

Reading Comprehension Worksheet: Word & Phrase Meanings

Read the short story and answer each question.



The Cloud Painter

Mara loved painting skies.

While some artists focused on faces or forests, Mara found magic in clouds. She'd stare at them for hours, watching how they changed shape—one moment a castle, the next a running fox. Her mother called her a dreamer, but Mara didn't mind.

One afternoon, as a summer storm rolled in, Mara set up her easel on the porch. The sky was a battlefield. Thunder cracked like a giant's drum, and lightning scratched the clouds like silver claws.

Mara didn't flinch. Her brush moved quickly, streaking deep purples and stormy grays across the canvas. Each stroke was a heartbeat. Each swirl, a secret whispered by the sky.

When the rain began, she stayed under the porch roof, painting the way the drops danced on the leaves like tiny feet on a stage.

Her brother peeked out. "Why paint something so dark?" he asked.

Mara shrugged. "Storms are just the sky's way of showing it can feel big things too."

When the sky cleared, she added golden light breaking through the clouds, like hope peeking from behind a curtain.



Name: _____

The Cloud Painter

1. What does the phrase *"lightning scratched the clouds like silver claws"* suggest?

- A. The lightning was jagged and powerful, slashing through the sky.
- B. The clouds were soft and fluffy.
- C. The lightning was made of metal.
- D. The sky was being cleaned.

2. What does Mara mean when she says *"storms are just the sky's way of showing it can feel big things too"*?

- A. Storms express strong emotions, just like people do.
- B. Storms are caused by animals in the sky.
- C. Storms are scary and should be avoided.
- D. The sky gets too full and explodes.

3. Fill in the blank:

Mara painted the raindrops *dancing on the leaves like tiny feet on a* _____.

4. How does the author use figurative language to show Mara's connection to the sky?

5. Choose one metaphor or simile and explain how it adds to the mood of the story.



Parent and Teacher Guide

Guide Reading Level: Q

Lexile Level: 735L-885L

Grade Level: 4th Grade, Beginning of the Year

Genre: Realistic Fiction with Poetic Elements

Introducing the Text

"In this story, Mara uses painting and imagination to express her feelings about the sky. As we read, we'll focus on how the author uses figurative language—like similes and metaphors—to help us visualize and understand Mara's world more deeply."

Vocabulary: easel, swirl, whispered, battlefield, peeking

Before Reading Discussion Questions

1. What kind of things do artists notice that others might miss?
 2. Why might someone feel a connection to the sky or weather?
 3. What does figurative language mean to you?
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During Reading Discussion Questions

1. What similes and metaphors does the author use to describe the storm?
 2. How does Mara's painting reflect her emotions?
 3. What is her perspective on storms, and how is it different from her brother's?
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After Reading Discussion Questions

1. What does the figurative language in the story tell you about Mara as a person?
 2. Why is it powerful to describe things like emotions through nature or the sky?
 3. How do similes and metaphors help readers feel more connected to the story?
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Activity Idea

Invite students to create a mini "cloud journal" with one illustration and a short poem or description using at least two similes or metaphors to describe a weather scene (storm, sunset, snow, etc.). Then share how their figurative language changes the mood of their writing.

