Lines on the Move

See how rhythm and line breaks shape a poem.

6.8.B "analyze the effect of meter and structural elements such as line breaks in poems across a variety of poetic forms;"

NAME _____ DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

YOUR JOB In each poem, write the syllable count beside two nearby lines. Underline two line endings that make you pause or wait for the next line, and circle any end words that sound alike.

Ways Home

1 At dusk, the river takes the sky
and bears it past the pier.
The bridge begins its iron song
that night trains stop to hear.
I walk beside the old stone wall
where weeds press through the seam.
A lantern swings above the path
and shakes its gold on stream.
My brother races to the bend,
his red scarf darts ahead.
His call crosses the water still,
then fades beyond the shed.
The river keeps its silver road
while windows bloom with light.
I match my steps to moving waves
and walk the dark to night.

② On the late bus, a girl holds
a jar of fireflies against her coat.
Their small lamps blink under her chin,
then vanish when the bus enters the tunnel.
For one long block, the passengers become faces
floating in a dark jar
above the rattling seats.
When daylight returns, the girl opens her hands.
The fireflies are only reflections from a phone screen,
but everyone watches the bright blue glass
as if it could fly.

③ Morning bells cross Market Square.
Vendors lift striped awnings.
I turn toward home at last.

Rain taps on blue umbrellas.
Shoppers share narrow sidewalks.
I turn toward home at last.

Pigeons rise above bakery roofs.
Crumbs scatter beside doors.
I turn toward home at last.

Sunset fills the bus windows.
Tired riders loosen scarves.
I turn toward home at last.

Streetlights wake along the hill.
Key warms my pocket.
I turn toward home at last.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. What syllable pattern occurs from line to line in the first poem? How does this pattern affect the rhythm?

2. How do the matching end sounds in the first poem, such as “pier” and “hear,” affect the poem’s movement?

3. In the second poem, why does the poet place “faces” on one line and “floating in a dark jar” on the next line?

4. How do the repeated final line and the three-line stanzas in the third poem support the speaker’s journey home?

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

Write a six-line poem about arriving somewhere. Make lines 1, 3, and 5 eight syllables long and lines 2, 4, and 6 six syllables long, use a line break after a phrase that creates a pause, then add one sentence explaining the effect of that break.

ANSWER KEY

Lines on the Move

GRADE 6 · TEKS 6.8.B

PART 1 · READ AND MARK

In each poem, write the syllable count beside two nearby lines. Underline two line endings that make you pause or wait for the next line, and circle any end words that sound alike. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 · ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	What syllable pattern occurs from line to line in the first poem? How does this pattern affect the rhythm?	**The lines alternate between eight and six syllables. This creates a steady, songlike rhythm, like walking steps.**
2	How do the matching end sounds in the first poem, such as “pier” and “hear,” affect the poem’s movement?	**The matching sounds connect the lines and make the poem flow smoothly, like a song or ballad.**
3	In the second poem, why does the poet place “faces” on one line and “floating in a dark jar” on the next line?	**The break makes the reader pause after “faces,” then reveals the comparison. It makes the dark bus seem enclosed, with passengers like objects in a jar.**
4	How do the repeated final line and the three-line stanzas in the third poem support the speaker’s journey home?	**The repeated line returns the reader to the speaker’s goal of going home. The regular three-line stanzas create a measured pace as the speaker passes each scene.**

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

Beyond the station, lights appear
and shine upon the rain.
I slow my steps beside the gate
until the doors swing wide.
Inside, warm voices call my name.
I step into the glow.

The break after “gate” pauses the action, so the opening doors feel important.

Accept answers that use evidence from the poems to explain how rhythm, rhyme, repetition, stanza shape, or line breaks affect reading. For the writing task, accept a clear alternating eight-six syllable pattern and a reasonable explanation of an intentional line break. The first poem has sixteen deliberate lines with alternating 8/6 syllables. The second is free verse: syllable counts vary, and faces ends its intentional line. The third has five three-line stanzas. The model has six lines counted 8,6,8,6,8,6, followed by a separate explanation.