Have you ever heard someone say “It’s the little things that matter”? In everyday life, little things can make you happy, sad, annoyed, or excited. In literature and poetry, the little things that matter are words, chosen carefully by the author. Words affect meaning and establish the **tone**, or the attitude of the narrator or speaker. Word choice also is important because it can create the **mood**, or atmosphere, in a story or poem.

Read the poem below, paying close attention to poet’s choice of action verbs and descriptive words.

```
Murky Monday. Lockers slam,
Doorways clog and hallways jam.
Sweetest Ruby smiles so wide—
She can’t see me shyly hide . . .
Wondrous Monday. Lockers shine.
Ruby smiled at me in line.
```

Circle words in each line that help you understand the speaker’s feelings.

Read the chart below to help you analyze the poet’s word choices in each line.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Lines</th>
<th>Words with Positive Meaning</th>
<th>Words with Negative Meaning</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1–2</td>
<td>murky, slam, clog, jam</td>
<td>murky, slam, clog, jam</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3–4</td>
<td>sweetest, smiles</td>
<td>shyly, hide</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5–6</td>
<td>wondrous, shine, smiled</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Just as movie directors pay attention to the smallest details when setting up each scene, authors pay attention to each word when they create poems and stories. In this poem, the poet uses words to show how the speaker’s whole attitude changes after Ruby smiles at him. Analyzing an author’s choice of words will help you understand a text’s meaning, mood, and tone.
Read this story about a girl named Carmen who is awakened by a strange sound. Then read and answer the question that follows.

**A Fright in the Night** by Tasha Gilden

Carmen squinted through the thin curtains on her window, seeking the source of the sound that had awakened her. Unable to focus through the fabric, she pinched the hem with two fingertips and pulled the curtain aside slowly. She held her breath and her whole body completely still—but there was nothing.

I know I heard something; I thought it was the wind out in the old oak tree. But the tree was still and Carmen’s chest pounded a little and her palms went sweaty because something had made a noise, and it wasn’t the tree.

Carmen settled back into her blankets but stayed upright and scanned her room. The moonlight created an eerie glow on her bookshelves, and the rainbow mobile cast shadows more serpentine than serene.

What sort of mood does the author establish in these paragraphs?

Look carefully at the words the author chooses to describe the character’s feelings and actions.

Important words from the story are shown in the chart below. Reread the story and think carefully about these word choices. Then fill in the Mood section of the chart.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Word Choice</th>
<th>Mood</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>squinted, pounded, sweaty, eerie</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

With a partner, identify other important words and phrases from this part of the story. Then discuss how each choice of words helps you understand the meaning of this story.
Continue reading about Carmen. Use the Close Reading and the Hint to help you answer the question.

(continued from page 138)

Carmen swallowed the lump in her throat when she heard the sounds again—*rustle, rustle, thump*—coming clearly now from the opposite side of the room. She pulled her toes in tight, as if that could prevent something from grabbing them. Her mouth opened as she prepared to yell, because there just shouldn’t be anything rustling in her room in the night. And then—*rustle, rustle, scratch*—Carmen’s cat finished pushing its way out of the bottom drawer of her dresser!

Carmen’s near–yell turned into a laugh. “Dandy–Lion, you must have been more scared than I was!”

Circle the correct answer.
Which group of words from the story best reflects the change in mood?
A  swallowed the lump in her throat
B  near-yell turned into a laugh
C  pushing its way out
D  more scared than I was

Show Your Thinking
Look at the answer that you chose above. Explain why you think it is the correct answer.

With a partner, list phrases from the story that you think are the strongest in creating a menacing mood.
Read the poem. Use the Study Buddy and the Close Reading to guide your reading.

I know poets choose words carefully. I’m going to pay close attention to descriptive words and how they make me feel about the boys in the poem.

Close Reading

What kind of boy was Jim? **Circle** words in stanzas 3 and 4 that describe him.

Reread stanzas 1 and 2, paying close attention to the words the speaker uses to describe Bill. **Underline** words that describe Bill’s traits.

