

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 of *Sherlock Holmes and the Midnight Killer*.

Flashback to the Roylott Estate, England, 1881

SD3: The lights come up on a large stone house.
SD1: The house is grand but shows signs of neglect: The windows are dirty, the stones are crumbling, and weeds crowd the front garden.
SD2: The wind howls. Rain beats against the windows.
SD3: The front of the house lifts away, revealing three bedrooms connected by a hallway.
SD1: The room on the far right—Dr. Roylott’s—is dark.
SD2: The middle room—Julia’s—is bright but empty.
SD3: The room on the far left—Helen’s—is also bright. In it, Julia and Helen talk quietly.
Julia: The past few nights, I’ve heard the strangest whistle around midnight.

Helen: Some sort of animal?
Julia: Perhaps . . . In any case, I’m sure it’s nothing to worry about. It’s late; I should let you get to sleep.
SD1: Julia returns to her room. She and Helen go to bed.
SD2: The stage lights dim. After a long silence, the village clock can be heard striking midnight.
Julia: AAAAAHHHHHHHHHHH!
SD3: Helen leaps out of bed and runs into the hallway. She hears a low whistle and then a clanging sound.
SD1: Julia opens her door, her face contorted in horror.
Julia: It was the band! The speckled band!
SD2: Julia falls to the floor.
Helen: Help! Help!
Roylott (coming to Julia’s side): She is dead.

1. In the box below, write one or two words that describe the mood of Scene 2:

Now let’s look at what creates this mood.

2. Plot

Briefly explain how what is happening helps create the mood you identified.

3. Setting

Think about where the action takes place. How does this contribute to the mood?

4. Dialogue

What the characters say and how they say it help create the mood.

UNDERLINE at least three lines of dialogue in the scene that help create the mood you identified.

5. Word Choice

Look at all the vivid verbs the playwrights use! These verbs help create the mood.

CIRCLE at least five verbs in the scene that help create the mood you identified.

6. Imagery

The imagery the playwrights use also helps create the mood. (Imagery is description that appeals to the reader's sense of sight, hearing, taste, smell, or touch—also known as sensory details.)

PLACE A STAR NEXT TO at least three sensory details in the passage that help create the mood you identified.

7. Heightened Senses

Consider the sensory details you starred in number 6. Explain how these details help create the mood.