Harbor of Fear

Trace how figurative choices reveal a story's larger meaning.

10.RL.2.B "Analyze how authors use literary devices and figurative language, including allusion, allegory, and paradox to impact the meaning of the text."

NAME _____ DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline metaphors and the paradoxical statement. Circle the allusion to Greek myth, and number three details that suggest what the harbor and gate represent beyond the literal story.

The Gate at Aster

(1) Each autumn, the people of Aster raised the iron gate across their harbor before the first storm. They said the gate was a shield, though it also kept out boats carrying news, medicine, and strangers. This year, Mara tended the lighthouse, whose beam swept the water like a searching eye. On the morning the gate closed, she noticed a small sail beyond it. The boat rocked in the gray waves, unable to enter. Above the village, clouds gathered like a clenched fist over the roofs.

(2) Mara asked the council to open the gate, but its members feared that one unknown sailor could bring danger. "We must not become Icarus," the mayor said, pointing toward the darkening sky. Mara wondered whether caution had become another kind of storm. As rain began, the trapped boat flashed a lantern three times. Mara recognized the old signal for help. She remembered her grandfather's words: "A harbor is safest when it welcomes the sea." The statement sounded impossible, yet she saw that a harbor built only to refuse water would soon become a dry, useless basin.

(3) That night, Mara climbed the gatehouse and released the lock. The gate swung inward, and the small boat crossed the threshold just before the waves grew violent. Its sailor carried a radio and warned Aster that the storm would turn north, toward homes on the cliff. Because the town had admitted one stranger, everyone moved to safety before dawn. Later, the council left the gate open during daylight. Mara watched boats enter and leave, and the harbor no longer resembled a fortress. It became a conversation, loud, changeable, and alive.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. How does calling the gate a "shield" shape the reader's understanding of the council's decision to close it?

2. What does the allusion to Icarus suggest, and how does the mayor use it to support his position?

3. How can the harbor and gate be read as an allegory for a larger human behavior? Use two details from the passage in your explanation.

4. Explain the paradox, "A harbor is safest when it welcomes the sea." How do later events make the statement meaningful?

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

Write five sentences. In the first four, create an allegorical scene about a group choosing openness or isolation, using one clear allusion, one metaphor, and one paradox. In the fifth sentence, explain how those choices shape the scene's larger meaning.

ANSWER KEY

Harbor of Fear

GRADE 10 · 10.RL.2.B

PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Underline metaphors and the paradoxical statement. Circle the allusion to Greek myth, and number three details that suggest what the harbor and gate represent beyond the literal story. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 · ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	How does calling the gate a "shield" shape the reader's understanding of the council's decision to close it?	**The metaphor shows that the council sees exclusion as protection. It reveals that fear makes them view outsiders and change as threats.**
2	What does the allusion to Icarus suggest, and how does the mayor use it to support his position?	**Icarus suggests reckless, overconfident risk. The mayor uses the allusion to make opening the gate seem dangerously rash.**
3	How can the harbor and gate be read as an allegory for a larger human behavior? Use two details from the passage in your explanation.	**They represent a community isolating itself out of fear. The gate blocks news, medicine, and strangers, while the harbor later becomes a "conversation," showing the value of connection and openness.**
4	Explain the paradox, "A harbor is safest when it welcomes the sea." How do later events make the statement meaningful?	**The statement seems contradictory because welcoming the sea appears unsafe during a storm. It becomes meaningful when admitting the sailor brings the warning that helps the town move to safety.**

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

At the library, the board locked every book in glass cases after one volume was damaged. The cases became a winter coat around the town's thoughts. The chair feared a King Midas ending, in which prized books became as useless as gold. Nia replied, "A library protects its books by letting them travel," and opened the cases for a reading circle. The locked library represents a community that fears new ideas, while the metaphor, allusion, and paradox show that knowledge survives through responsible sharing.

Accept equivalent analyses that connect each device to the council's fear, the town's isolation, or the change toward connection. For the open response, accept varied settings and messages if the allusion, metaphor, paradox, and explanation are clear and meaningful.