---

**Those Two Boys**  
*by Franklin P. Adams*

1. When Bill was a lad he was terribly bad.  
He worried his parents a lot;  
He’d lie and he’d swear and pull little girls’ hair;  
His boyhood was naught but a blot.

2. At play and in school he would fracture each rule—  
In mischief from autumn to spring;  
And the villagers knew when to manhood he grew  
He would never amount to a thing.

3. When Jim was a child he was not very wild;  
He was known as a good little boy;  
He was honest and bright and the teacher’s delight—  
To his mother and father a joy.

4. All the neighbors were sure that his virtue’d endure,  
That his life would be free of a spot;  
They were certain that Jim had a great head on him  
And that Jim would amount to a lot.

5. And Jim grew to manhood and honor and fame  
And bears a good name;  
While Bill is shut up in a dark prison cell—  
You never can tell.

*naught:* nothing
Use the Hints to help you answer the questions.

1. Why did the author use the word *blot*, which can mean “a dark stain,” in line 4?
   - A. It suggests that Bill’s behavior was always bad.
   - B. It shows that Bill’s misdeeds were accidental.
   - C. It illustrates that Bill’s mischief was truly criminal.
   - D. It shows that Bill’s bad acts marked him for life.

2. Which words from the poem best help you understand Jim?
   - A. child, good, boy
   - B. honest, bright, delight
   - C. mother, father, neighbors
   - D. wild, free, spot

3. Explain how the poet’s choice of words helps create a judgmental tone. Cite examples from the text to support your explanation.

   ________________________________________________________________
   ________________________________________________________________
   ________________________________________________________________
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Hints

What kinds of actions are described in stanza 1?

Which words create the most positive feelings?

Look carefully at your marked-up text in the first three stanzas. What words and phrases did you circle? What did you underline?
Read the story. Then answer the questions that follow.

from “The Eyes Have It”

by Philip K. Dick

1 It was quite by accident I discovered this incredible invasion of Earth by lifeforms from another planet. As yet, I haven’t done anything about it; I can’t think of anything to do. . .

2 I was sitting in my easy–chair, idly turning the pages of a paper-backed book someone had left on the bus, when I came across the reference that first put me on the trail. For a moment I didn’t respond. It took some time for the full import to sink in. After I’d comprehended, it seemed odd I hadn’t noticed it right away.

3 The reference was clearly to a nonhuman species of incredible properties, not indigenous to Earth. A species, I hasten to point out, customarily masquerading as ordinary human beings. Their disguise, however, became transparent in the face of the following observations by the author. It was at once obvious the author knew everything. Knew everything—and was taking it in his stride. The line (and I tremble remembering it even now) read:

4 . . . his eyes slowly roved about the room.

5 Vague chills assailed me. I tried to picture the eyes. Did they roll like dimes? The passage indicated not; they seemed to move through the air, not over the surface. Rather rapidly, apparently. No one in the story was surprised. That’s what tipped me off. No sign of amazement at such an outrageous thing. . .

6 The eyes had clearly come apart from the rest of him and were on their own. My heart pounded and my breath choked in my windpipe. I had stumbled on an accidental mention of a totally unfamiliar race. Obviously non-Terrestrial. Yet, to the characters in the book, it was perfectly natural—which suggested they belonged to the same species.

7 And the author? A slow suspicion burned in my mind. The author was taking it rather too easily in his stride. Evidently, he felt this was quite a usual thing. He made absolutely no attempt to conceal this knowledge. The story continued:

8 . . . presently his eyes fastened on Julia.

9 Julia, being a lady, had at least the breeding to feel indignant. She is described as blushing and knitting her brows angrily. At this, I sighed with relief. They weren’t all non-Terrestrials. The narrative continues:

10 . . . slowly, calmly, his eyes examined every inch of her.

11 Great Scott! But here the girl turned and stomped off and the matter ended. I lay back in my chair gasping with horror. . .

