Water in Words

A poetic model for persuading an audience to conserve a shared resource.

11.T.T.4.b "Apply knowledge of various poetic techniques and conventions to create poetic text for an intended purpose. (C)"

NAME _____ DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

YOUR JOB Circle each use of the repeated refrain, underline two images that make water use or water scarcity concrete, and number two imperative verbs. These choices show how the poem builds its persuasive purpose.

Let the Tap Rest

(1) Before dawn, the kitchen faucet clicks
like a small clock counting silver seconds.
In the sink, one clear thread keeps speaking,
though no hand is listening.
Outside, the lawn holds its yellow breath;
dust gathers at the curb where rain once drummed.
Let the tap rest, says the quiet pipe.
Let it rest while you brush,
while the kettle warms,
while morning opens its dry blue eye.
A saved cup is not nothing.
It is a cool coin
placed back in the river's pocket.

2 At noon, the car wash sprays bright fans
across the pavement, then sends them racing
toward a storm drain that leads nowhere near a cloud.
We can choose another shine:
a bucket, a broom, a patient rag.
We can listen for the hiss behind a toilet wall,
the sly leak practicing its secret song.
Let the tap rest.
Not as punishment, but as a promise:
that gardens may wake green after heat,
that firefighters may find pressure in the hydrant,
that a child can fill a glass
and taste no absence.

3 Tonight, when dishes wait like pale moons,
turn the handle with intention.
Hear the house answer: pipes settling,
cupboards breathing cedar and soap.
Fill the basin, not the endless rush.
Carry the leftover water to the thirsty basil
leaning beside the window.
Let the tap rest,
and let the phrase travel room to room,
soft as steam, steady as a drum.
We are not asked to empty our lives of water.
We are asked to use it awake,
so tomorrow's rain, whenever it arrives,
meets a city that remembered how to wait.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. Which simile in the first stanza compares the faucet to a tool for measuring time? Explain how that comparison supports the poem's purpose.

2. What refrain is repeated across the poem? How does repeating it shape the speaker's appeal to the reader?

3. Name two imperative verbs from the third stanza. What do these commands ask the reader to do differently?

4. In the final stanza, the speaker says people are not asked to "empty our lives of water" but to "use it awake." Explain the contrast and its persuasive effect.

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

Write an 8- to 10-line poem that persuades students at your school to reduce disposable plastic. Include one simile, at least two imperative verbs, and a refrain that appears exactly twice.

ANSWER KEY

Water in Words

GRADE 11 · 11.T.T.4.b

PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Circle each use of the repeated refrain, underline two images that make water use or water scarcity concrete, and number two imperative verbs. These choices show how the poem builds its persuasive purpose. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 · ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	Which simile in the first stanza compares the faucet to a tool for measuring time? Explain how that comparison supports the poem's purpose.	**"like a small clock counting silver seconds"; it makes each drip seem measurable and shows how small amounts of wasted water add up.**
2	What refrain is repeated across the poem? How does repeating it shape the speaker's appeal to the reader?	**"Let the tap rest"; repetition makes the conservation message memorable and gives the poem a steady, urgent call to action.**
3	Name two imperative verbs from the third stanza. What do these commands ask the reader to do differently?	**Answers may include "turn," "hear," "fill," and "carry." The commands ask the reader to use water deliberately, fill a basin instead of letting water run, and reuse leftover water for plants.**
4	In the final stanza, the speaker says people are not asked to "empty our lives of water" but to "use it awake." Explain the contrast and its persuasive effect.	**The contrast says conservation does not mean giving up water entirely. It asks for mindful use, making the request seem practical and reasonable.**

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

At lunch, wrappers flutter across the courtyard
like nervous silver birds.
Bring a bottle. Choose the refill station.
Keep the bin light.
One cup tossed today becomes a long-lived visitor
at the riverbank, catching reeds and rain.
Refuse the extra fork, and ask for a washable tray.
Keep the bin light,
so our school leaves footprints, not a trail of plastic.

Accept equivalent explanations that connect a poetic choice to the poem's purpose of encouraging water conservation. For the original poem, check for 8 to 10 lines, a clear school audience, one simile, two or more imperative verbs, and one identical refrain used exactly twice. Display nine intentional model lines and retain exactly two occurrences of Keep the bin light; actual source stanza and model line breaks are preserved.