Stormlight Signals

Analyze how imagery, repetition, and structure shape a poem's meaning.

9.T.T.4.a "Read, discuss, evaluate, and critique a variety of poetic texts, considering poetic techniques used to present and design content and their associated implications on meaning and/or theme. (I)"

NAME _____ DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline two sensory images, circle each use of repetition, and number 1, 2, and 3 beside places where the poem's mood or perspective changes.

Night Wash

1 At six, the laundromat glows beside the rain-dark bus stop. Washers turn behind round windows, moons trapped in metal cages. A woman folds blue shirts, snapping each sleeve like a small flag. Outside, water fills the cracked curb and carries a bottle cap toward the drain. Inside, coins click, click, click. The sound does not hurry. It keeps time for wet shoes, tired hands, and the last riders waiting under the awning for buses that arrive with their headlights lowered against the weather all night.

2 Near the door, a boy presses his palm to the glass and watches the street blur. Still, the washers turn. Still, the rain taps its thin fingers on the roof. His mother says nothing, but her face softens when he finds a lost mitten near the change machine. He lifts it carefully, as if it were a bird with one wet wing. For a moment, the bright room holds more than laundry: it holds a question about who will come back for what they lost tomorrow.

3 Then the bus arrives, breathing steam at the curb. The waiting riders climb aboard, carrying bags that smell of soap and rain. I stay beneath the awning, watching their windows slide past like dark mirrors. The laundromat shrinks behind them, yet its light seems to travel in every puddle. By morning, the storm will leave paper cups, branches, and a cleaner sky. But tonight, this little room makes the whole block feel less alone. Its steady windows answer the storm without speaking a single word.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. What mood does the comparison of the washers to “moons trapped in metal cages“ create? Explain how the comparison supports your answer.

2. How does the repeated word “Still” affect the pace and meaning of the second paragraph?

3. What does the comparison of the lost mitten to a bird with “one wet wing” suggest about the boy's response to it?

4. How does the shift to “I” in the final paragraph help develop the poem's theme?

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

Write a 4- to 6-line poem about an ordinary place during a change in weather. Use one comparison and one repeated word or phrase, then write exactly two sentences that explain how those choices shape a theme.

ANSWER KEY # Stormlight Signals

GRADE 9 · 9.T.T.4.a

PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Underline two sensory images, circle each use of repetition, and number 1, 2, and 3 beside places where the poem's mood or perspective changes. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 · ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	What mood does the comparison of the washers to "moons trapped in metal cages" create? Explain how the comparison supports your answer.	**It creates a quietly strange, confined mood. The glowing round washers resemble captured moons, making the ordinary laundromat seem enclosed and unfamiliar.**
2	How does the repeated word "Still" affect the pace and meaning of the second paragraph?	**It slows the pace and emphasizes that the washers and rain continue steadily, even while the people wait.**
3	What does the comparison of the lost mitten to a bird with "one wet wing" suggest about the boy's response to it?	**It suggests that he sees the mitten as fragile and in need of care, which shows his gentleness.**
4	How does the shift to "I" in the final paragraph help develop the poem's theme?	**The shift makes the ending personal and turns the observations into a reflection. It supports the theme that an ordinary shared space can lessen loneliness during a difficult night.**

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

At the library door, umbrellas bloom like black flowers.
Wind combs the book-return slot.
Wait, wait, the rain says to the sidewalk.
Inside, readers turn pages louder than thunder.

Technique explanation: The comparison makes the umbrellas seem briefly alive, while the repeated word slows the moment. Together, these choices suggest that a quiet public place can offer shelter during a storm.

Accept other defensible interpretations when students connect a specific technique or structural choice to the poem's mood, meaning, or theme. For the open task, check for 4 to 6 poem lines, a comparison, repetition, and exactly two explanatory sentences.