12 Trembling, I read the next revealing passage:

13 . . . he put his arm around Julia. Presently she asked him if he would remove his arm. He immediately did so, with a smile.
It’s not said what was done with the arm after the fellow had removed it. Maybe it was left standing upright in the corner. Maybe it was thrown away. I don’t care. In any case, the full meaning was there, staring me right in the face.

Here was a race of creatures capable of removing portions of their anatomy at will. Eyes, arms—and maybe more. Without batting an eyelash. My knowledge of biology came in handy, at this point. Obviously they were simple beings, uni-cellular, some sort of primitive single-celled things. Beings no more developed than starfish. Starfish can do the same thing, you know. . . .

There was no doubt of the thing in the next passage. Julia, whom I had thought to be the one normal person, reveals herself as also being an alien life form, similar to the rest:

. . . quite deliberately, Julia had given her heart to the young man. . . .

Flushing crimson, I slammed the book shut and leaped to my feet. But not in time to escape one last reference to those carefree bits of anatomy whose travels had originally thrown me on the track:

. . . her eyes followed him all the way down the road and across the meadow. . . .

I had had enough of the thing. I want to hear no more about it. Let them come on. Let them invade Earth. I don’t want to get mixed up in it.

I have absolutely no stomach for it.

---

**Question:**

Read this sentence from the story.

It was quite by accident I discovered this incredible invasion of Earth by lifeforms from another planet.

Which statement best describes the impact of the author’s word choice on the tone of the story?

A. It instills terror in the reader.
B. It provokes a feeling of amusement.
C. It hints at the narrator’s madness.
D. It creates a sense of amazement.
2 Throughout the story, the narrator includes excerpts from the book he is reading. How do these excerpts affect your understanding of the story?

A They show that the narrator is wrong about the alien invasion.
B They add tension as the narrator finds more proof of the aliens.
C They tell a separate story about Julia’s romance with an alien.
D They demonstrate the narrator’s ability to find hidden messages.

3 What tone does the author’s word choice create in paragraph 6?

A fatigue
B fright
C despair
D disgust

4 In the last sentence from the story, the narrator states, “I have absolutely no stomach for it.” Explain how the author’s word choice adds a humorous meaning to the story. Use text evidence to support your answer.

__________________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________

Self Check Go back and see what you can check off on the Self Check on page 127.
Lesson 14  (Student Book pages137–144)
Analyzing Word Choice

Theme: Surprise Endings

LESSON OBJECTIVES

• Understand tone and mood in literary text.
• Analyze the impact of word choice on meaning and tone.

THE LEARNING PROGRESSION

• **Grade 5:** CCLS RL.5.4 asks students to determine the meaning of figurative language.
• **Grade 6:** CCLS RL.6.4 builds on the Grade 5 standard by requiring students to determine the connotative meaning of words and phrases and to understand the relationship between word choice and the overall meaning and tone of a text.
• **Grade 7:** CCLS RL.7.4 requires students to go beyond figurative language to analyze how other devices, such as rhyme, repetition, and alliteration, shape meaning.

PREREQUISITE SKILLS

• Understand that some words have positive and negative connotations.
• Understand the meaning suggested by figurative language.

TAP STUDENTS’ PRIOR KNOWLEDGE

• Tell students they will be working on a lesson about how a writer’s choice of words affects the meaning of a text and also sets an overall tone or mood. Tell them that tone is the attitude of the narrator or speaker, and mood refers to the atmosphere or feeling in a story or poem.

• Ask students what attitude, or tone, they would try to set if they wanted to convince a reluctant parent to let them have a pet. *(a serious tone that would convey how responsible and trustworthy they are)*

• Next, ask them how they would create the right mood if they were going to tell a ghost story. *(turn out the lights or gather by a fire, speak in an ominous or whispery voice)*

• Tell students that good writers do the same thing with words. By choosing just the right words, they can convey an attitude about something or create a certain mood. Recognizing these word choices will help students enjoy and appreciate what they read.

