Light in the Tower

Notice how style choices shape a story's tone.

6.RL.2.B "Explain elements of author's style as purposeful choices (e.g., imagery, figurative language, and word choice) to develop tone."

NAME _____ DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline three phrases that create a picture or sound, circle two comparisons or human actions given to nonhuman things, and number two exact words that help create the passage's tone.

Gull Point Lighthouse

1 At dusk, Mara climbed the narrow path to Gull Point Lighthouse, carrying her grandfather's brass key. Wind tugged at her jacket and pushed gray waves against the rocks below. The tower stood above the shore like a pale finger, its windows dark and watchful. Mara had heard that the lamp had not shone for twenty years, yet a thin ribbon of light slid beneath the locked door. She tightened her grip on the key and listened to the sea hiss in the grass.

2 Inside, the staircase curled upward, swallowing each step in shadow. Mara's shoes tapped softly, but the sound seemed too small for the empty tower. On the wall, faded maps fluttered in the draft like trapped birds. She remembered her grandfather saying that a lighthouse keeper never left a light to die alone. Near the top, a sudden clank rang out. Mara froze. Then she saw an old metal shutter swinging loose, knocking against the lantern room.

3 Mara stepped into the lantern room and found the glass lens covered with salt and dust. Beside it lay a tin of matches and a note in her grandfather's careful hand: "For the next keeper." Her fear loosened. She cleaned the lens, struck a match, and turned the stiff wheel until the lamp woke with a warm golden glow. Outside, the waves still crashed, but their roar no longer sounded like a warning. From the cliff, the beam swept across the water, a steady path through the dark.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. What tone does the first paragraph create? Use two details from the paragraph to explain your answer.

2. How does the comparison “like a pale finger” affect the tone of the lighthouse in paragraph 1?

3. In paragraph 2, how does the image of maps fluttering “like trapped birds” develop the tone?

4. Which words in paragraph 3 show a change in tone? Explain how those words change the mood of the ending.

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

Write a four-sentence scene set in a place that feels uneasy at first. Use at least two sensory details and one simile or personification. Then write one sentence that names the tone and explains how one of your style choices creates it.

ANSWER KEY

Light in the Tower

GRADE 6 · 6.RL.2.B

PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Underline three phrases that create a picture or sound, circle two comparisons or human actions given to nonhuman things, and number two exact words that help create the passage's tone. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 · ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	What tone does the first paragraph create? Use two details from the paragraph to explain your answer.	**The tone is suspenseful and mysterious. Details such as the "dark and watchful" windows, the locked door, and the sea that "hiss[es]" create uncertainty.**
2	How does the comparison "like a pale finger" affect the tone of the lighthouse in paragraph 1?	**It makes the lighthouse seem strange and eerie, which builds a mysterious tone.**
3	In paragraph 2, how does the image of maps fluttering "like trapped birds" develop the tone?	**The image makes the maps seem restless and unable to escape. It adds to the tense, lonely feeling inside the tower.**
4	Which words in paragraph 3 show a change in tone? Explain how those words change the mood of the ending.	**Words such as "warm golden glow" and "steady path" shift the tone from fearful to hopeful and reassuring.**

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

Rain drummed on the bus shelter as Nia waited beside the empty road. A cold puddle crept over the curb, and the yellow streetlight blinked like a tired eye. She pulled her hood closer while distant tires whispered through the fog. When the bus finally appeared, its bright windows glowed like small fires. The tone is uneasy at first because words such as "drummed," "crept," and "tired" make the setting seem threatening.

Accept answers that identify a reasonable tone and support it with accurate words, imagery, or figurative language from the passage. For Part 3, accept varied scenes if the student includes the required style choices and gives a logical explanation of tone.