

## Skill: Analyze Author's Techniques, including Figurative Language

### HISTORICAL FICTION: Lexington

### 8<sup>th</sup> Grade Assessment

Source: Public Domain, adapted by Center for Urban Education, may be used with citation.

I remember it vividly. We were fighting for our freedom. There was a battle at Lexington, and the news of Lexington spread everywhere, producing wild excitement. My father and I got ready to join the new army. It was as if the world was different that day. Everyone would go to Boston to join the army. Imagine you were there.

Every village and every farmhouse helped to swell the number. Men came from all over, even from tiny towns. In Connecticut, an old man was plowing his field and proclaimed, "This is my fight, too." He unyoked his oxen, left his plow in the furrow, and, leaping to his saddle, raced to join the army. Just picture what that was like.

Fiery Ethan Allen, at the head of his Green Mountain Boys, was eager to join us, but he stopped with his Green Mountain Boys to take over a fort. The soldiers did not expect them at all. Despite the fact that the Green Mountain Boys had not fought before, they were extremely brave, and the British gave up without a fight.

Day by day the army grew, until thirty thousand men were encamped around Boston, from Charlestown Neck to Dorchester. We were all terribly excited and determined. I was afraid, too, but I decided that I needed to remain strong and brave. Just imagine what it was like then.

The patriot leaders were beginning to grow impatient. It was now the middle of June, and they had decided the time had finally come to fight. They chose a place for the battle; the location selected was the highland on the Charlestown peninsula known as Bunker Hill. They chose the date of June 16<sup>th</sup>. How do you think we felt?

The battle of Bunker Hill was a great fight. Never in my life had I witnessed such bravery on behalf of so many men. No one gave up, everyone fought hard, and we all worked together. Although it was a struggle, we remained strong. I really believe that with that one battle, our nation was born. We all felt different after the battle of Bunker Hill. We were Americans. I hope you can experience the feelings that I felt then.

I can recall that great battle clearly, and I remember the ones after that as well. Although it took much longer than I had initially anticipated, it was well worth it. It was difficult, and I became exhausted, but then we won and freed our country. We were a new nation. Now, each year on the Fourth of July, I remember those days and smile. I hope you do, too.

*Directions: Choose the best answer for each question.*

1. Whose voice do you hear in this story?

- a. a soldier
- b. George Washington
- c. Ethan Allen
- d. a farmer

2. How does the author help you feel as if you are part of the story?

- a. He writes it with battles.
- b. He talks to the reader.
- c. He writes about a young soldier.
- d. He tells about Americans.

3. Why does the writer end with the last sentence?

- a. so you know what happened
- b. so you know why it was important
- c. so the story ends clearly
- d. so it tells why the person fought

4. How does the writer keep you interested in the story?

- a. Many things happen.
- b. The story follows one person's history.
- c. It is about the United States.
- d. It has important heroes in it.

5. *Write your own answer to this question.*

This is historical fiction. What makes it fictional?

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**TEACHER NOTES: Develop Students' Skills: Exercise Thinking**

These questions have not been validated, so decisions about student's achievement should not be made based on their responses. They are intended to exercise skills. Recommended activities include: students work in pairs to choose the best response; give students the questions without the responses so they generate their own answers; students make up additional questions; students make up questions like these for another passage.

**Answers:** *You can remove this answer key and then give it to students and ask them to figure out the basis for the correct response.*

Item	1	2	3	4
Answer	a	b	c	b

Question 5 is open-ended. Here is a suggested response.

5. It is about an imaginary person.

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**POEM:** He Had His Dream  
By Paul Laurence Dunbar

**8th Grade Assessment**  
**This text is in the public domain.**

He had his dream, and all through life,  
Worked up to it through toil and strife.  
Afloat fore'er before his eyes,  
It colored for him all his skies:  
The storm-cloud dark  
Above his bark,  
The calm and listless vault of blue  
Took on its hopeful hue,  
It tintured every passing beam--  
He had his dream.

He labored hard and failed at last,  
His sails too weak to bear the blast,  
The raging tempests tore away  
And sent his beating bark astray.  
But what cared he  
For wind or sea!  
He said, "The tempest will be short,  
My bark will come to port."  
He saw through every cloud a gleam--  
He had his dream.

*Directions: Choose the best answer for each question.*

6. Why does the poet keep saying “He had his dream”?

- a. to have a rhyme
- b. to emphasize a theme
- c. to tell what the man thought
- d. to explain what happened

7. Why does the poet say “storm-cloud dark”?

- a. The man was sad.
- b. The sky was cloudy.
- c. The man faced problems.
- d. The man was worried.

8. What does it mean when the poet says “He saw through every cloud a gleam”?

- a. He was discouraged.
- b. He was patient.
- c. He had hope.
- d. He would have more problems.

9. Why does the poet write about difficulties?

- a. to show that hard work can fail
- b. to help people think about problems
- c. to discourage people from changing
- d. to encourage people to try

10. *Write your own answer to this question.*

What do you think the poet wants you to learn from the poem?

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Why do you think so?

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**Answers:** *You can remove this answer key and then give it to students and ask them to figure out the basis for the correct response.*

Item	6	7	8	9
Answer	b	c	c	d

Question 10 is open-ended. Here is a suggested response.

10. Answers should relate to resilience or determination or hope.