

Name: _____ Date: _____

Exploring Mood

Mood is the feeling you get from reading a piece of writing. Another way to describe mood is *atmosphere*. When you walk into a place, it has an atmosphere that makes you feel a certain way; when you “walk into” a story, it too has an atmosphere that creates a feeling. Writers create mood through word choice, imagery, dialogue, setting, and plot.

In this activity, you will consider the mood of Scene 2 in *The Poison Sky*:

SCENE 2***A bird sanctuary in Massachusetts, 1957***

N2: It is four years earlier. Olga and Stuart Huckins sip iced tea on their porch.

N3: Surrounding their house is a thick green forest.

N1: Birds chirp as a warm breeze gently rustles the trees.

N2: Suddenly, a loud whirring noise shatters the peaceful scene.

Olga: What is that?

Stuart (*pointing*): Look there.

N3: They watch a plane fly over their land. It releases a spray that settles over the woods and marshes of their bird sanctuary.

Olga: That plane is spraying DDT again!

Stuart: It's just killing the mosquitoes.

N1: The Huckinses walk around their property.

N2: Suddenly, Olga gasps.

N3: Five songbirds lie on the ground—dead.

Olga: These birds were poisoned.

Stuart: Something is terribly wrong.

N1: There is a thud.

N2: A robin drops from a tree branch above them. Its bill gapes open. Its splayed claws are drawn up in agony.

Olga (*kneeling down*): What a horrible death.

Stuart: What can we do about this?

Olga: I'm going to write my friend Rachel.

Stuart: The nature writer?

Olga: Yes. She knows people in D.C. Maybe she can help us.

This scene starts off in one mood and then shifts to another. Let's look at what those two moods are and how the playwright creates them.

1. Where does this scene take place? _____

2. The first three lines of this scene provide imagery—language that portrays sensory experiences (the sights, sounds, smell, tastes, and feel of things). We’ve listed two sensory details from the first three lines of the scene. List two more.
 - The house is surrounded by a thick green forest.
 - Olga and Stuart are sipping iced tea on the porch.
 - _____
 - _____

3. At the beginning of Scene 2, the mood is safe and peaceful. Which one of the following does NOT state a way that this safe and peaceful mood is created?
 - ☐ A. The setting—a bird sanctuary—transports readers to a place that exists to provide protection for wildlife, creating a safe and peaceful mood.
 - ☐ B. The imagery in the first three lines of the scene invites readers to imagine a safe and peaceful situation. Readers can visualize a couple relaxing on the porch, “hear” the soothing sounds of nature, and “feel” the pleasant sensation of a warm breeze on their skin.
 - ☐ C. The setting creates a safe and peaceful mood because the scene takes place in Massachusetts in 1957.

4. After the safe and peaceful mood is established, Narrator 2 says something that shifts the mood. Write that line here:

5. Choose two words that best describe what the mood shifts to with the line you wrote down in Question 4.

☐ dreamy ☐ alarming ☐ hopeful ☐ disturbing ☐ light-hearted

6. The mood you identified in Question 5 continues throughout the rest of the scene. We’ve listed one line that helps continue that mood. List three more.
 - N2: “Suddenly, Olga gasps.”
 - _____
 - _____
 - _____

7. Briefly explain how the lines you wrote down in Question 6 contribute to the mood you identified in Question 5.

Name: _____ Date: _____

Exploring Mood

Mood is the feeling you get from reading a piece of writing. Another way to describe mood is *atmosphere*. When you walk into a place, it has an atmosphere that makes you feel a certain way; when you “walk into” a story, it too has an atmosphere that creates a feeling. Writers create mood through word choice, imagery, dialogue, setting, and plot.

In this activity, you will consider the mood of Scene 2 in *The Poison Sky*:

SCENE 2

A bird sanctuary in Massachusetts, 1957

N2: It is four years earlier. Olga and Stuart Huckins sip iced tea on their porch.

N3: Surrounding their house is a thick green forest.

N1: Birds chirp as a warm breeze gently rustles the trees.

N2: Suddenly, a loud whirring noise shatters the peaceful scene.

Olga: What is that?

Stuart (*pointing*): Look there.

N3: They watch a plane fly over their land. It releases a spray that settles over the woods and marshes of their bird sanctuary.

Olga: That plane is spraying DDT again!

Stuart: It’s just killing the mosquitoes.

N1: The Huckinses walk around their property.

N2: Suddenly, Olga gasps.

N3: Five songbirds lie on the ground—dead.

