Grade 7: Reading Benchmark

Figurative Language

7.R.3.1: Analyze how figurative language contributes to tone and meaning and explain examples of allusions in text(s).

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Benchmark Introduction



Benchmark:

Analyze how figurative language and/or allusion(s) contribute to tone and meaning.

Definition of Figurative Language

Figurative language expresses something other than the literal, or actual, meaning of the words.

Examples of Figurative Language

Some figurative language uses comparison:

- **Simile**: A simile is a comparison between two different things that uses “like” or “as” to express a quality they have in common.
  Example: Joe is *as busy as a bee*.

- **Metaphor**: A metaphor is a comparison between two different things to express a quality they have in common. Unlike a simile, a metaphor doesn’t use “like” or “as.”
  Example: Shawna *is a night owl*.

Examples of Figurative Language

More figurative language that uses comparison:

- **Personification**: Personification gives human qualities to something that isn't human.
  Example: It is best to answer when opportunity knocks.

- **Idiom**: A cultural expression that cannot be understood from the meanings of its separate words but must be learned as a whole.
  Example: It's raining cats and dogs.

Examples of Figurative Language

Some figurative language uses emphasis:

- **Hyperbole**: Exaggerated statements or claims not meant to be taken literally.

  Example: Rafael waited in line for ages.

- **Meiosis**: Using underemphasis in order to achieve a greater effect; understatement.

  Example: "There's nothing like a quick sail across the pond!" exclaimed the young woman after her cruise across the Atlantic Ocean.

Definition of Allusion

An **allusion** is a reference to a well-known real or fictional event, person, place, or thing.

Examples:

- She is **carrying the weight of the world on her shoulders**. (This indirectly references Atlas, a figure in Greek mythology who had to hold up the world on his shoulders.)
- You're a real **Einstein**. (Though often used sarcastically, this is a direct reference to Albert Einstein, a scientist well known for his brilliance.)

Examples of how figurative language and allusions contribute to tone and meaning

Walter in *A Raisin in the Sun* exclaims, “Bitter? Man, I’m a volcano. Bitter? Here I am a giant—surrounded by ants! Ants who can’t even understand what it is the giant is talking about.”
(Act II, Scene One, 103)

- When Walter uses a **metaphor** to compare himself first to a volcano and then a giant among ants, he conveys his **meaning**: he believes that he is powerful and underappreciated.
- This figurative language also conveys his **tone** (attitude) toward George. Walter has an attitude of superiority toward George.

Examples of how figurative language and allusions contribute to tone and meaning

Later in this scene, George says to Walter, “Good night, Prometheus!”

- George responds to Walter’s claim that he is a giant by making an **allusion** to Prometheus, a giant Titan in Greek mythology who gave fire to humans.
- By jokingly replying to Walter, George conveys a dismissive and sarcastic **tone** (attitude) toward Walter and his dreams.
- The **meaning** George conveys is that it is ridiculous for Walter to see himself as a giant.

Benchmark Skill Routine



How to analyze the roles of figurative language and allusions in communicating tone and meaning

Read closely, highlight, and annotate any language that isn’t literal or that is an example of an allusion.

How to analyze the roles of figurative language and allusions in communicating tone and meaning

Consider:

What feelings or ideas are suggested by the figurative language and allusions?

How to analyze the roles of figurative language and allusions in communicating tone and meaning

Think about how figurative language and allusions communicate tone and meaning in this text.

Remember

1. Read closely, highlight, and annotate any language that isn't literal or that is an example of an allusion.
2. Consider: What feelings or ideas are suggested by the figurative language and allusions?
3. Think about how figurative language and allusions communicate tone and meaning.

Benchmark in Action: Example of how to analyze the roles of figurative language and allusions in conveying tone and meaning



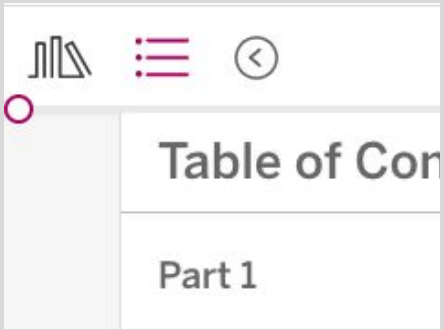
Get ready to read two passages in *The Count of Monte Cristo* by Alexandre Dumas.



