

Comprehending and Responding to Texts:

Close Reading Practice

This worksheet applies strategies for constructing meaning from text and context, including analyzing controlling ideas, tone, and figurative language ([Outcome](#), [Outcome](#)). It also asks you to evaluate a text's effectiveness and connect it to your own perspective ([Outcome](#), [Outcome](#)).

Read the passage below before beginning the exercises.

The old lighthouse keeper had not spoken to another soul in eleven days when the boat appeared on the horizon. He climbed the tower stairs two at a time, his knees complaining with every step, and pressed his face against the salt-crusted glass. The boat drew no closer. It simply sat there, rocking, as though deciding whether the shore was worth the trouble. He told himself it was only a fishing vessel resting between hauls. He told himself this for three more days, until the boat was gone and he was alone again with the gulls and the grinding of the tide, wondering if he had imagined the whole thing, or if the sea had simply grown tired of offering him company.

Exercises

1. Controlling idea and supporting details

Identify the controlling idea of the passage and two supporting details that develop it ([Outcome](#)).

Controlling idea: _____

Supporting detail 1: _____

Supporting detail 2: _____

2. Purpose and audience

Choose the option that best describes the text creator's implicit purpose, and explain your choice in one sentence ([Outcome](#)).

- A) To document the daily routine of a lighthouse keeper
- B) To convey a character's isolation and his struggle to accept it
- C) To criticize the fishing industry
- D) To describe a coastal setting for its own sake

Answer: _____

Explanation: _____

3. Devices and effects

Match each device from the passage to the effect it creates. Write the correct letter beside each number ([Outcome](#)).

Device	Effect
1. "his knees complaining with every step"	A) suggests the sea is personified, deepening the keeper's isolation
2. "the sea had simply grown tired of offering him company"	B) creates a slow, repetitive rhythm that mirrors the keeper's waiting
3. repetition of "He told himself"	C) uses figurative language to make an ordinary action feel more vivid

1. _____ 2. _____ 3. _____

4. Tone and moral stance

Describe the tone of the passage in one word or short phrase, then explain what that tone suggests about the text creator's attitude toward solitude ([Outcome](#)).

Tone: _____

Explanation: _____

5. Evaluating effectiveness

Identify one criterion you would use to judge whether this passage succeeds as a piece of narrative writing, then apply it ([Outcome](#)).

Criterion: _____

Application (2 to 3 sentences): _____

6. Personal and cultural connection

Respond personally to the keeper's situation. Have you experienced a moment of waiting for something that never fully arrived? How does your own context shape your reading of this passage ([Outcome](#), [Outcome](#))?

Answer key

1. Controlling idea centres on isolation and the difficulty of accepting it; supporting details may include the eleven days alone, the boat that never approaches, or the keeper repeating a story to himself. ([Outcome](#))
2. B; the passage focuses on the keeper's internal response to isolation rather than on the boat or setting itself. ([Outcome](#))
3. 1-C, 2-A, 3-B. ([Outcome](#))
4. Accept reasoned answers such as "wistful" or "resigned"; explanation should connect the tone to an implied acceptance of loneliness as unavoidable. ([Outcome](#))
5. Accept any reasonable criterion (e.g., consistency of character, effectiveness of imagery) applied with specific reference to the passage. ([Outcome](#))
6. Accept any personal response that draws a genuine connection between the student's experience and the keeper's situation. ([Outcome](#))