Olga: These birds were poisoned.

Stuart: Something is terribly wrong.

N1: There is a thud.

N2: A robin drops from a tree branch above them. Its bill gapes open. Its splayed claws are drawn up in agony.

Olga (*kneeling down*): What a horrible death.

Stuart: What can we do about this?

Olga: I’m going to write my friend Rachel.

Stuart: The nature writer?

Olga: Yes. She knows people in D.C. Maybe she can help us.

This scene starts off in one mood and then shifts to another. Let’s look at what those two moods are and how the playwright creates them.

1. Where does this scene take place? _____

2. The first three lines of this scene contain imagery, or descriptions that appeal to the reader’s five senses (sight, hearing, taste, smell, touch). We’ve listed three sensory details. List one more.

- The house is surrounded by a thick green forest.
- Olga and Stuart are sipping iced tea on their porch.
- Birds are chirping.
- _____

3. At the beginning of Scene 2, the mood is safe and peaceful. Which one of the following does NOT state a way that this safe and peaceful mood is created?

- ☐ A. The setting—a bird sanctuary—takes readers to a place that exists to provide a safe home for wildlife, creating a safe and peaceful mood.
- ☐ B. The imagery in the first three lines of the scene invites readers to imagine a safe and peaceful situation. Readers can visualize a couple relaxing on the porch, “hear” the soothing sounds of nature, and “feel” the pleasant sensation of a warm breeze on their skin.
- ☐ C. The setting creates a safe and peaceful mood because the scene takes place in Massachusetts in 1957.

4. After the safe and peaceful mood is established, Narrator 2 says, “Suddenly, a loud whirring noise shatters the peaceful silence.” Choose two words that best describe what the mood shifts to with that line:

- ☐ dreamy ☐ alarming ☐ hopeful ☐ disturbing ☐ light-hearted

5. The mood you identified in Question 4 continues throughout the rest of the scene. We’ve listed two lines that help continue that mood. List two more.

- “Suddenly, Olga gasps.”
- “Five songbirds lie on the ground—dead.”
- _____
- _____

6. Complete the sentences below to explain how the lines in Question 5 contribute to the mood you identified in Question 4.

The lines about dead birds help create a _____ mood because _____.

The words and actions of the Huckinses help create a _____ mood because they show that the Huckinses are feeling _____.

Identifying Mood

Mood is the feeling the reader gets from a work of literature. Another way to describe mood is atmosphere. When you walk into a place, it has an atmosphere that makes you feel a certain way; when you “walk into” a text, it too has an atmosphere that makes you feel a certain way. For example, the mood could be *calm*, *creepy*, *romantic*, *gloomy*, or *tense*. Authors create mood through word choice, imagery, dialogue, setting, and plot. The mood can stay the same from the beginning to the end of a text, or it can change.

Name: _____ Date: _____

Mood Words

Mood is the feeling the reader gets from a work of literature. There are *many* different words you can use to describe the mood of a piece of writing. Here are some to get you started. They are organized into groups of words with similar meanings. We've left space in each box so you can add your own words.

angry

aggravated, enraged, hostile, irate,
violent

happy

content, joyful, delighted, ecstatic, elated

boring

dreary, dull, uneventful, tiring

loving

warm, delicate, romantic, touching,
sympathetic

calm

quiet, serene, tranquil, mellow, harmonious

sad

depressed, melancholy, mournful, tragic,
gloomy

exciting

exhilarating, lively, rousing, thrilling,
energetic

scary

creepy, nightmarish, spooky, haunting,
threatening

fun

amusing, bouncy, cheerful, playful

worried

anxious, nervous, restless, suspenseful, tense,
uneasy

Name: _____ Date: _____

Rachel Carson's Legacy: Finding and Using Text Evidence

1. Who was Rachel Carson?

In one sentence, summarize who Carson was. Tell what her occupation was and when she lived.

2. What contributions did Carson make to society?

Make sure to provide citations for information you draw from the play.

A. What book did Carson write? Give its name and briefly explain what it was about.

B. What was her motivation for writing this book? In other words, why did she write it?

C. What obstacles did she encounter while writing this book?

D. How did she overcome these obstacles?

E. How did members of the public and of the United States government react to Carson's book? What changes did her book help bring about?

3. What kind of a person was Carson?

List three character traits. For each trait, give text evidence from *The Poison Sky* and provide commentary. We completed one for you.

