Fog at the Pier

Track how language and sentence structure shape tone.

7.RL.2.B "Analyze how the elements of an author's style (e.g., word choice, sentence structure, dialogue, figurative language, imagery) are used to influence and develop tone."

NAME _____ DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline three words or phrases that create a strong feeling, circle one short or repeated sentence pattern, and write in the margin the tone each choice helps create.

Last Ferry

1 Mara reached the harbor just as the last ferry bell rang. Fog pressed against the pier, swallowing the far end of the dock. Her grandfather's blue boat should have been waiting beside the bait shop, but the water held only empty ropes and a bobbing orange buoy. "Grandpa?" she called. The wind carried her voice away. Beneath her sneakers, the boards groaned, and each careful step sounded too loud in the pale, listening morning around her.

2 Then a lantern winked beyond the fog, once, twice, then vanished. Mara gripped the railing. The bell rang again, sharp as a warning, and the ferry's engine coughed somewhere near the channel. "Stay on the dock!" her grandfather shouted. His voice was thin, yet it cut through the wind. Mara froze. A dark shape slid past the pilings, close enough for her to hear water slap its sides. The boat was coming, but it was not moving toward the pier.

3 For one long moment, Mara wanted to run. Instead, she lifted the emergency flag beside the bait shop and pulled the cord. Clang. Clang. Clang. The sound leaped across the harbor. The dark boat turned slowly, its lantern flashing through the gray. When it reached the dock, her grandfather stepped onto the boards, dripping and breathless. "The steering jammed," he said. Mara laughed once, then held his cold hand while the fog loosened its grip on the morning.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. What tone do the words “swallowing,” “groaned,” and “listening” create in paragraph 1? Explain how they affect the harbor setting.

2. How does the short sequence “once, twice, then vanished” influence the tone in paragraph 2?

3. How does the dialogue, “Stay on the dock!” affect the tone of paragraph 2?

4. Compare the fog in paragraph 1 with the fog in the final sentence. How does the author's word choice change the tone?

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

Write a three-sentence scene that begins with an uneasy tone and ends with relief. Include vivid imagery, one sentence of three words or fewer, and one line of dialogue. After the scene, name both tones and explain how one style choice helps create each tone.

ANSWER KEY # Fog at the Pier

PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Underline three words or phrases that create a strong feeling, circle one short or repeated sentence pattern, and write in the margin the tone each choice helps create. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 · ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	What tone do the words “swallowing,” “groaned,” and “listening” create in paragraph 1? Explain how they affect the harbor setting.	**They create an uneasy, suspenseful tone. The words make the fog, dock, and morning seem threatening or alive, so Mara feels alone.**
2	How does the short sequence “once, twice, then vanished” influence the tone in paragraph 2?	**It builds suspense because the lantern appears briefly and then disappears, making the boat's location uncertain.**
3	How does the dialogue, “Stay on the dock!” affect the tone of paragraph 2?	**The command creates urgency and danger because Mara's grandfather warns her sharply from the fog.**
4	Compare the fog in paragraph 1 with the fog in the final sentence. How does the author's word choice change the tone?	**At first, the fog “pressed” and was “swallowing” the dock, creating tension. In the end, it “loosened its grip,” creating relief.**

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

Rain tapped the bus shelter like impatient fingers while Nia watched the empty street. "No bus." At last, headlights curved around the corner, and the cold, silent block seemed to breathe again. Tones: uneasy, then relieved. The image of rain tapping like impatient fingers makes the wait uneasy, while the block seeming to breathe again creates relief.

Accept tone words such as anxious, tense, worried, urgent, calm, or relieved when students support them with accurate details from the passage. For the open task, check for three scene sentences, the required style choices, and a reasonable explanation of how choices shape both tones.