Name _____ Date _____

How a Poem's Form Adds Meaning: A Sonnet About a Skateboard

Directions: Read the poem carefully. Notice how it is built: its number of lines, its rhymes and its stanzas. Then answer each question.

Secondhand Board

The board came secondhand, its corners worn,
its grip tape smoothed where someone else had stood.
One wheel would squeak, the painted flames were torn,
and still I rode it anywhere I could.

I fell on gravel, sidewalks, grass, and street;
I fell so often that my mother sighed.
Each time I jumped, the board shot from my feet,
and every scrape was proof of how I tried.

I practiced in the lot until the light
turned orange, then turned purple, then turned gray.
I swore that I would quit for good each night,
then grabbed the board again the following day.

At last the board and I rose through the air,
and every fall I'd taken got me there.

1. Count the lines of the poem. How many lines does it have, and what kind of poem does that make it?

A. Sixteen lines, which makes it a limerick

B. Twelve lines, which makes it a ballad

C. Fourteen lines, which makes it a sonnet

D. Fourteen lines, which makes it a haiku

2. Which pattern shows how the lines of the poem rhyme?

A. AABB CCDD EEFF GG

B. ABCB DEFE GHIH JJ

C. ABBA ABBA CDE CDE

D. ABAB CDCD EFEF GG

3. In the first stanza, the word "worn" rhymes with "torn" at the end of another line. How do these rhyming words help describe the board?

A. They are the only rhyming words in the poem.

B. They stress how old and damaged the board is.

C. They show that the board is brand new.

D. They show that the speaker tore the board on purpose.

4. A quatrain is a group of four lines, and a couplet is a pair of rhyming lines. Match each part of the poem to what happens in it.

Write the letter of the matching answer on each line.

1. _____ First quatrain
2. _____ Second quatrain
3. _____ Third quatrain
4. _____ Final couplet

A. The speaker finally rises into the air.
B. The speaker practices until dark and keeps coming back.
C. The speaker falls again and again.
D. The speaker describes the worn, secondhand board.

5. In a sonnet, the turn is the place where the poem's thinking shifts. Which words signal the turn in this poem?

A. "then grabbed the board again"
B. "At last the board and I"
C. "Each time I jumped"
D. "I practiced in the lot"

6. How does the third quatrain set up the turn in the couplet?

A. It shows the speaker nearly quitting but coming back each day, so the success feels earned.
B. It shows the speaker landing the jump for the first time.
C. It describes the old board in detail.
D. It shows the speaker giving up skateboarding for good.

7. The last line says that "every fall I'd taken got me there." How does this line change the way the reader sees the falls in the earlier quatrains?

A. The falls happened only once or twice.
B. The falls hurt so badly that the speaker quit.
C. The falls were steps toward success, not just failures.
D. The falls were the fault of the old, broken board.

8. The poem ends with a two-line couplet after twelve lines of struggle. How does this short ending fit what happens?

A. Its shortness shows that the speaker ran out of things to say.
B. It repeats the first quatrain to show that nothing changed.
C. It breaks the rhyme pattern to show the speaker failed again.
D. Its quick, rhyming finish feels sudden and satisfying, like the speaker's rise into the air at last.