A. dedicated

Text evidence: "I won't rest until my book is done, Jeanne. I can't. There is too much at stake. If I do nothing more in my life, I must tell this story." (p. 15)

Commentary: Rachel Carson is sick when she says this, but in spite of her serious illness, she is determined to complete her story. This shows her dedication.

B.

Text evidence:

Commentary:

C.

Text evidence:

Commentary:

4. What is Carson's legacy?

Your legacy is how you will be remembered and the contributions you make during your life. For example: Martin Luther King Jr.'s legacy is that his leadership in the civil rights movement continues to inspire Americans today to work for equality and justice.

In your own words, state Rachel Carson's legacy.

Name: _____ Date: _____

Close-Reading Questions

The Poison Sky

1. Carson is introduced in Scene 1. What can you tell about Carson's character from this first scene? (character)
2. In Scene 1, Jeanne Davis says of Carson's book, "I have a feeling your book is going to cause quite a storm." What does she mean? (figurative language)
3. In Scene 5, Carson hears a radio commercial for DDT. Why might the author have chosen to include this scene? What does it contribute to the play? (author's craft)

- ©2017 BY SCHOLASTIC INC. TEACHERS MAY PROJECT OR MAKE COPIES OF THIS PAGE TO DISTRIBUTE TO STUDENTS.

Name: _____ Date: _____

Critical-Thinking Questions

The Poison Sky

1. What reasons might Carson have had for keeping her cancer a secret? How might the public have reacted to the information that she had cancer?
2. What does the play suggest about the importance of having the safety of a product checked by someone from outside the company that makes it? Explain.
3. Why is it useful to read the article “When Mosquitoes Were Killers in America” before reading the play?

Name: _____ Date: _____

Go to Scope
Online to listen
to the words
and definitions
read aloud.

Vocabulary:

The Poison Sky

1. **Dark Ages (dahrk AYJ-iz)** *noun*; When people talk about the Dark Ages, they are referring to a period of European history roughly between the years 500 A.D. and 1000 A.D., during the early Middle Ages. Many people think of it as a “dark” time because life was gloomy back then. There was a lot of violence, poverty, and disease. Some say there weren’t many scientific achievements, great works of art, or admired leaders during this time, although others say that the period is called “dark” only because there aren’t many historical records from which to learn about it. (Most people did not know how to read or write during this period.) The Dark Ages is no longer a term used in academic writing, but people sometimes use it conversationally to refer to a more primitive time of life.
2. **contaminate (kuhn-TAM-uh-neyt)** *verb*; To contaminate something is to make it dirty, impure, or dangerous by adding something harmful or unwanted to it. Chemicals from a factory could contaminate a river. Bacteria could contaminate food. You may choose not to eat your bologna sandwich after your friend sneezes on it and contaminates it with snot.
3. **ecosystem (EE-koh-sis-tuhm)** *noun*; An ecosystem is all of the living and nonliving things in a particular environment. A pond’s ecosystem, for example, includes the plants, animals, bacteria, and water in the pond, as well as the soil at the bottom of the pond and the sunlight and rainfall that the pond receives. Each part plays an important role in helping the system function.
4. **fanatic (fuh-NAT-ik)** *noun*; A fanatic is a *very* enthusiastic supporter of something—a person whose behavior or beliefs are intense or passionate beyond the limits of what is considered normal. You might call your older brother or sister a fanatic for standing in line for hours waiting for the newest *Harry Potter* book to be released at midnight. (The word *fan* comes from the word *fanatic*.)
5. **immerse (ih-MURS)** *verb*; To immerse something is to put it in a liquid so that every part of it is covered. My little brother will only enjoy a cookie if it has been immersed in milk first. *Immerse* can also mean “to completely involve oneself in an activity or interest.” If you’re immersed in a book, you forget about the world around you while you’re reading it.
6. **indiscriminately (in-di-SKRIM-uh-nit-lee)** *adverb*; To do something indiscriminately is to do it carelessly or aimlessly, without careful thought or judgment. If Hannah is indiscriminately throwing clothes into her suitcase, she’s not thinking about what she’s packing—she’s just

randomly tossing stuff in there.

7. inevitable (in-EV-i-tuh-buhl) *adjective*; Something that is inevitable is sure to happen and cannot be avoided or prevented.