Toolbox

Prerequisite Skills RL.6.4

| Ready Lessons | ✓ |
| Tools for Instruction | ✓ | ✓ |
| Interactive Tutorials | ✓ | ✓ |

CCLS Focus

**RL.6.4** … analyze the impact of a specific word choice on meaning and tone.

**ADDITIONAL STANDARDS:** RL.6.1, RL.6.4, RL.6.5, RL.6.7; W.6.3, W.6.7, W.6.11.c; SL.6.1, SL.6.4, SL.6.6; L.6.1, L.6.2.a, L.6.4.a, L.6.4.b *(see page A31 for full text)*
AT A GLANCE

Through a short poem, students are introduced to the idea of paying careful attention to a writer’s choice of words in order to understand a text’s meaning, tone, and mood. They learn to analyze words by thinking about whether they convey positive or negative feelings.

STEP BY STEP

• Read the definitions of tone and mood. Then have students read the poem carefully and think about the words the writer chose. Ask, “What feelings do the words convey?”

• After students have finished reading the poem, point out the change in tone as the words go from negative to positive. Tell students to go back and circle the words in each line that show how the speaker feels.

• Explain that the chart lists some descriptive adjectives and exact verbs from the poem. Read the words and discuss how they clearly and vividly convey the gloom of a Monday morning and how that gloom is transformed by a sweet smile.

• Discuss with students how poems can convey happy, sad, funny, or silly moods. Have students share the titles of poems they have read and enjoyed.

Genre Focus

Literary Texts: Mystery

Tell students that in this lesson they will read a mystery. Remind them that a mystery is a fiction story with characters who try to solve a crime or some unexplained event.

Explain that one of the characteristics of mysteries is the element of suspense. Discuss the definition of suspense and how suspense can range from the stomach-churning anticipation of a scary roller-coaster ride, to a hint of the supernatural that raises the hair on the back of your neck, to a rising feeling of panic that comes with the threat of bodily harm.

Discuss with students how authors create a suspenseful mood. Ask, “What part does the setting play?” “What settings are suited to mysteries and why?” (nighttime, a dark forest, a storm, an old, abandoned house) “How is the conflict or problem often set up?” (someone is alone, lost, powerless, unaware of hidden danger)

Have students name some suspenseful mysteries they have read. Ask them to tell how the author created a suspenseful mood.

• Tell students that “A Fright in the Night” is a story that has some familiar characteristics of suspense—a nighttime setting and an unexplained noise.
Students identify the mood of a short story about a girl who is awakened by a strange noise. They think about how the author’s word choice sets the mood.

**Step by Step**

- Remind students that they just analyzed word choice in a poem and how it conveys the speaker’s feelings.
- Tell students that in this lesson they will analyze the impact of word choice on meaning and mood in a short story.
- Read aloud “A Fright in the Night.”
- Then read the question: “What sort of mood does the author establish in these paragraphs?”
- Tell students you will use a Think Aloud to demonstrate a way of answering the question.

**Think Aloud:** In this story, a girl is awakened by a sound in the night. I’ll look for words that help establish the mood. The word *squinted* in the first sentence suggests that the girl is afraid of what she might see through the window because it shows she doesn’t open her eyes all the way.

- Point out the chart and explain that it shows words from the story and how they create a certain mood.
- Have students reread the story and think about how the words contribute to the mood.

**Think Aloud:** In the second paragraph, the author uses the word *pounded*. When my chest pounds and my palms are sweaty, I know I am nervous. Moonlight can be nice, but here it is described as eerie. This suggests a negative feeling that the moonlight is spooky. I will think about how all of these words work together to create a mood.

- Tell students to fill in the mood section of the chart.
- Finally, have partners follow the directions at the bottom of the page. Invite volunteers to share their answers with the class. Sample response: The phrase “more serpentine than serene” suggests that the shadows are scary. This description helps readers understand why Carmen feels uneasy in her room.