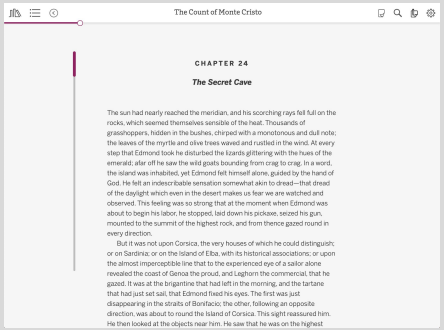
1. Open the Library app.



2. Type “The Count of Monte Cristo” into the search bar. Click on the title of the book to open it.



3. Click on the Table of Contents. Find and go to Chapter 24 “The Secret Cave.”



4. Read lines 1–10 in paragraph 5. Stop reading after, “He lighted it and retired.”

The Count of Monte Cristo

Context for Passage 1

In *The Count of Monte Cristo*, Edmund Dantès is falsely accused of treason and imprisoned without trial. Fourteen years later, with the help of a fellow inmate, Dantès pulls off a daring escape. In this passage, Dantès has made his way to the island of Monte Cristo, where he attempts to access a cave said to be filled with great treasure.

Read lines 1–10 in paragraph 5 of Chapter 24 “The Secret Cave.”

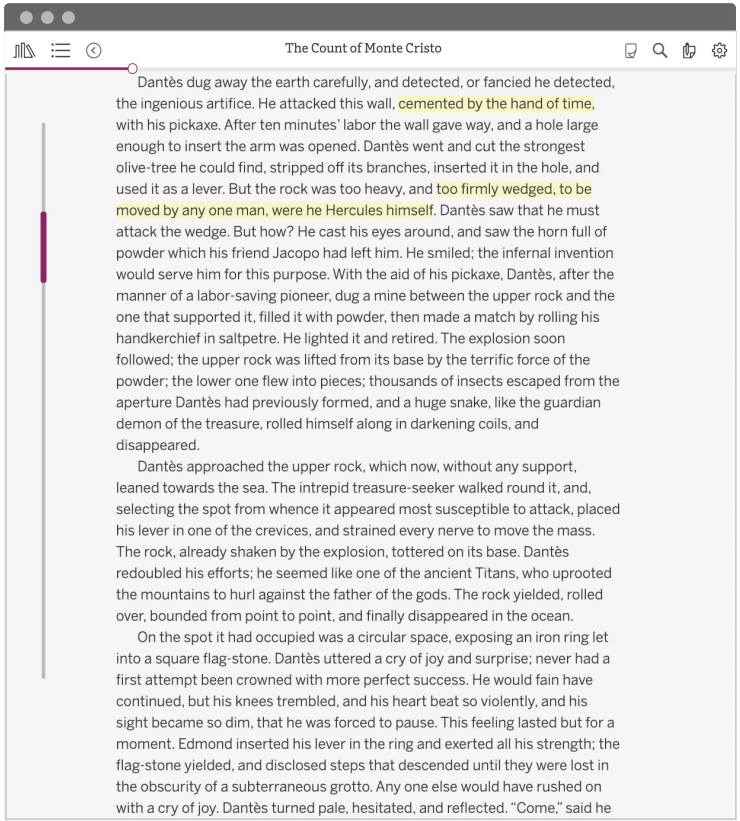
As you read...

- look for language that isn’t literal, and examples of allusions.
- consider what feelings or ideas the figurative language and allusions suggest.
- think about how figurative language and allusions communicate tone and meaning in this text.

Practice Step 1

Read closely, highlight, and annotate any language that isn’t literal or that is an example of an allusion.