8. sanctuary (SANGK-choo-er-ee) *noun*; *Sanctuary* has a range of meanings that are all related to the idea of protection:

1. a place where someone or something is given shelter and protection
2. a safe place for animals to live protected from hunters, predators, and other threats
3. a room inside of a church, temple, or similar building where religious services are held
4. any holy or sacred place
5. the protection that a safe place provides

In the space below or on the back of this page, list any other words from the play or essay whose definitions you are not sure about. For each word, use context clues to try to figure out the meaning. Then look up the word in a few different dictionaries. Discuss the meaning of the word with your teacher or another adult. Then write a definition for the word and one example sentence.

Vocabulary Practice

The Poison Sky

Directions: For each statement below, fill in the circle to show whether you think it's true or false. Briefly explain your choice.

1. A forest fire would not affect an ecosystem.

Ⓐ true Ⓑ false

Reason: _____

2. A wildlife sanctuary would allow hunting.

Ⓐ true Ⓑ false

Reason: _____

3. A baseball fanatic would be unlikely to watch baseball on TV.

Ⓐ true Ⓑ false

Reason: _____

Directions: Choose the word that is least similar in meaning to each word in bold.

4. **immerse**

Ⓐ sprinkle Ⓑ drench

5. **inevitable**

Ⓐ unavoidable Ⓑ preventable

6. **indiscriminately**

Ⓐ carelessly Ⓑ carefully

7. **contaminate**

Ⓐ cleanse Ⓑ infect

Directions: Complete each unfinished sentence in a way that makes the meaning of the boldfaced word clear.

8. Kelly's little brother **indiscriminately** grabbed a handful of jellybeans out of the jar. Kelly, however, _____

9. My sister never went to camp. She said it was like returning to the **Dark Ages** when people _____

10. I **immersed** the shirt in water. The shirt was _____

Name: _____ Date: _____

The Poison Sky Quiz

Directions: Read *The Poison Sky*. Then answer the questions below.

1. In Scene 1, Jeanne Davis tells Rachel Carson, “I have a feeling your book is going to cause quite a storm.” What does Davis mean?
 - (A) Carson’s book will get little attention.
 - (B) Carson’s book will affect the weather.
 - (C) Carson’s book will upset many people.
 - (D) Carson’s book will make everyone happy.
2. In Scene 2, N1 says that there’s a thud, and N2 says that a robin drops from a tree with its bill gaping open and its splayed claws drawn up in agony. This imagery helps shift the mood from
 - (A) alarming and disturbing to peaceful and safe.
 - (B) peaceful and safe to alarming and disturbing.
 - (C) suspenseful and exciting to regretful.
 - (D) chaotic and confusing to gloomy.
3. The radio ad for DDT in Scene 5 helps readers understand that
 - (A) DDT is harmful to many types of animals as well as to humans.
 - (B) DDT is not as harmful as Carson thinks.
 - (C) Carson faces a huge challenge in convincing people that DDT is harmful.
 - (D) the public does not trust chemical companies.
4. In Scene 6, Carson’s agent says, “You’ve always said nature is interconnected.” Which section of the text helps explain what she means?
 - (A) the epilogue
 - (B) the photos and caption on pages 16-17
 - (C) Scene 7
 - (D) the “How DDT Kills Birds” infographic (p. 18)
5. What is Carson’s motivation for exposing the truth about DDT?
 - (A) She wants Dr. White-Stevens to respect her.
 - (B) She wants to write a best-selling book and become famous.
 - (C) She wants to become an expert on mosquitoes and other pests.
 - (D) She wants to protect wildlife and humans from what she knows to be a dangerous chemical.
6. Which pair of lines from the play supports your answer to question 5?
 - (A) “*The New Yorker* magazine is going to run some excerpts” and “I think you have your title.”
 - (B) “... it affects our entire ecosystem” and “... we need a way to protect the American people from chemical hazards.”
 - (C) “She isn’t even a scientist” and “We’d be back in the Dark Ages.”
 - (D) “Rachel turns off the radio” and “We must stop her.”

Constructed-Response Questions



Directions: Write your answers to the questions below on the back of this paper or type them up on a computer.

7. Answer the questions in the caption on page 16: *Why were people so excited about DDT? What didn’t people know?* Use details from the play and the article “When Mosquitoes Were Killers in America.”
8. In her book *Silent Spring*, Rachel Carson wrote, “In nature, nothing exists alone.” How does the play support this idea? Use text evidence.

Name: _____ Date: _____

The Poison Sky Quiz

Directions: Read *The Poison Sky*. Then answer the questions below.

