# Closed Door Promises

Track literal language and hidden criticism in a civic satire.

**11.RL.2.D** "Analyze the use of satire, sarcasm, irony, and understatement to differentiate between what is directly stated and what is implied."

NAME _____ DATE _____

## 1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

**YOUR JOB** Underline each phrase whose literal wording differs from its implied meaning, then write Sa for sarcasm, I for irony, or U for understatement in the margin. Circle one detail in each paragraph that contributes to the passage's satire of the council's priorities.

### Friday at the Library

1 At the Riverton council meeting, Mayor Bell announced that the town would close its library on Fridays to save money. Behind him, a banner praised Riverton as "A City That Reads." The mayor smiled at the cameras and called the cut "a bold investment in literacy," because residents would have more time to read the notices explaining why the doors were locked. In the front row, Ms. Alvarez, the librarian, wrote the date in her notebook. She had spent the afternoon removing a display of job-search guides so the empty shelves would look "less distracting" during the televised meeting.

2 During public comment, Councilman Reed said, "Wonderful. Nothing prepares teenagers for college like limiting their access to books and internet service." He proposed replacing the library's Friday hours with a vending machine that dispensed inspirational bookmarks for twenty-five cents. Several officials nodded while checking their phones. Reed added that the plan might cause "a small inconvenience" for the students who used the library computers to submit applications before deadlines. Outside, a high school senior held a sign reading, "Books Build Futures." A reporter asked whether she expected the council to reconsider. "I am sure they will," she said, watching members leave through a side door.

3 The next week, Riverton released a glossy brochure celebrating its "Weekend of Unlimited Learning." It pictured children reading beneath tall trees, although the town park had no lights after sunset and no public Wi-Fi. The brochure advised families to "discover the joy of self-reliance" by finding information without librarians, databases, or a warm building. Ms. Alvarez placed a copy beside the library's dark Friday entrance. "The brochure is not completely wrong," she told the senior. "People are learning a great deal about what the council values." By Monday, residents had filled the meeting room, each carrying a book and a flashlight.

## 2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. What is ironic about the mayor calling the Friday closure "a bold investment in literacy"? Explain what his words directly state and what they imply.

2. How does Councilman Reed use sarcasm in his statement about preparing teenagers for college? What criticism does he imply?

3. Why is "a small inconvenience" an understatement? Use a detail from the passage in your explanation.

4. How does the "Weekend of Unlimited Learning" brochure contribute to the passage's satire? Identify one contrast between its message and the town's actions.

## 3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

Write a 3-4 sentence mini-scene that uses satire to criticize a fictional policy. Include one sarcastic, ironic, or understated statement, then add a parenthetical label that names the device and explains its implied meaning.

ANSWER KEY

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GRADE 11 · 11.RL.2.D

## PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Underline each phrase whose literal wording differs from its implied meaning, then write Sa for sarcasm, I for irony, or U for understatement in the margin. Circle one detail in each paragraph that contributes to the passage's satire of the council's priorities. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

## PART 2 · ANSWERS

| # | QUESTION | ANSWER |
|---|---|---|
| 1 | What is ironic about the mayor calling the Friday closure "a bold investment in literacy"? Explain what his words directly state and what they imply. | **Directly, he claims the closure supports literacy. Ironically, the closure removes access to books and library services, so the claim implies the opposite.** |
| 2 | How does Councilman Reed use sarcasm in his statement about preparing teenagers for college? What criticism does he imply? | **His praise is sarcastic. He implies that limiting access to books and internet service makes college preparation harder, not better.** |
| 3 | Why is "a small inconvenience" an understatement? Use a detail from the passage in your explanation. | **Students may miss application deadlines because they need library computers, so losing access is a serious problem, not a small inconvenience.** |
| 4 | How does the "Weekend of Unlimited Learning" brochure contribute to the passage's satire? Identify one contrast between its message and the town's actions. | **The brochure celebrates unlimited learning, but the town closes the library, provides no evening park lights or public Wi-Fi, and tells families to work without librarians or databases. The contrast satirizes leaders who value a positive image over real access to learning.** |

## PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

When Eastgate High replaced its water fountains with a bottled-water subscription kiosk, the principal unveiled a poster saying, "Hydration is a privilege we are proud to modernize." Students lined up with empty cups beneath the poster while the kiosk flashed an error message. "What a convenient way to stay thirsty," Maya said. (Sarcasm: Maya implies that the policy is inconvenient and harmful.)

Accept equivalent explanations that distinguish the literal statement from the implied criticism and support the interpretation with passage details. For the open response, accept varied fictional policies if the scene uses satire and the parenthetical accurately identifies and explains one device.