Stories at the Stop

Use context to uncover the feeling behind words and phrases.

6.RL.4.a "Determine the meaning of words and phrases, including figurative and connotative language."

NAME _____ DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

YOUR JOB Circle words or phrases that carry a feeling or suggest more than their literal meaning. Underline nearby clues that help you understand them.

The Crooked Bookshelf

1 On Saturday morning, I carried a box of used books to the bus stop. Our class had built a little bookshelf there so riders could borrow a story while they waited. Rain had fallen all night. The shelf leaned to one side, and its paper sign hung in strips. A puddle had crept under the bottom row. "What a disaster," I muttered, lifting a damp mystery novel by one corner. The gray sky seemed to press its thumb on everything, even my plans.

2 Mina arrived with towels and a roll of tape. "The books aren't ruined," she said, opening one to show its dry pages. While we wiped the shelf, a bus pulled up. A man in a blue coat waited nearby, watching us work. My worry buzzed like a trapped fly. What if nobody wanted books from a crooked shelf? Mina set a bright red sign above the books. "FREE STORIES," it said. The man stepped forward and chose a book of poems.

3 He turned a few pages and smiled. "My mother read these to me," he said. When the bus came, he carried the book aboard as carefully as a glass bowl. Soon a girl left a comic in exchange for a science fiction book. By noon, the shelf was still crooked, but it no longer looked pitiful. It looked stubborn, holding its place beside the road. I taped the last loose corner of the sign and watched it flutter above the books.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. What does it mean when the narrator says the sky seemed to “press its thumb on everything, even my plans”? What feeling does the phrase create?

2. Why does the narrator compare their worry to “a trapped fly”? Use a clue from the passage.

3. What does carrying the book “as carefully as a glass bowl” suggest about the man and the book?

4. The shelf first looks “pitiful” and later looks “stubborn.” How does that change in words show a change in the narrator's view?

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

Write three sentences about arriving at a place you have never visited. Include an original comparison and a word with a clear positive or negative feeling. In your third sentence, explain what both choices suggest.

ANSWER KEY # Stories at the Stop

GRADE 6 · 6.RL.4.a

PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Circle words or phrases that carry a feeling or suggest more than their literal meaning. Underline nearby clues that help you understand them. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 · ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	What does it mean when the narrator says the sky seemed to "press its thumb on everything, even my plans"? What feeling does the phrase create?	**The gray, rainy day makes everything, including the narrator's plans, seem weighed down or gloomy.**
2	Why does the narrator compare their worry to "a trapped fly"? Use a clue from the passage.	**The worry feels restless and hard to ignore. The narrator keeps thinking that nobody will want books from the crooked shelf.**
3	What does carrying the book "as carefully as a glass bowl" suggest about the man and the book?	**He treats the book as precious. The poems matter to him because his mother read them to him.**
4	The shelf first looks "pitiful" and later looks "stubborn." How does that change in words show a change in the narrator's view?	**At first, the damaged shelf seems sad and helpless. After people use it, the narrator sees it as strong and determined to stay.**

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

The new skating rink spread before me like a sheet of silver glass. I stepped through its welcoming doors and heard blades scratch the ice. The comparison suggests a smooth, shining rink, and welcoming makes the place feel friendly rather than frightening.

Accept explanations that connect each phrase's suggested meaning to details in the passage. For Part 3, look for an original comparison, a word with a clear positive or negative feeling, and an accurate explanation of both.