Dark Sky Voices

Read a model poem and trace choices that shape its invitation.

9.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 Underline three sensory images, circle repeated words or phrases, and number two examples of figurative language. These choices help the poem invite readers to notice the night sky.

After the Lights Go Out

1 At 10:17, the stadium lights click off, and our block becomes a bowl of ink. Windows blink open one by one. On the sidewalk, Mr. Vega lifts his face as if the sky has called his name. Above us, stars spill across the dark, sharp as salt scattered on black cloth. We stand still. We stand still long enough to hear a bicycle chain ticking, a dog collar jingling, leaves brushing leaves. The city, usually shouting, lowers its voice. In that hush, even the narrow street seems wide enough for wonder.

2 No billboard tells us to look up. No screen asks for a swipe. Instead, the moon hangs over the water tower, a lantern held by an invisible hand. My little sister whispers, "It looks close enough to climb." Her whisper travels farther than traffic. I remember that the same moon reaches farms beyond town, ships on the ocean, and people I will never meet. We share this bright coin, this patient witness. Look up, I think. Look up before the lights return. The dark does not erase our world. It reveals the parts we hurry past.

3 When power returns, the lamps will pour gold onto the pavement, and the stars will fade behind it. Yet I will carry this blackout home like a small flame. Tomorrow, I may pass the same corner without stopping, but I will know what waits above the roofs. I will know that silence has a pulse, soft, steady, secret. Let us save a little darkness where we can, by closing a curtain, stepping outside, or asking a neighbor to pause. A darker sky can make room for a larger thought.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. What simile describes the stars in the first paragraph? Explain what picture it creates.

2. What phrase repeats in the second paragraph? How does the repetition support the poem's purpose?

3. Find the alliteration in the final paragraph. What mood do these words create?

4. Choose one example of personification from the poem. Explain how it helps show that the city becomes quiet during the blackout.

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

Write a six-line poem that invites people to notice a natural place near them. Include one sensory image, one simile or personification, one repeated phrase used in two lines, and alliteration.

ANSWER KEY

Dark Sky Voices

GRADE 9 · 9.T.T.4.b

PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Underline three sensory images, circle repeated words or phrases, and number two examples of figurative language. These choices help the poem invite readers to notice the night sky. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 · ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	What simile describes the stars in the first paragraph? Explain what picture it creates.	**"Sharp as salt scattered on black cloth." It creates an image of bright, scattered stars against a dark sky.**
2	What phrase repeats in the second paragraph? How does the repetition support the poem's purpose?	**"Look up" repeats. It urges readers to pause and notice the sky before the lights return.**
3	Find the alliteration in the final paragraph. What mood do these words create?	**"Soft, steady, secret." The repeated s sound creates a quiet, peaceful, private mood.**
4	Choose one example of personification from the poem. Explain how it helps show that the city becomes quiet during the blackout.	**"The city, usually shouting, lowers its voice." Giving the city a voice emphasizes that the blackout makes the city seem quieter.**

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

Step outside, step outside,
where the river folds silver around the stones.
Pines whisper, "Slow down," beside the path.
Cool water kisses my dusty hands.
Listen to the low, lapping water.
Step outside, step outside.

Accept varied details and techniques when they clearly meet the required purpose and conventions. For the open task, check for six lines, a repeated phrase in two lines, sensory imagery, figurative language, and alliteration.