**Tier 2 Vocabulary: Scanned**

- Point out the word *scanned* in the last paragraph. Ask students what context clues in the paragraph can help them figure out what *scanned* means. (“stayed upright,” “the moonlight created a glow,” “the mobile cast shadows”).
- Explain that the descriptions of the moonlight on the bookshelves and the shadows of the mobile indicate that Carmen’s eyes are open and she is looking around her room, checking to make sure things are as they should be. Now ask students what *scanned* means (to look over quickly and systematically). *(RL.6.4; L.6.4.a)*
Lesson 14

Part 3: Guided Instruction

AT A GLANCE

Students continue reading about Carmen. They answer a multiple-choice question and analyze the details that helped them select the correct answer.

STEP BY STEP

• Tell students they will continue reading about Carmen and the nighttime interruption.
  
• Point out the two features to the left of the passage. Remind students that good readers pay attention to an author’s word choice. The Close Reading helps students focus on the mood of the story. The Hint will help them understand how a few well-chosen words can completely change the mood of a story.
  
• Have students read the passage and underline words and phrases that convey the mood, as directed by the Close Reading.
  
• Ask volunteers to share the words and phrases they underlined. Have them explain the mood that the words convey. If necessary, ask: “Do the words express positive or negative feelings?”
  
• Have students respond to Show Your Thinking. Sample response: The mood so far in the story has been suspenseful. The word laugh suggests humor.

ANSWER ANALYSIS

Choice A is incorrect. When Carmen swallows the lump in her throat, this continues the suspenseful mood established at the start of the story.

Choice B is correct. This group of words reflects the change in mood created by the story’s surprise ending.

Choice C is incorrect. These words let the reader know how the noise was made but do not change the mood.

Choice D is incorrect. Carmen’s concern for her cat comes after her laugh of relief, so the change in mood has already occurred by the time she talks to her cat.

ERROR ALERT: Students who did not choose B may not have understood the question. Point out that it asks for the words that reflect the change in mood. All the choices are from the ending. Only B shows how the mood changes from suspenseful to funny.

ELL Support: Irregular Past-Tense Verbs

• Remind students that some verbs do not follow the rules for forming the past tense. These verbs are called irregular verbs, and students must remember their past-tense forms.
  
• Ask students to find an irregular past-tense verb in the first sentence. (heard) Ask what the present tense form of the verb is. (hear)
  
• Display these sentences and help students fill in the blanks with the proper form of the verb hear:
  
Carmen _______ a noise last night.

Do you _______ that noise? (L.6.1)
Students read a poem twice about two boys. After the first reading, you will ask three questions to check students’ comprehension of the poem.

**STEP BY STEP**

- Have students read the poem silently without referring to the Study Buddy or Close Reading text.
- Ask the following questions to ensure students’ comprehension of the text:
  ```plaintext
  The poet says Bill “would fracture each rule” at school and at play. What does “fracture each rule” mean? (Bill broke all the school’s rules and also the rules of any games or sports he played.)
  ```
- What happened to the two boys when they grew up? (Jim achieved honor and fame. Bill ended up in jail.)
- What do you think is the main message of “Those Two Boys”? (The way you behave in childhood is a good sign of how you will turn out when you grow up.)
- Ask students to reread the first stanza and look at the Study Buddy think aloud. What does the Study Buddy help them think about?

**Tip:** The Study Buddy reminds students to pay attention to the poet’s word choice as they read. Have students think about whether the poet uses words with positive or negative connotations to describe Bill.

- Have students read the rest of the poem. Tell them to follow the directions in the Close Reading.

**Tip:** Point out to students that the speaker is pretty definite about the character of each boy. However, a reader could interpret the poem’s tone in different ways. Have students think about what tone is set by all the strong descriptions, both good and bad. Is the tone light-hearted? Stern? Joking? Have students point to clues in the poem that suggest the tone. The bouncy rhythm and phrases such as “naught but a blot” and “fracture each rule” create a comic effect. How would a different interpretation of the poem’s tone affect how a reader understands the poem’s message? The last line of the poem suggests it might be poking fun at the idea that “good” and “bad” children reverse roles as adults.

- Finally, have students answer the questions on page 141. Use the Answer Analysis to discuss correct and incorrect responses.