1. In Scene 1, Jeanne Davis tells Rachel Carson, “I have a feeling your book is going to cause quite a storm.” What does Davis mean?
 - (A) Carson’s book will get little attention.
 - (B) Carson’s book will affect the weather.
 - (C) Carson’s book will upset many people.
 - (D) Carson’s book will make everyone happy.
2. In Scene 2, N1 says that there’s a thud, and N2 says that a robin drops from a tree with its bill gaping open and its splayed claws drawn up in agony. This imagery helps shift the mood from
 - (A) alarming to peaceful.
 - (B) peaceful to alarming.
 - (C) suspenseful to joyful.
 - (D) confusing to gloomy.
3. The radio ad for DDT in Scene 5 helps readers understand that
 - (A) DDT is harmful to many types of animals and to humans.
 - (B) DDT is not as harmful as Carson thinks.
 - (C) Carson faces a huge challenge in convincing people that DDT is harmful.
 - (D) the public does not trust chemical companies.
4. In Scene 6, Carson’s agent says, “You’ve always said nature is interconnected.” How does the infographic on page 18 help explain what she means?
 - (A) It explains why DDT kills mosquitoes.
 - (B) It gives an example of something Rachel Carson wrote an article about.
 - (C) It compares how DDT affects dragonflies with how DDT affects mosquitoes.
 - (D) It shows how poison affects different animals as it moves through the food chain.
5. Carson is writing a book about DDT because
 - (A) she wants to be a respected scientist.
 - (B) she wants to be famous author.
 - (C) she wants to learn more about mosquitoes.
 - (D) she wants to protect humans and wildlife.
6. Which line from the play supports your answer to Question 5?
 - (A) “And *The New Yorker* magazine is going to run some excerpts.” (p. 15)
 - (B) “But more than that, we need a way to protect the American people from chemical hazards.” (p. 18)
 - (C) “We’d be back in the Dark Ages, with bugs and disease ruling the Earth.” (p. 17)
 - (D) “She isn’t even a scientist.” (p. 17)

Constructed-Response Questions



Directions: Write your answers to the questions below on the back of this paper or type them up on a computer.

7. Answer the questions in the caption on page 16:
Why were people so excited about DDT? What didn’t people know? Use details from the play and the article “When Mosquitoes Were Killers in America.”
8. On page 17, Dr. White-Stevens says about Rachel Carson, “We must stop her.” What does he mean? Is he able to stop Carson? Use text evidence to support your answers.

Name: _____ Date: _____

Literary Elements and Devices

Identifying the basic elements of a literary work can help you understand it better.

Use this activity to help you understand *The Poison Sky*.

See *Scope's* "Glossary of Literary Terms" for definitions of the words that appear in bold.

Section 1: Characters

1. For the characters of Rachel Carson, Dr. White-Stevens, and one other character of your choice: (1) decide whether the character is **major** or **minor**; (2) briefly describe the character, including his or her appearance, personality, and background; and (3) decide whether the character is **static** or **dynamic**, then explain why.

Character	Major or Minor	Description	Static or Dynamic	I think so because . . .
Rachel Carson	<input type="checkbox"/> major <input type="checkbox"/> minor		<input type="checkbox"/> static <input type="checkbox"/> dynamic	
Dr. Robert White-Stevens	<input type="checkbox"/> major <input type="checkbox"/> minor		<input type="checkbox"/> static <input type="checkbox"/> dynamic	
Character of your choice: _____	<input type="checkbox"/> major <input type="checkbox"/> minor		<input type="checkbox"/> static <input type="checkbox"/> dynamic	

Section 2: Setting

2. A. Where and when does the story take place? _____

B. What does the reader learn from the photos and captions about people's attitudes toward DDT at this time?

Section 3: Conflict

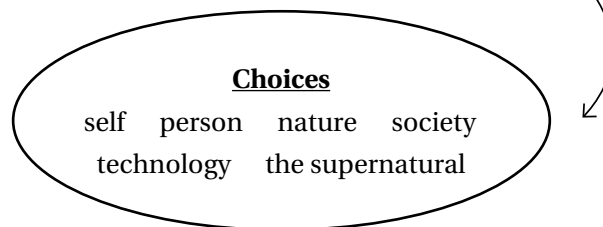
3. Who is the **protagonist** in this play? _____

4. Who is the **antagonist** in this play? _____

5. A. Describe the main **conflict** the **protagonist** faces.

B. Is this conflict **internal** or **external**? _____

C. Another way to describe this **conflict** is: person vs. _____.



6. How is the main conflict resolved?

Section 4: Figurative Language

7. On page 15, Jeanne Davis tells Rachel Carson, “I have a feeling your book is going to cause quite a storm.”
What does Davis mean?

