Shelter in Words

How figurative language shapes a scene

11-12.L.5.a "Analyze figurative language in context and its role in the text."

NAME _____ DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline one figurative phrase in paragraph 1, two in paragraph 2, and one in paragraph 3. Number them in reading order to track how the narrator's view of the library changes.

Open Until Midnight

1 By six o'clock, the heat had pressed its thumb against every window on Alder Street. The bus shelter offered no shade, and the sidewalks held the day's warmth long after sunset. When the public library announced it would stay open until midnight, I went mostly for the air-conditioning. Inside, the ceiling fans turned slowly above rows of books, and cold water waited in paper cups. At the door, a librarian showed me where to leave my bicycle. Her voice was ordinary, which made the open doors feel less like an emergency and more like an invitation.

2 At first, we occupied separate islands: a delivery driver charging his phone, two sisters bent over a puzzle, an older man sleeping beside a stack of newspapers. Nobody had come to read. Then the power flickered, and the air conditioner fell silent for nearly a minute. The younger sister counted aloud while the rest of us waited. When the lights steadied, the driver offered his charger to the man, whose phone had died. The library was no longer just a harbor from the heat. It had become a place where strangers noticed what someone else lacked.

3 Near closing time, a librarian rolled out a cart of donated snacks. The sisters passed crackers down the long table, and conversation began to thread through the room. Someone asked the driver about his route; the older man recommended a bus that stopped closer to the library. Beyond the glass, the pavement still gave off heat, and tomorrow's forecast promised more of it. I left with no borrowed book and no solution to the weather. Yet as we locked our bicycles outside, the street seemed less empty than it had on my way in.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. What does the heat pressing its thumb against the windows suggest about the street? How does that image shape the opening mood?

2. Why does the narrator call the people in the library "separate islands" at first? Use a detail from the paragraph to explain the image.

3. The narrator calls the library "a harbor from the heat." What does that comparison show the library provides, and why does the narrator say it is "no longer just" that?

4. What does "conversation began to thread through the room" suggest about the people near closing time? How does this image help develop the passage's ending?

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

Imagine rain begins as the people leave the library. Write two sentences: give the rain an original figurative description, then explain how your image would change the mood of the passage's ending.

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PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Underline one figurative phrase in paragraph 1, two in paragraph 2, and one in paragraph 3. Number them in reading order to track how the narrator's view of the library changes. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 · ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	What does the heat pressing its thumb against the windows suggest about the street? How does that image shape the opening mood?	**The heat feels forceful and hard to escape, creating an oppressive opening mood.**
2	Why does the narrator call the people in the library "separate islands" at first? Use a detail from the paragraph to explain the image.	**The image suggests that people are near one another but disconnected. The driver charges his phone while the sisters work on a puzzle and the older man sleeps.**
3	The narrator calls the library "a harbor from the heat." What does that comparison show the library provides, and why does the narrator say it is "no longer just" that?	**Like a harbor, the library offers shelter. It also becomes a place where strangers help one another, as when the driver offers the man his charger.**
4	What does "conversation began to thread through the room" suggest about the people near closing time? How does this image help develop the passage's ending?	**Conversation connects people who had kept to themselves. The image supports the ending's sense that the street feels less empty even though the heat remains.**

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

Rain tapped a quick, uneven rhythm on our bicycle seats. Its lively sound would make the ending feel more hopeful, while the passage's actual ending leaves the heat in place.

Accept interpretations grounded in the wording and events of the passage. For the open task, look for an original figurative image and an explanation of its effect on the ending's mood.