**Tier 2 Vocabulary: Mischief**

- Read the first two lines of Stanza 2. Ask, “Who is the poet telling about here?” (Bill) “How do you know?” (Bill is the bad boy described in Stanza 1. Breaking rules is something a bad boy would do.)
- Ask students how the context of the first six lines of the poem helps them understand what the word mischief means. (It must have something to do with behaving badly all year.)
- Tell students another clue is the prefix mis-, which means “bad” or “wrong,” as in misbehave.
- Based on these clues, ask students what mischief means. (“annoying or bad behavior”) (RL.6.4; L.6.4.a; L.6.4.b)
- Then ask students what other words would make sense in place of in mischief (in trouble, behaving badly).
STEP BY STEP

• Have students read questions 1–3, using the Hints to help them answer those questions.

Tip: If students are having trouble answering question 1, have them reread line 4. Point out that this is a metaphor—figurative language that compares two things. Have students tell what the metaphor is comparing and what the comparison means.

• Discuss with students the Answer Analysis below.

ANSWER ANALYSIS

1  The correct choice is A. The poem says Bill's boyhood was nothing but a blot, a metaphor suggesting there was nothing good about Bill. Choice B is incorrect. Bill's misdeeds such as lying and swearing didn't happen by accident. Choice C is incorrect because people are usually not considered criminals until they are adults. Choice D is a valid conclusion, but the metaphor is only about Bill's boyhood, not his life.

2  The correct choice is B. All these words are used to describe what people thought of Jim. Choices A and C are incorrect. Words such as child and mother do not help readers understand what Jim is like. Choice D is incorrect. These isolated words are misleading without the rest of the descriptions they are part of—“not very wild” and “free of a spot.”

3  Sample response: The poet creates a judgmental tone by using harsh words to describe Bill and glowing words to describe Jim. The second stanza, which tells about Bill, ends with the line “He would never amount to a thing.” Jim, on the other hand, is called “honest and bright” and gains “honor and fame.”

RETEACHING

Use a chart to verify the answer to question 3. Draw the chart below, and have students fill in the boxes. Sample responses are provided.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Boy</th>
<th>Words Suggesting Judgmental Tone</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bill</td>
<td>would never amount to a thing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jim</td>
<td>would amount to a lot</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Integrating Standards

Use these questions to further students’ understanding of “Those Two Boys.”

1  Compare and contrast lines 4 and 14. Tell why you think the poet included them. (RL.6.1)

The lines are similar because they both include words that can mean a stain—blot and spot. But the difference is that Bill’s life is judged as nothing but a stain, whereas Jim’s life is predicted to be free of any stain. I can infer that the poet is using the same image, in a positive and a negative way, to connect the two boys but also to emphasize how different they are.

2  What does the poet mean when he says that “Jim had a great head on him”? (RL.6.4)

The next line says that Jim would amount to a lot. Usually, you don’t amount to a lot unless you are smart. Your brain is in your head, so I think “great head” means smart. The poet is saying that people thought Jim was very smart.
Part 5: Common Core Practice

Read the story. Then answer the questions that follow.