8. Underline the figurative language in the following line from the play, then check one of the choices to show which type of figurative language it is.

“Sunlight streams through the windows, but the mood is anything but sunny.” (p. 17)

☐

simile

☐

metaphor

☐

personification

Write what the figurative language helps the reader understand or what it adds to the story:

Section 5: Genre

9. The **genre** of this play is historical fiction. Historical fiction often includes real people and events from the past in combination with characters and events that the author invents. To write a work of historical fiction, an author must do a lot of research so that he or she can accurately portray the time period and the story, and bring both to life for the reader.

Briefly explain what you think authors researched to write *The Poison Sky*.

Name: _____ Date: _____

Literary Elements and Devices

Identifying the basic elements of a literary work can help you understand it better.

Use this activity to help you understand *The Poison Sky*.

See *Scope's* "Glossary of Literary Terms" for definitions of the words that appear in bold.

Section 1: Characters

1. Read the example character analysis we've provided for the character of Rachel Carson. Then for the characters of Dr. White-Stevens and one other character of your choice: (1) decide whether the character is **major** or **minor**; (2) briefly describe the character, including his or her appearance, personality, and background; and (3) decide whether the character is **static** or **dynamic**, then

Character	Major or Minor	Description	Static or Dynamic	I think so because. . .
<div>Here's the example!</div> <p>Rachel Carson</p>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> major <input type="checkbox"/> minor	Carson is a science writer dedicated to exposing the truth about the pesticide DDT. She devotes her life to researching DDT, writing a book, and inspiring lawmakers and citizens to think differently about nature.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> static <input type="checkbox"/> dynamic	Carson does not undergo any significant changes over the course of the play.
<p>Dr. Robert White-Stevens</p>	<input type="checkbox"/> major <input type="checkbox"/> minor		<input type="checkbox"/> static <input type="checkbox"/> dynamic	
<p>Character of your choice:</p> <p>_____</p>	<input type="checkbox"/> major <input type="checkbox"/> minor		<input type="checkbox"/> static <input type="checkbox"/> dynamic	

Section 2: Setting

2. A. Where and when does the story take place? _____
- B. What does the reader learn from the photos and captions about people's attitudes toward DDT at this time?
- _____
- _____
- _____

Section 3: Conflict

3. A **protagonist** is the main or central character in a work of literature. Circle the protagonist in this story:
- Senator Ribicoff Rachel Carson Jeanne Davis
4. An **antagonist** is the person or group of people who oppose the protagonist. Circle the antagonist in this story:
- Rachel Carson the chemical industry Senator Ribicoff
5. Describe the main **conflict** between the protagonist and antagonist you chose in Questions 3 and 4.
- _____
- _____
6. Check the box next to the statement that explains how this conflict is resolved.
- A. ☐ Carson conducts research, which includes talking to doctors, insect experts, and farmers like Mr. Murphy, so she can better understand the damage caused by DDT.
- B. ☐ Carson's research and book help expose the truth about DDT. DDT is banned in the U.S., and the EPA is formed to protect human health as well as the country's air, water, and land.
- C. ☐ Rachel hears an advertisement on the radio about DDT's effectiveness and turns the radio off.

Section 4: Figurative Language

7. On page 15, Jeanne Davis tells Rachel Carson, “I have a feeling your book is going to cause quite a storm.”

What does Davis mean?

- ☐ Carson’s book is going to affect the weather.
- ☐ Carson is going to sell a lot of copies of her book and make a lot of money.
- ☐ People are going to have strong reactions to Carson’s book—and some of those reactions will be negative.

8. “Sunlight streams through the windows, but the mood is anything but sunny.” (p. 17)

- ☐ simile ☐ metaphor ☐ hyperbole

This _____ helps readers understand that the mood, or feeling, in the boardroom where the chemical company executives are talking about Carson is _____

Section 5: Genre

9. The **genre** of this play is historical fiction. Historical fiction often includes real people and events from the past in combination with characters and events that the author invents. To write a work of historical fiction, an author must do a lot of research so that he or she can accurately portray the time period and the story, and bring both to life for the reader.

Briefly explain what you think the authors researched to write *The Poison Sky*.