Practice Step 1

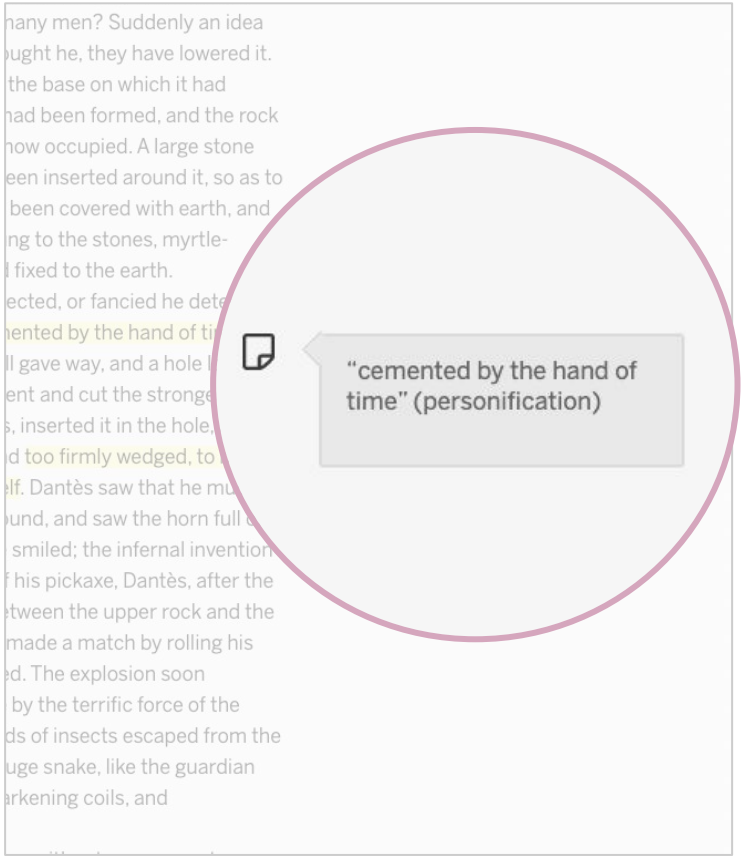


Highlight any language that isn't literal or that is an example of an allusion.

"cemented by the hand of time"

"too firmly wedged, to be moved by any one man, were he Hercules himself"

Practice Step 1



Annotate to identify each detail as a type of figurative language or allusion.

- "cemented by the hand of time" (personification)
- "too firmly wedged, to be moved by any one man, were he Hercules himself" (allusion to Greek mythology)

Practice Step 2

Consider:

What feelings or ideas are suggested by the figurative language and allusions?

Practice Step 2 Examples:

In this passage, the narrator uses figurative language and allusions to describe the difficulty in accessing the treasure:

- When the narrator describes the wall as "cemented by the hand of time," his personification suggests that over time a rock has become wedged in the entrance, making it hard to get past.

- The description that the rock is "too firmly wedged, to be moved by any one man, were he Hercules himself" alludes to a god/hero in Greek mythology known for his strength, suggesting that the rock is nearly impossible to move.

Practice Step 3

Think about how figurative language and allusions communicate tone and meaning in this text.

Practice Step 3 Example:

The narrator's figurative language and allusions convey an admiring tone toward Dantès. The narrator describes the location of the treasure as difficult to access, though Dantès manages to figure out a way to deal with each challenge. The meaning conveyed by this description is that Dantès is no ordinary man. He is uniquely strong, clever, and determined.

Remember

1. Read closely, highlight, and annotate any language that isn't literal or that is an example of an allusion.
2. Consider: What feelings or ideas are suggested by the figurative language and allusions?
3. Think about how figurative language and allusions communicate tone and meaning in this text.