from “The Eyes Have It”
by Philip K. Dick

1. It was quite by accident I discovered this incredible invasion of Earth by lifeforms from another planet. As yet, I haven't done anything about it; I can't think of anything to do. . .
2. I was sitting in my easy–chair, idly turning the pages of a paperbacked book someone had left on the bus, when I came across the reference that first put me on the trail. For a moment I didn't respond. It took some time for the full import to sink in. After I'd comprehended, it seemed odd I hadn't noticed it right away.
3. The reference was clearly to a nonhuman species of incredible properties, not indigenous to Earth. A species, I hasten to point out, customarily masquerading as ordinary human beings. Their disguise, however, became transparent in the face of the following observations by the author. It was at once obvious the author knew everything. Know everything—and was taking it in stride. The line (and I tremble remembering it even now) was . . .
4. . . his eyes deeply read about the room.
5. Vague chills assailed me. I tried to picture the eyes. Did they roll like dimes? The passage indicated not; they seemed to move through the air, not over the surface. Rather rapidly, apparently. No one in the story was surprised. That's what tipped me off. No sign of amazement at such an outrageous thing. . .
6. The eyes had clearly come apart from the rest of him and were on their own. My heart pounded and my breath choked in my windpipe. I had stumbled on an accidental mention of a totally unfamiliar race. Obviously non–Terrestrial. Yet, to the characters in the book, it was perfectly natural—which suggested they belonged to the same species.
7. . . And the author? A slow suspicion burned in my mind. The author was taking it rather too easily in his stride. Evidently, he felt this was quite a usual thing. He made absolutely no attempt to conceal this knowledge. The story continued: . . . present in his eyes fastened on Julia.
8. Julia, being a lady, had at least the breeding to feel indignant. She is described as blushing and knitting her brows angrily. At this, I sighed with relief. They weren't all non–Terrestrials. The narrative continues: . . . slowly, calmly, his eyes examined every inch of her.
9. Great Scott! But here the girl turned and stomped off and the matter ended. I lay back in my chair confused. . . .
10. There was no doubt of the thing in the next passage. Julia, whom I had thought to be the one normal person, revealed herself as also being an alien life form, similar to the rest: . . . quite deliberately, Julia had given her heart to the young man.
11. . . . and the matter ended. I lay back in my chair. Presently his eyes fastened on Julia. . . .
12. . . . present in his eyes fastened on Julia.
13. . . . he put his arm around Julia. Presently she asked him if he would remove his arm. He immediately did so, with a smile.
14. It was quite by accident I discovered this incredible invasion of Earth by lifeforms from another planet. As yet, I haven't done anything about it; I can't think of anything to do. . .

AT A GLANCE

Students independently read a longer story and answer questions in a format that provides test practice.

STEP BY STEP

• Tell students to use what they have learned about reading carefully and analyzing word choice to read the story on pages 142 and 143.

• Remind students to circle or underline words that help them understand the meaning and tone of the passage.

• Tell students to answer the questions on pages 143 and 144. For questions 1–3, they should fill in the correct circle on the Answer Form.

• When students have finished, use the Answer Analysis to discuss the correct responses and the reasons for them. Have students fill in the Number Correct on the Answer Form.

ANSWER ANALYSIS

1 Choice D is correct. The word incredible creates a sense of amazement. Choices A and B are incorrect. These lines do not suggest terror or amusement. Choice C is incorrect. The narrator recognizes that the idea of alien lifeforms invading Earth is hard to believe, so the lines do not suggest madness.

2 Choice A is correct. The lines from the book show that the narrator does not recognize figurative language when he reads it. Choices B, C, and D are incorrect because they all assume the narrator is correct in his literal interpretation of the book.

Theme Connection

• How do all the stories in this lesson relate to the theme of surprise endings?

• How would you describe the tone of each passage?

Part 5: Common Core Practice
3  Choice B is correct. The words “my heart pounded” and “my breath choked” create a sense of fright. Choice A is incorrect. The word fatigue means “extreme tiredness,” and there are no words in the paragraph that convey this feeling. Choice C is reasonable—the narrator might well despair at the thought of an alien invasion—but that is an inference that is not supported by the words of the paragraph. The main idea is terror at the discovery of an alien race on Earth, not despair. Choice D, disgust, is also a reasonable but unsupported inference. The roving eyes are described matter-of-factly, not in a way that shows disgust.

4  Sample response: All along, the narrator has interpreted figurative language literally. When he reads about eyes roving or a heart being given to someone, he thinks these organs disengage from the body and move on their own. He says, “Here was a race of creatures capable of removing portions of their anatomy at will.” Clear evidence of an alien race, he concludes. Nevertheless, the tone of the passage changes to humorous at the end when the narrator himself uses figurative language without realizing it. By saying he has “no stomach for it,” he is referring to his stomach as a thing separate from his body.

Integrating Standards

Use these questions and tasks as opportunities to interact with “The Eyes Have It.”