Glossary of Literary Terms

alliteration (uh-LIH-tuh-RAY-shuhn): When two or more words in a group of words begin with the same sound (usually, the same letter or group of letters). For example: *Anne's awesome apple; Fred's frozen french fries*. See also: *figurative language*.

antagonist (an-TAG-uh-nist): The opponent or enemy of the main character, or protagonist. See also: *protagonist*.

aside (uh-SAHYD): Words spoken to the audience by a character in a drama that are not supposed to be heard by the other characters onstage. An aside is usually used to let the audience know what a character is thinking.

characterization (kar-ik-ter-uh-ZAY-shun): The means through which an author reveals a character's personality. Characterization may be *direct* or *indirect*. In **direct characterization**, the writer or a narrator tells the reader what the character is like: "Ben was a quiet, serious boy." In **indirect characterization**, the author shows the reader or audience member what the character is like through (1) how the character looks, (2) what the character does, (3) what the character says, (4) what the character thinks, and (5) how the character affects other characters. From these five things, the reader or audience member understands the character's personality.

climax (KLAHY-maks): The point in a play, novel, short story, or narrative poem at which the conflict reaches its greatest intensity and is then resolved. The climax is also the part of a narrative when the reader or audience member experiences the most-intense emotions. See also: *plot*.

conflict (KAHN-flikt): A struggle between opposing forces. A conflict may be external (between the character and another person, society, nature, or technology) or internal (a struggle within the character).

dialogue (DAHY-uh-lawg): The conversation between characters in a work of literature.

dynamic character (dahy-NAM-ik KAR-ik-ter): A character who undergoes a significant internal change over the course of a story. This may be a change in understanding, values, insight, etc. See also: *static character*.

figurative language (FIG-yer-uh-tiv LANG-gwidj): The *literal* meaning of a word is its definition as you would find it in a dictionary. Figurative language uses words in some way *other* than for their literal meanings to make a comparison, add emphasis, or say something in a fresh and creative way. Examples of figurative language include *alliteration*, *hyperbole*, *idiom*, *imagery*, *metaphor*, *onomatopoeia*, *personification*, and *simile*. (You can find definitions of these words in this glossary.)

flashback (FLASH-bak): A scene in a story that occurred before the present time in the story. Flashbacks provide background information about events happening during the current narration. They may be presented as memories, dreams, or stories of the past told by characters.

foreshadowing (for-SHAD-oh-ing): Clues or hints about something that is going to happen later in the story. Authors use foreshadowing to build suspense and to prepare the reader for what happens later.

hyperbole (hahy-PUR-buh-lee): Extreme exaggeration used for emphasis or effect; an extravagant statement that is not meant to be taken literally. For example: “I almost died of boredom.” Hyperbole is frequently used in humorous writing. See also: *figurative language*.

idiom (ID-ee-um): An expression that cannot be understood from the meanings of its individual words. For example, “it’s raining cats and dogs” is an idiom that means it’s raining really hard—but there is no way to know that from the meanings of its individual words. See also: *figurative language*.

imagery (IH-muhj-ree): Language that portrays *sensory experiences*, or experiences of the five senses: sight, hearing, smell, taste, and touch. Authors use imagery to describe actions, characters, objects, and ideas, and to heighten the emotional effect of their writing. One way authors create imagery is through the use of figurative language. See also: *figurative language*.

irony (AHY-ruh-nee): There are three types of irony: (1) **dramatic irony**, when the reader or audience member is aware of something that the characters are not aware of; (2) **situational irony**, when something happens that is the reverse of what you expected; and (3) **verbal irony**, when the name or description of something implies the opposite of the truth (for example, calling a very tall person “Tiny”).

major character (MEY-jer KAR-ik-ter): A main or important character; a character who plays a large role in a story. Major characters usually face some sort of obstacle, and they will be present

throughout all, or almost all, of a story. A story can have one major character or several. See also: *minor character*.

metaphor (MET-uh-for): The comparison of two unlike things to illuminate a particular quality or aspect of one of those things. For example, “Karen was a ray of sunshine” is a metaphor in which Karen is compared with a ray of sunshine. The metaphor suggests that Karen was cheerful, happy, warm, hopeful—qualities we associate with the sun. Metaphors state that one thing *is* something else; they do not use the words *like* or *as*. See also: *figurative language*, *simile*.

minor character (MY-ner KAR-ik-ter): A character who does not play a large role in a story. Minor characters usually do not face any obstacles during the course of the story, and they usually do not change during the course of the story. The reader does not usually learn much about minor characters. They are just there for the major characters to interact with and to help advance the plot. See also: *major character*.

