end rhyme in the first two lines sound when read aloud? Explain how another detail complicates the phrase "perfect peace."

- 2** Compare "Tick, tick" with "Low and slow, low and slow." How can their sounds and pacing convey different emotions?

- 3** How do the orange image and the description of the stairwell in stanza 2 work together? Explain more than their literal meanings.

- 4** What does the last stanza suggest has changed even after the electricity returns? Connect a sound with a specific action or image.

3

YOUR TURN

Your own words

Write a developed analysis explaining a message the poem conveys and how its craft shapes a reader's emotions. Connect at least one sound choice and one image, using evidence from the beginning, middle and ending. Explain how the ending develops or qualifies your interpretation. Use stanza locations; do not merely list device names or retell the events.

PART 1 • READ AND MARK

This is an original classroom poem in three numbered stanzas. Read it aloud. Circle an end-rhyme pair and a repeated sound or phrase; underline two sensory images. Use those markings in Questions 1–4 and your final analysis to explain effects on mood and meaning. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 • ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	How does the end rhyme in the first two lines sound when read aloud? Explain how another detail complicates the phrase "perfect peace."	"Cease" and "peace" form a neat, closed pair. The darkness that "looks back" or the fact that no one calls their names makes that order feel uneasy or isolated rather than fully comforting. Accept other supported accounts of the sound.
2	Compare "Tick, tick" with "Low and slow, low and slow." How can their sounds and pacing convey different emotions?	The clipped repeated tick can emphasize tense listening. Repeated "low and slow," including its internal rhyme and longer vowel sounds, can create a calmer shared pace. The neighbors now answer the isolation with their own voices.
3	How do the orange image and the description of the stairwell in stanza 2 work together? Explain more than their literal meanings.	The orange becomes a small shared sun, suggesting warmth or hope during the blackout. Voices making the stairwell "wide" suggest social openness, not a physical change. Together the images connect sharing with a less confining space.
4	What does the last stanza suggest has changed even after the electricity returns? Connect a sound with a specific action or image.	"Clang and hiss" brings ordinary building noise back, but the brother leaves the door ajar and the final "sharp small sun" image stays on the thumb. These details can suggest that a trace of sharing lasts beyond the blackout. The poem does not specify exactly what physical sensation the final metaphor represents.

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

The poem suggests that shared attention can loosen isolation and leave a lasting connection. In stanza 1, the end rhyme of "cease" and "peace" closes the first two lines neatly, yet the dark that "looks back" makes that quiet feel watchful rather than secure. The clipped "Tick, tick" sharpens this uneasy listening. In stanza 2, "Low and slow" offers a gentler repeated rhythm made by people together. The orange is a "little sun," so an ordinary shared object becomes an image of warmth. By stanza 3, "Clang and hiss" announces the return of ordinary noise, but the brother leaves the door ajar. The final image of a "sharp small sun" staying on the thumb can suggest a lasting trace of their sharing. The ending therefore locates the change in their continuing openness, not simply in restored electricity.

Accept different interpretations supported by the whole poem. Assess how rhyme, repeated sounds, rhythm, imagery or other devices work together to convey a message and emotion. The poem has occasional rhyme, not a uniform rhyme scheme or meter. Readings of the pacing may differ if justified. The final "sun" continues the orange metaphor; the stairwell does not literally widen. All eighteen lines and all characters are original classroom fiction. This task assesses analysis of poetry; an original student poem is an optional extension, not the required assessed product.