

Station After Dark

Track how word choice shapes an eerie mood and distinct voices.

6.9.F “analyze how the author's use of language contributes to mood and voice; and”

NAME _____

DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK _____ Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline three words or phrases that create an uneasy mood. Circle two words or phrases from Mara's logbook entry that reveal her voice, and label them M.

The Last Platform

- ① At dusk, Mara pushed open the gate to the old train station. Rust flakes drifted from the sign like brown snow, and the platform boards groaned beneath her boots. No trains had stopped there for years, yet a single light blinked in the ticket window. Mara held her flashlight low. Its beam shook across empty benches, a torn timetable, and tracks disappearing into weeds. The station seemed to be listening for a sound that had forgotten how to arrive.
- ② Near the waiting room, she found a blue logbook wedged behind a radiator. Most pages were blank. One entry in Mara's handwriting was dated yesterday. It read, “Dear future visitor, congratulations. You have discovered the world's least popular station. Please admire the dust, but do not feed it after midnight.” Mara snorted, then looked over her shoulder. The joke made the room feel less lonely, but the fresh ink made her stomach tighten. Someone had been here recently. She tucked the book under her arm and followed a row of muddy footprints toward the stairwell.
- ③ Upstairs, the station master's office waited with its door half open. Wind tapped a loose shutter, patient as a knuckle on glass. Mara stepped inside and saw a metal lunchbox on the desk. A note lay beneath it: “Back in five minutes. Keep the light on.” The neat letters gave no name. Mara clicked off her flashlight anyway, because the ticket-window light was glowing brighter now. Outside, the rails hummed softly, although no train was due.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE _____ Use the passage

- 1** Choose two details from paragraph 1 that create an uneasy mood. Explain how the details affect the mood.

- 2** How does the phrase “a sound that had forgotten how to arrive” affect the mood of paragraph 1?

- 3** What kind of voice does Mara’s logbook entry have? Use one phrase from the entry as evidence.

- 4** How does the narrator’s comparison of the wind to “a knuckle on glass” contribute to the narrator’s voice and the mood?

3 YOUR TURN _____ Your own words

Write a two-sentence continuation of the scene. Include one sensory detail that builds suspense and one line Mara might write in her logbook that shows her humorous, self-aware voice.

PART 1 • READ AND MARK

Underline three words or phrases that create an uneasy mood. Circle two words or phrases from Mara's logbook entry that reveal her voice, and label them M. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 • ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	Choose two details from paragraph 1 that create an uneasy mood. Explain how the details affect the mood.	Answers may include "platform boards groaned," "a single light blinked," "tracks disappearing into weeds," or the station "listening." These details make the station seem empty, strange, and possibly alive.
2	How does the phrase "a sound that had forgotten how to arrive" affect the mood of paragraph 1?	It makes the station seem lonely and mysterious, as if it is waiting for something that will not come.
3	What kind of voice does Mara's logbook entry have? Use one phrase from the entry as evidence.	Mara has a humorous, playful, self-aware voice. Phrases such as "world's least popular station" and "do not feed it after midnight" joke about the dusty station.
4	How does the narrator's comparison of the wind to "a knuckle on glass" contribute to the narrator's voice and the mood?	The comparison shows the narrator's vivid, observant voice and creates an eerie, suspenseful mood because the tapping sounds like someone knocking.

PART 3 • YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

Mara lifted the lunchbox, and a cold click sounded beneath the desk. She opened the logbook and wrote, "Note to self: haunted stations should offer snacks, not secret noises."

Accept different mood words when students quote or clearly point to passage language and explain its effect. For Part 3, accept two sentences that include a suspenseful sensory detail and a humorous, self-aware line for Mara.