

Reading Comprehension Worksheet: Academic Vocabulary

Read the short story and answer each question.



The Lightning Runner

Lina ran like the wind—fast, wild, and hard to catch. Her sneakers slapped the pavement like claps of thunder as she charged through the neighborhood. People said she had “lightning in her legs,” and she believed it.

But lately, her feet felt heavy—like she was dragging the weight of the world. Ever since her brother left for college, Lina had been quiet, like a song stuck on pause.

Coach Ramirez noticed. “You’ve got sparks, Lina. Don’t let them burn out.”

At the city race, Lina lined up next to taller, older runners. Her heart beat like a wild drum. As the starting gun cracked, she thought of her brother’s last words: “Run your way.”

Lina dashed forward. Her thoughts blurred. The wind tugged at her hair. The crowd roared.

She didn’t win. But her spark returned.

She smiled. “The lightning’s still in me.”



Name: _____

The Lightning Runner

1. What does the phrase "lightning in her legs" suggest about Lina?

- A. She runs with anger and frustration.
- B. She is very fast and full of energy.
- C. She has electricity powers.
- D. She trips often during races.

2. What does Lina mean when she says, "The lightning's still in me"?

- A. She wants to become a scientist.
- B. She still has her speed and confidence.
- C. She's scared of thunderstorms.
- D. She plans to quit running.

3. Fill in the blank:

Lina's coach told her not to let her _____ burn out.

4. How do the figurative phrases in the story help us understand Lina's emotions?

5. Choose one metaphor or simile and explain what it means in your own words.



Parent and Teacher Guide

Guide Reading Level: S

Lexile Level: 850L-1000L

Grade Level: 5th Grade, Beginning of the Year

Genre: Realistic Fiction with a touch of magical realism

Introducing the Text

“Today’s story uses figurative language like similes and metaphors to show how a runner feels about herself and her challenges. As we read, let’s look closely at the words the author uses to describe emotions and actions, and what they really mean.”

Vocabulary: thunder, sparks, blurred, paused, crack

Before Reading Discussion Questions

1. Have you ever heard someone use a phrase like “lightning in your legs”?
 2. What do similes and metaphors help us understand in a story?
 3. What kinds of feelings do people connect to running or sports?
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During Reading Discussion Questions

1. How does Lina feel at the beginning of the story?
 2. What do the author’s phrases tell us about Lina’s thoughts and emotions?
 3. How does the race help Lina find her spark again?
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After Reading Discussion Questions

1. What does “The lightning’s still in me” mean to Lina?
 2. How did figurative language help you visualize Lina’s journey?
 3. What other metaphors or similes could describe how someone feels when doing something difficult?
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Activity Idea

Have students write their own simile or metaphor to describe themselves doing something they love (e.g., “I swim like a dolphin chasing dreams”) and illustrate it to create a figurative language collage.

