

Name _____

Date _____

Flower Power

As a child, Mary had wonderful memories of her grandmother. They did so many exciting things together: swimming in the ocean, flying kites, making snowmen in the front yard. But when her grandmother's health began to deteriorate in the fall of 1994, Mary knew that their time together was limited. Every few days, Mary would make the drive from Washington, DC to Winchester, VA to visit her grandmother, who was staying in the hospital there.



Mary hated highway driving, finding it ugly and monotonous. She preferred to take meandering back roads to the hospital. When she drove through the rocky town of Harpers Ferry, the beauty of the rough waters churning at the intersection of the Shenandoah and Potomac rivers always captivated her.

Toward the end of her journey, Mary had to get on highway 81. It was here that she discovered a surprising bit of beauty during one of her trips. Along the median of the highway, there was a long stretch of wildflowers. They were thin and delicate and purple. They swayed in the wind as if whispering secrets to one another.

The first time she saw the flowers, Mary was seized by an uncontrollable urge to pull over on the highway and yank a bunch from the soil. She carried them into her grandmother's room when she arrived at the hospital and placed them in a water pitcher by her bed.

For a moment her grandmother seemed more lucid than usual. She thanked Mary for the flowers, commented on their beauty, and asked where she had gotten them. Mary was overjoyed by the ability of the flowers to wake up something inside her ailing grandmother.

Afterwards, Mary began carrying clippers in the car during her trips to visit her grandmother. She would quickly glide onto the shoulder, jump out of the car, and cut a bunch of flowers. Each time Mary placed the flowers in the pitcher, her grandmother's eyes would light up and they would have a splendid conversation.

It was a chilly morning in late October when Mary got the call. The man at the hospital calmly informed her that her grandmother had taken a turn for the worse. Mary got in her car and headed to the hospital. She sped past the place where she usually stopped to pick the flowers. After continuing ahead for about a mile, she put on her emergency lights and pulled onto the median.

She reentered the highway going the opposite way. When Mary arrived back at the flowers, she was surprised to see how many of them had withered and turned brown, probably as a result of the cold.

Nonetheless, she spotted a patch that bravely retained that vibrant purple glow. She cut a few of them and hopped back into her car and headed for the hospital.

When Mary arrived at the hospital, she found her grandmother very weak and unresponsive. She placed the flowers in the pitcher and sat down to hold her grandmother's hand. She felt a light squeeze on one of her fingers. It would be the last conversation they ever had.

1) Based on the things Mary and her grandmother did when she was a child, it can be understood that Mary's grandmother

- A. was an exceptionally strong swimmer
- B. had a variety of colorful kites
- C. enjoyed spending time outdoors
- D. lived in a cold and windy area

2) As used in paragraph 1, which is the best antonym for **deteriorate**?

- A. improve
- B. increase
- C. adjust
- D. climb

3) As used in paragraph 2, the word **captivated** most nearly means

- A. energized
- B. fascinated
- C. imprisoned
- D. relaxed

4) In paragraph 3 the author writes, "They swayed in the wind as if whispering secrets to one another." Which of the following literary devices is used in this sentence?

A. Metaphor, characterized by the comparison of two unlike things without the use of "like" or "as." This often involves taking a concept or identity that is clearly understood and applying it to a second, less well-known element.

B. Alliteration, characterized by the use of adjacent words that begin with the same sound or letter, creating a repetition of similar sounds in the sentence. This is used to add character to the writing and often adds an element of playfulness.

C. Authorial intrusion, characterized by a point at which the author speaks out directly to the reader. Authorial intrusion establishes a one to one relationship between the writer and the reader where the latter is no longer a secondary player or an indirect audience to the progress of the story but is the main subject of the author's attention.

D. Personification, characterized by attributing human traits or characteristics to inanimate objects or animals.

- 5) Which best describes what the act of stopping for flowers on the side of the highway became for Mary?
- A. a curse
 - B. a ritual
 - C. a regret
 - D. a bother
- 6) As used in paragraph 5, which is the best antonym for **lucid**?
- A. false
 - B. realistic
 - C. confused
 - D. determined
- 7) What do the flowers come to signify for Mary?
- A. the natural beauty of the United States highway system
 - B. an opportunity to compose herself before visiting her grandmother
 - C. a final chance to connect with her grandmother
 - D. a way to make the hospital room more pleasant
- 8) Why do you think Mary continued to pick flowers from the median instead of just buying them at the store? Explain your answer.

Answers and Explanations

1) C

Core Standard: **Integration of Knowledge**

In paragraph 1, we learn that Mary and her grandmother "did so many exciting things together: swimming in the ocean, flying kites, making snowmen in the front yard." These are all outdoor activities. This lets us know that Mary's grandmother enjoyed spending time outdoors. Choice **(C)** is correct.

Although Mary's grandmother swam with Mary in the ocean, this does not necessarily mean that she was an exceptionally strong swimmer. You can be an average swimmer and still be able to swim in the ocean. Choice **(A)** is incorrect.

Although Mary's grandmother flew kites with Mary, this does not necessarily mean that she had a variety of colorful kites. You can still fly kites with one or two that are not very colorful. Choice **(B)** is incorrect.

