Analyzing Literary Techniques from Forge

In this novel, Laurie Halse Anderson incorporates some literary techniques to make the story more descriptive. Complete the following packet so that you can familiarize yourself with these terms. **You will be tested on their meanings. Use complete sentences and write in PEN.**

***Term #1: A **simile** is a literary technique in which two unlike things are compared using the words “like” or “as.”

1. What two things are being compared in the following simile?

   “Like a flint hitting steel, a memory spark, then fired” (4).

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2. In what way(s) are the two things similar? Be specific.

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3. What two things are being compared in the following simile?

   “…the drums pounded like the heartbeat of a tremendous beast” (22).

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4. What two things are being compared in the following simile?

   “I leapt over a cook fire, stumbled on a rock, fell to the ground, and scuttled on all fours like a crab…” (38).

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***Term #2: A metaphor is a direct comparison between two objects that seem to be dissimilar.

1. What two things are being compared in the metaphor below?

   “The cold was a beast gnawing at my fingers and toes” (3).

2. What two things are being compared in the following metaphor?

   “The sunset burned red, a coal buried deep in ash” (75).

   Explain how the two things being compared in question 2 are similar.
***Term #3: Personification is a literary device in which an author gives human qualities to inanimate (nonliving) or nonhuman things.

1. What is being personified in the excerpt below, and what word makes it seem human?

“The river gurgled and tugged, trying to pull the boat back into the current” (4).

2. What is being personified in the excerpt below, and what word makes it seem human?

“My mind would run off without leave, and I’d find myself wondering if she had a warm place for the winter” (68).

***Term #4: An idiom is an expression that has a completely different meaning than that of the individual words. It is a figure of speech. Example: “Break a leg” is an idiom that means “good luck.” The actual words do not sound positive at all, but as English speakers, we know that the phrase is actually encouraging when used in certain situations.

Explain the meaning of each bolded idiom in the sentences below.

1. “He [Eben] could talk the bark off a tree” (36).

2. “I had the unpleasant sensation that I was about to jump from a fry pan into the fire” (41).
***Term #5: A flashback** refers to an interruption in the current or present action to include something that happened in the past.

1. *Why do you think that the author uses flashbacks in this novel? How are they important to the current action of the story?*

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***Term #6: Onomatopoeia** is when a word imitates a natural sound. The ear perceives the word and actual sound similarly. Examples include words such as “buzz,” “hiccup,” or “crunch.”

1. *Read the following excerpts below:*
   - Explain how onomatopoeia occurs in BOTH excerpts.
   - What word or words are used that demonstrate onomatopoeia?
   - How did the use of onomatopoeia add to the story?

   “Crrr-ack.
   Heavy boots crashed through the forest. Voices shouted.
   Crrr-ack. BOOM!
   An angry hornet hissed past my ear and smacked into the tree trunk behind me with a low thuuump.” (9)

   “The bright flash and the explosion of firing guns were quick followed by the thud, thud, thud, of musketballs hitting the dirt and fence rails around us” (23).
***Term #7: Symbolism is a literary device where one thing stands for or represents a larger idea.

1. Read the following excerpt. What does the hat symbolize?

   “You’d say that only a fool would cry over the loss of a raggedy felt hat. But that had been my father’s hat…I’d worn it on my head since the day the redcoats shot Father on Breed’s Hill” (30).

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2. The compass is a symbol. Explain what the broken compass symbolizes. What does the needle inside of Curzon represent? Why do you think that Anderson uses the symbol of a compass in the book? Re-read pages 20 and 21 in order to answer this question.

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***Term #8: Alliteration is the repetition of initial consonant sounds in two or more words in the same sentence or line of poetry.

1. How is alliteration used in the excerpt below?

   “I was partnered with a mud-spattered militiaman whose pale face was creased with lines of melancholy” (27).

***Term #9: Hyperbole is an exaggeration that is not meant to be taken literally, or exactly.

1. Explain why the following excerpt is a hyperbole.

   “I was sure that every wolf in the forest could hear me, smell me” (15).

Final Question: What two literary techniques are used in this excerpt? Explain how each is used.

   “The camp awoke before dawn – carts rattling, cook pots clanging, axes biting into wood, bold conversating voices, and the drummer boys at their task, announcing the day” (31).