mood (mood): The feeling the reader gets from a work of literature. Another way to describe a story’s mood is *atmosphere*. When you walk into a place, it has an atmosphere that makes you feel a certain way; when you “walk into” a story, it too has an atmosphere that makes you feel a certain way. For example, the mood could be calm, creepy, romantic, sad, or tense. Authors create mood through word choice, imagery, dialogue, setting, and plot. The mood can stay the same from the beginning to the end of a story, or it can change.

onomatopoeia (on-uh-maht-uh-PEE-uh): The use of words whose sounds imitate the sounds of what they describe, such as *hiss*, *murmur*, *growl*, *honk*, *buzz*, *woof*, etc. See also: *figurative language*.

personification (per-son-uh-fih-KAY-shun): Describing nonhuman animals, objects, or ideas as though they possess human qualities or emotions. For example: “The moon smiled down at her,” “I felt the cold hand of death on my shoulder,” “There is a battle being fought in my garden between the flowers and the weeds.”

plot (plaht): The sequence of events in a story. The plot includes the opening event (what happens at the beginning/the main problem that the main character faces), the rising action (what happens to intensify the problem), the climax (when the problem reaches its most intense point and begins to be resolved), the falling action (what happens to solve the problem), and the resolution (how things end).

point of view (poynt uhv vyoo): The perspective from which a story is told. In other words, who is telling the story—a character in the story or an outside narrator. There are several types of point of view: (1) **first-person point of view**, where the narrator is a character in the story who describes things from his or her own perspective and refers to himself or herself as “I”; (2) **third-person limited point of view**, where the narrator is not a character in the story but the narrator can describe the experiences and thoughts of only one character in the story; (3) **third-person omniscient point of view**, where the narrator is not one of the characters and is able to describe the experiences and thoughts of every character in the story.

protagonist (proh-TAG-uh-nist): The main or central character of a work of literature. Usually, the main character is involved in a conflict or struggle with the antagonist. See also: *antagonist*.

setting (SEHT-ing): The environment in which a story takes place, including the time period, the location, and the physical characteristics of the surroundings.

simile (SIM-uh-lee): When two unlike things are compared—using *like* or *as*—in order to illuminate a particular quality or aspect of one of those things. For example, “Randy’s voice is like melted chocolate” is a simile in which Randy’s voice is compared to melted chocolate. The simile suggests that Randy’s voice is rich, smooth, sweet, warm—qualities we associate with melted chocolate. See also: *figurative language, metaphor*.

static character (STAT-ik KAR-ik-ter): A character who does not undergo a significant change over the course of a story. See also: *dynamic character*.

symbol (SIM-buhl): An object, setting, event, animal, or person that on one level is itself, but that has another meaning as well. For example, the American flag is really a piece of fabric with stars and stripes on it, but it also represents the United States and ideals like freedom, patriotism, and pride. In a story or play, rain could be a symbol; the rain would really be rain, but it might also represent an idea like sadness or leaving the past behind. *Symbolize* means “to be a symbol of.”

symbolism (SIM-buhl-izm): The practice of using symbols. See also: *symbol*.

theme (theem): A story’s main message or moral.

tone (tohn): The author’s attitude toward the subject matter or toward the reader or audience. Words that could describe tone include *doubtful, humorous, gleeful, serious, and questioning*. Tone is conveyed through the author’s word choices and the details that he or she includes.

Note: *Scope* does not accept Google Docs. If you are e-mailing your entry, please send a .pdf or .doc file.

Rachel Carson Contest

Explain why the U.S. should create Rachel Carson Day—a national holiday to celebrate her legacy. Your entry can be in the form of an essay, a video, a slideshow, or a poem. Five winners will get *World Without Fish* by Mark Kurlansky.

Entries will be judged on:

- ⇒ a clearly stated central idea
- ⇒ use of supporting evidence
- ⇒ good organization and transitions
- ⇒ grammar, spelling, and punctuation

My name: _____

My home phone number: _____ My grade: _____

My teacher's name: _____ My teacher's e-mail: _____

School name: _____

School address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ ZIP: _____

School phone number: _____

My parent or legal guardian consents
to my participation in this contest.

Parent's or legal guardian's signature: _____

Include this form with your written entry and send both to: scopemag@scholastic.com
or mail them to: Rachel Carson Contest, c/o *Scope*, P.O. Box 712, New York, NY 10013-0712

ENTRIES MUST BE RECEIVED BY May 15, 2017!