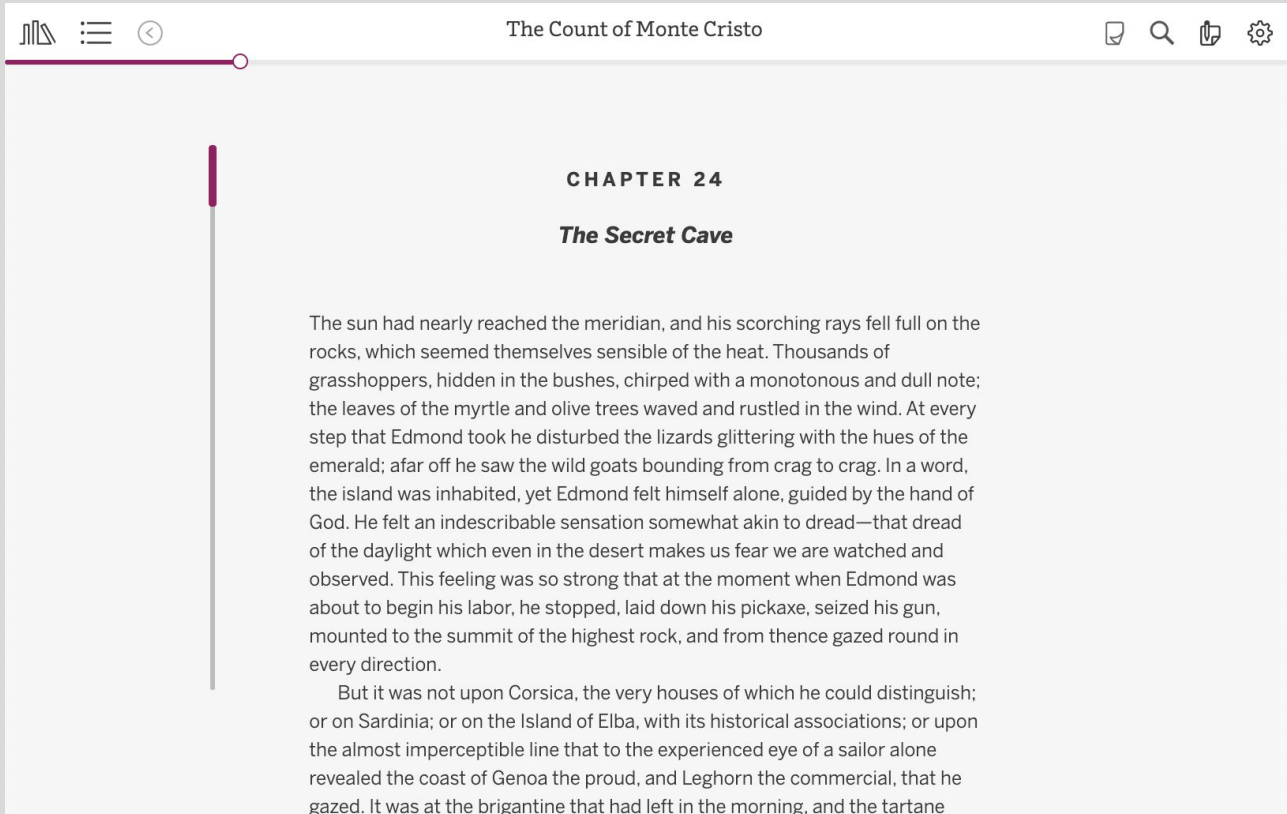
Independent Practice



Benchmark:

Analyze how figurative language and/or allusion(s) contribute to tone and meaning.

Now read the rest of paragraph 5 and all of paragraph 6 in Chapter 24 “The Secret Cave,” in *The Count of Monte Cristo*.



The Count of Monte Cristo

Context for Passage 2

In this passage, Dantès continues to gain access to the cave where he believes the treasure is hidden on the island of Monte Cristo.

Practice reading to analyze how figurative language and allusions contribute to tone and meaning

Step 1
Read closely, highlight, and annotate any language that isn't literal or that is an example of an allusion.

Step 2
Consider what feelings or ideas the figurative language and allusions suggest.

Step 3
Think about how figurative language and allusions communicate tone and meaning in this text.

Check for Understanding



Share and Discuss

1. What language does the author include that isn’t literal or that is an example of an allusion?

Share and Discuss

2. What feelings or ideas are suggested by the figurative language and allusions?

Share and Discuss

3. Explain how the figurative language and allusions in this text communicate tone and meaning.