Creekside Clues

Use nearby details to interpret literal and figurative language.

10.RV.1.B "Use context and sentence structure to clarify the literal and figurative meanings of words and phrases."

NAME _____ DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline the three figurative phrases in the passage and box the word cloudiness. For each underlined phrase, number two nearby details that help you infer its meaning.

Willow Creek Restoration

1 On Saturday, volunteers gathered beside Willow Creek, a stream that had turned brown after years of runoff from nearby construction sites. Science teacher Ms. Alvarez handed out gloves, native grass plugs, and clipboards. She asked teams to record the water's cloudiness before planting along the bank. Near an exposed bend, Jordan pointed to a thin green shoot pushing through gravel. Ms. Alvarez called the creek "a patient neighbor," then assigned the group to remove trash without disturbing the small plants. Across the water, a heron lifted from the reeds, while a city truck delivered bundles of willow branches.

2 By noon, workers set willow branches into the muddy edge, anchoring them with stakes. Their roots would spread over time, and their stems could slow water near the bank. During a brief rain shower, droplets struck the bare slope and carried loose dirt toward the creek. Where the new plants stood, less soil slid downhill. Jordan watched the difference and said the willow rows were "a seat belt during a storm." Ms. Alvarez wrote his words on the clipboard beside the team's measurements. At the end of the day, volunteers covered another bare patch with straw.

3 Two weeks later, the class returned after a night of steady rain. The water was still moving quickly, but it looked clearer than it had on the planting day. At the bend, the straw remained on the slope, and several willow branches were upright instead of scattered downstream. Jordan found a mayfly nymph clinging to a stone and added the observation to the group's chart. Ms. Alvarez studied the bank, listened to the rushing current, and said, "The creek is beginning to speak again." No one answered her aloud. Instead, the students compared their new notes with the records from the first visit.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1 In paragraph 1, what does cloudiness literally mean? Which two details in that paragraph help you determine its meaning?

2 What does Ms. Alvarez most likely mean by calling the creek "a patient neighbor"? Use two details from paragraph 1 to support your inference.

3 What does Jordan mean when he calls the willow rows "a seat belt during a storm"? Explain how the sentences around his statement clarify the comparison.

4 In paragraph 3, what does "The creek is beginning to speak again" mean? Use the sentences after the quotation to explain why speak is figurative.

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

Write exactly two sentences about a place in nature or your community. Use quotation marks around one figurative phrase, and include at least two concrete clues that help a reader infer what the phrase means.

Creekside Clues

PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Underline the three figurative phrases in the passage and box the word cloudiness. For each underlined phrase, number two nearby details that help you infer its meaning. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 · ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	In paragraph 1, what does cloudiness literally mean? Which two details in that paragraph help you determine its meaning?	**Cloudiness means how clear or murky the water is. The stream had turned brown, and students were asked to record the water's cloudiness.**
2	What does Ms. Alvarez most likely mean by calling the creek "a patient neighbor"? Use two details from paragraph 1 to support your inference.	**She suggests that the creek has endured damage and is slowly recovering. Supporting details include the years of runoff and the green shoot growing through gravel, along with the instruction not to disturb small plants.**
3	What does Jordan mean when he calls the willow rows "a seat belt during a storm"? Explain how the sentences around his statement clarify the comparison.	**He means the willows provide protection during heavy rain by helping keep soil from washing away. Their roots spread, their stems slow water, and less soil slid downhill where plants stood.**
4	In paragraph 3, what does "The creek is beginning to speak again" mean? Use the sentences after the quotation to explain why speak is figurative.	**It means the creek is showing observable signs about its condition or recovery. No one answers the creek aloud, and the students compare observations and records instead.**

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

The library was a "lighthouse" during finals week. Its lamps glowed after sunset, quiet tables held tired students, and the librarian guided them toward useful sources.

Accept equivalent literal and figurative interpretations when students support them with accurate nearby details. For the open task, accept varied figurative phrases if the two sentences include at least two clues that make the intended meaning inferable.