

The platform clock

Poetry | 6 questions

Name: _____ Date: _____

Read once for the main idea. Look back at the passage while answering. Find words that support each answer.

The platform clock counts out our wait;
Its hands creep past the painted nine.
A porter wheels a rattling crate
Along the pale and yellow line.

Beyond the tracks, the grasses lean;
A breeze lifts dust beside the wall.
A pigeon crosses, grey and green,
Then settles where the shadows fall.

The loudspeaker clears its crackling throat.
A new arrival time is read.
I fold my ticket with my coat
And count the minutes still ahead.

Then rails begin a distant song;
A light grows larger through the rain.
Our quiet waiting stretches long,
Then gathers speed beside the train.

Questions

Choose one answer for each question. You can refer to the passage. The answer notes start on a separate page.

1. What does the porter move?

- A. A rattling crate
- B. The platform clock
- C. A folded coat
- D. A loudspeaker

2. What information comes from the loudspeaker?

- A. The price of a ticket
- B. The pigeon's location
- C. The number on the crate
- D. A new arrival time

3. What does “creep” suggest about the clock's hands?

- A. They move backwards
- B. They have stopped completely
- C. They make a loud rattle
- D. They seem to move slowly

4. What does “clears its crackling throat” describe?

- A. The train releasing steam
- B. The pigeon calling from the wall
- C. The speaker's noise before the announcement
- D. The porter coughing beside the crate

5. Which details suggest the train is approaching?

- A. The clock's painted nine and the porter's crate
- B. A pigeon and the folded coat
- C. Dust beside the wall and a new ticket
- D. Sound from the rails and a growing light

6. How does the final stanza change the mood?

- A. It shifts from slow waiting towards movement
- B. It shows the speaker deciding to go home
- C. It makes the platform completely silent
- D. It suggests the clock has broken

Answers and explanations

Try the questions before reading these notes. A practice score is not an exam grade.

1. A. A rattling crate

The first stanza says the porter wheels a rattling crate.

2. D. A new arrival time

The third stanza says a new arrival time is read.

3. D. They seem to move slowly

The image makes the passing time feel slow to someone waiting.

4. C. The speaker's noise before the announcement

The loudspeaker is given a human action to describe its crackling before speech.

5. D. Sound from the rails and a growing light

The final stanza introduces the rails' sound and a light growing larger, followed by the train.

6. A. It shifts from slow waiting towards movement

The earlier waiting gives way to the approaching train and the phrase "gathers speed".

Original passage written for Trace Learn. Authored 2026-09-30. These teaching questions are not a school entrance paper.