Figurative Light

Analyze how figurative language shapes a prose passage.

12.RL.2.A "Evaluate how the use of figurative language in poetry and prose contributes to the reader's understanding of the subject, form, mood, and theme."

NAME _____ DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline each comparison or instance of personification in the passage. Number the three examples that most strongly shape the mood or theme, then write a brief note beside each one about its effect.

The Last Lightkeeper

(1) At dusk, Mara climbed the lighthouse stairs with a wrench in her pocket and salt stiffening her coat. Below, the harbor held its boats like dark seeds in a cupped hand. Tomorrow, technicians would install an automated beacon, and the keeper's room would become a museum. Mara had heard the news for months, yet tonight it landed like a gull on her shoulder, light but impossible to ignore. Each step rang beneath her boots. The tower seemed to count with her, asking whether a place could remember the hands that had kept it alive.

(2) At the lantern room, Mara polished the brass rail although no visitor would see it. The glass around the lamp caught the last sun and broke it into thin coins across the floor. She thought of her father, who had taught her to trim the wick when storms erased the horizon. "The light does not fight the sea," he had said. "It tells sailors where not to go." Now the lamp's steady pulse filled the room, a small heart refusing to hurry. Outside, fog gathered at the windows and pressed its pale face against the panes.

(3) When Mara switched the lamp off at midnight, darkness entered so quickly that she gripped the rail. Then the new beacon blinked from the pier, precise and cold, cutting one white path through the fog. It did the work well. Still, Mara carried the old lens downstairs as if it were a sleeping animal, careful not to wake what it had witnessed. In the keeper's room, she set it beside the logbooks. Their pages smelled of oil, rain, and years. The tower no longer needed her hands, but it kept the shape of them in every worn stair and polished latch.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. How does the comparison of the harbor's boats to “dark seeds in a cupped hand” shape your understanding of the setting and mood?

2. What mood does the personification of the fog, which “pressed its pale face against the panes,” create? Explain how the image creates that mood.

3. How does the contrast between the new beacon as “precise and cold” and the old lens as a “sleeping animal” develop a theme of the passage?

4. The final paragraph shifts from the lamp going dark to the tower retaining “the shape” of Mara's hands. How does this figurative language shape the ending's form and theme?

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

Write an 80-100-word prose paragraph about a familiar place that is changing or closing. Include at least one simile or metaphor and one instance of personification, then write exactly two sentences explaining how your figurative language shapes the subject, mood, and theme.

ANSWER KEY

Figurative Light

GRADE 12 · 12.RL.2.A

PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Underline each comparison or instance of personification in the passage. Number the three examples that most strongly shape the mood or theme, then write a brief note beside each one about its effect. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 · ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	How does the comparison of the harbor's boats to "dark seeds in a cupped hand" shape your understanding of the setting and mood?	**It makes the harbor seem sheltered and full of quiet potential, creating a calm, reflective mood.**
2	What mood does the personification of the fog, which "pressed its pale face against the panes," create? Explain how the image creates that mood.	**It creates an enclosed, uneasy mood because the fog seems to watch and press in on Mara.**
3	How does the contrast between the new beacon as "precise and cold" and the old lens as a "sleeping animal" develop a theme of the passage?	**The contrast shows that new technology can perform the lighthouse's job efficiently while lacking the human history and emotional meaning connected to the old light.**
4	The final paragraph shifts from the lamp going dark to the tower retaining "the shape" of Mara's hands. How does this figurative language shape the ending's form and theme?	**It gives the ending a sense of closure by moving from the light's ending to its lasting traces. It supports the theme that places can preserve evidence of the people who cared for them.**

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

On the final afternoon before the city closed the old train station, I stood beneath its iron clock. Pigeons lifted from the rafters like scraps of gray paper, and the departure board blinked its tired eyes above empty benches. My grandmother had arrived here with one suitcase and a recipe folded into her coat pocket. Now workers rolled blueprints across the ticket counter. The station did not protest, yet its wide doors seemed to hold their breath, keeping one last space for travelers whose names had faded from the schedule. The early simile makes the pigeons seem fragile and disposable, establishing a wistful mood and framing the station as a vulnerable subject. Later personification gives the board and doors a witness's role, so the paragraph moves from visible closure to a theme that redevelopment can erase living memories.

Accept supported interpretations that accurately identify figurative language and explain its effect on subject, form, mood, or theme. For Part 3, verify the paragraph length, the required figurative language, and exactly two analytical sentences.