Although Mary's grandmother made snowmen in the front yard with Mary, this does not necessarily mean that she lived in a cold area. Although it may have snowed during winter, it may have been very hot during summer, as it is in many places along the eastern United States. Moreover, Although Mary's grandmother flew kites with Mary, this does not necessarily mean that she lived in a windy area. Although you need wind to fly a kite, Mary's grandmother may have done this at the beach (where it is usually windy), not at her home. Choice **(D)** is incorrect.

2) A

Core Standard: **Craft and Structure**

deteriorate (*verb*): to make or become worse or inferior in character, quality, value, etc.

In paragraph 1, we learn that Mary's grandmother's health "began to deteriorate," letting Mary know that "their time together was limited." We also learn that Mary drove a great distance to visit her grandmother in the hospital every few days. We can infer from these statements that the word deteriorate expresses a decline or worsening of Mary's grandmother's health. The opposite of worsen is *improve*. This means choice **(A)** is correct.

To *increase* means to become greater or larger. Health cannot become greater or larger. Therefore **(B)** is incorrect.

To *adjust* means to conform or adapt. Adapting is not the opposite of getting worse. Therefore **(C)** is incorrect.

The opposite of *climb* is fall or descend, not get worse. Therefore **(D)** is incorrect.

3) B

Core Standard: **Craft and Structure**

captivate (*adjective*): strongly attracted; filled with wonder and delight.

In paragraph 2, the passage says that Mary was “always captivated” by “the rough waters churning at the intersection of the Shenandoah and Potomac rivers.” In addition, the passage says that Mary “preferred to take meandering back roads to her grandmother’s hospital” because she wanted to see the rivers. We can infer from this that Mary was willing to take longer to get to her destination because she thought that the rivers were beautiful, and that Mary was attracted to the sight of the waters. The word fascinated means to be intensely attracted or having your attention fixated.

Therefore **(B)** is correct.

Energize means to invigorate or activate, not to attract or delight. While Mary may have been energized by beauty, the passage does not offer any information to prove this was true.

Therefore

(A) is incorrect.

Imprisoned means captured or detained by force. Although the word “captivated” sounds similar to captured, being captured is not the same as feeling strongly attracted. Therefore **(C)** is incorrect.

When someone is *relaxed*, he or she is freed from strain or tension. This is different from being attracted to or delighted by something. Therefore **(D)** is incorrect.

4) D

Core Standard: **Integration of Knowledge**

This sentence describes the flowers by using words that would normally describe human actions. Only humans can whisper secrets to one another, so this activity is uniquely human. Using this information, we can understand that the author is attributing human traits or characteristics to inanimate objects or animals. Therefore the author is using personification. Choice **(D)** is correct.

The passage does not provide information to support choices **(A)**, **(B)**, and **(C)**. Therefore they are incorrect.

5) B

Core Standard: **Key Ideas and Details**

A ritual is an established habit or routine. In paragraph 6, we learn that “Mary began carrying clippers in the car during her trips to visit her grandmother. She would quickly glide onto the shoulder, jump out of the car, and cut a bunch of flowers.” Since she did this each time she visited her grandmother, these actions can be described as a habit or routine. Therefore **(B)** is correct.

A *curse* is an evil charm or spell. The passage does not provide information to suggest that Mary found this act to be evil. Therefore **(A)** is incorrect.

Regret is a sense of disappointment or loss over something that could have gone differently. Mary does not regret stopping for flowers; indeed, she looks forward to it. Therefore **(C)** is incorrect.

A *bother* is an annoyance or something that causes worry. The passage does not provide information to suggest that stopping for flowers causes Mary pain or suffering. Therefore **(D)** is incorrect.

6) C

Core Standard: **Craft and Structure**

lucid (*adjective*): mentally sound; sane or rational; intelligible; clear; easily understood.

Paragraph 5 says that Mary’s grandmother “seemed more lucid than usual. She thanked Mary for the flowers, commented on their beauty, and asked where she had gotten them. Mary was overjoyed by the ability of the flowers to wake up something inside her grandmother.” We can infer from these statements that when Mary’s grandmother was more lucid, she was awake, able to see what was around her, and able to speak with Mary about it. This makes *confused* a good antonym for *lucid*.

Choice **(C)** is correct.

False means untrue. Untrue is not the opposite of clear. Therefore **(A)** is incorrect.

Realistic means showing an awareness and acceptance of reality. Accepting reality is related to being mentally sound. It is not the opposite of clear or mentally sound. Therefore **(B)** is incorrect.

Determined means decided or resolved. Resolved is not the opposite of clear or mentally sound. Therefore **(D)** is incorrect.

7) C

Core Standard: **Key Ideas and Details**

In paragraph 5, we learn that “Mary was overjoyed by the ability of the flowers to wake up something inside her ailing grandmother.” In the following paragraph the author says, “Each time Mary placed the flowers in the pitcher, her grandmother’s eyes would light up and they would have a splendid conversation.” We can infer from these statements that the flowers in some way helped Mary’s grandmother to communicate with, or to connect with, Mary. Therefore **(C)** is correct.

Although Mary does find natural beauty in the flowers by the roadside, her opinion is that beauty is the exception, not the rule, on the highway. Therefore **(A)** is incorrect.

While taking the time to stop and collect the flowers might give Mary time to compose herself before visiting her grandmother, the passage does not provide information to suggest that the flowers serve this purpose. Therefore **(B)** is incorrect.

Though the flowers may make the hospital room more pleasant, that is not what they signify to Mary. The connection and communication with her grandmother through the flowers are much more important to her. Therefore **(D)** is incorrect.