1  The narrator says, “The reference was clearly to a nonhuman species of incredible properties, not indigenous to Earth.” Use context clues to figure out the meaning of indigenous. (RL.6.4; L.6.4.a) The narrator says that the species is “nonhuman” with “incredible properties,” clearly a life form not from Earth, so indigenous means “native.”

2  How does Paragraph 16 contribute to the development of the plot of the passage? (RL.6.5) Up to this point, the narrator thinks that Julia is a normal human. In Paragraph 16, the narrator is shocked to read that she, too, seems able to remove a body part—her heart. This is the climax of the passage and seems to resign the narrator to the fact that Earth has indeed been invaded.

3  Using details from the passage, how would you describe the narrator? (RL.6.1)

The narrator is naive and gullible. He is too quick to take what he reads literally, and he jumps to conclusions. He uses sophisticated vocabulary, though, and the passage says he has a knowledge of biology. Perhaps his inability to recognize and analyze figurative language is because he has not read much fiction, only science. Also, he resigns himself to the invasion, rather than doing something about it. Maybe he has little experience of the world.

4  Discuss in small groups: Why do you think the author chose to write the story in the first person? How would it be different if it was written in the third person? (SL.6.1) Discussions will vary. Encourage students to consider how the story would sound if written in the third person. Would it be as engaging? Would the narrative be as smooth? Would readers have to use their imaginations as much if the third person was used? Would it make any difference at all?
Writing Activities

What If...? (W.6.3)

- Ask students: What if the narrator of “The Eyes Have It” is right, and Earth is being invaded? What if the narrator, rather than being resigned, takes action? What might he do, or not do?
- Have students write what happens next in the story as if Earth has been invaded by a “nonhuman species of incredible properties,” and only the narrator knows that the invasion has happened.

Using Dashes (L.6.2.a)

- Display this sentence from paragraph 3 of “The Eyes Have It”: “Knew everything—and was taking it in his stride.” Point out the dash and tell students that a dash can be used to set off an afterthought or a sudden change of thought. Explain that another use of the dash is to mean “in other words.”
- Ask students to find two other examples of the use of a dash in the passage and tell how it is being used. (Paragraph 6: “—which suggested they belonged to the same species”; to mean “in other words”; Paragraph 15: “— and maybe more”; an afterthought)
- Have partners write sentences about an alien life form using a dash both ways.

LISTENING ACTIVITY (RL.6.7; SL.6.6)

Listen Closely/Recite a Poem

- Have pairs recite “Those Two Boys,” with one reading the stanzas about Bill, the other reading the stanzas about Jim.
- Encourage students to create a distinct “voice” for each boy and to use appropriate rate and expression when they read. Remind students to listen respectfully and comment constructively on the oral readings.
- Then have students compare the experience of listening to the poem to reading it to themselves.

DISCUSSION ACTIVITY (SL.6.1)

Talk in a Group/Discuss Suspense

- Remind students of the elements of suspense. Ask students to think about each of the three passages and how they achieved, or didn’t achieve, a feeling of suspense.
- Have students form small groups to discuss how to create suspense and which passage in the lesson was most successful at creating suspense.
- Allow 10 to 15 minutes for discussion. Then have each group share its results with the class.

MEDIA ACTIVITY (RL.6.7)

Be Creative/Interpret a Scene

- Invite students to illustrate a scene from one of the passages. They can do a straightforward rendering based on the passage’s details, or they can add other characters or objects to the scene. Encourage them to convey a tone, such as scary or humorous.
- Invite students to explain their illustrations.
- Discuss how a picture compares with what students “saw” in their minds when they read the scene. Does the picture add a new dimension to their understanding or appreciation of the story?

RESEARCH ACTIVITY (W.6.7; SL.6.4)

Research and Present/Give a Presentation

- Tell students that Philip K. Dick was a famous science fiction writer and Franklin P. Adams a well-known writer and newspaper columnist.
- Have students research biographical information about one of these authors and how he achieved fame. Encourage students to use print and digital resources to locate information.
- Allow time for students to present their research to the class.