



CLARIFY

ollie
360 flip
cool grinds

HEY, JOSH, YOU DID SOME COOL GRINDS ON THE RAIL TODAY

SYMBOLISM

Why has the author introduced a reference to puddles being filled with blue sky? Is this symbolic? What connections can you make to the underlying message?

LANGUAGE FEATURES

Jargon – words and phrases used by a particular group or culture that are often not understood by other people.

Find some examples of jargon on this page.

Every hour I worked, and every trolley I pushed, I thought about my skateboard and how I was going to ollie down the five-stair with my new deck.

Last week I nearly did it. Then I hit the ground wrong on my old deck and finally snapped it.

At home, my new stepdad – Raymond – always says to Mum what a waste of time and money skateboarding is.

HE'S NEVER COME TO WATCH ME SKATEBOARD.

If he did, he'd see how much you have to practise if you want to land any tricks.

He could see the older guys and how fast they go, rolling down the ramp and busting out a 360 flip over the pyramid and landing it.

He might even say to me, "Hey, Josh, you did some cool grinds on the rail today."

Mum comes down and watches me at the park sometimes and she always gets nervous.

"It's all that concrete," she says.

She watches and watches while I mess up my landings, then she turns away just when I do a good one.

I'll bet with my new deck I'll be able to land the five-stair. That's my next project.

INFERENCE

What can you infer about how Raymond's dismissal of skateboarding affects Josh?

After I've bought my deck and fitted it to my trucks and wheels, I'll get a burger, then I'm off to the skatepark. It should be dry. It hasn't rained again, and everywhere I look the puddles are filled up with blue sky.

CLARIFY
skate trucks

THE BELLS RING...

as we come through a road crossing. A whole bunch of black and white calves at the fence suddenly run off, as if they've never seen a train before.

In the next field, a red tractor makes a mud trail across the grass. Now I can see a boy in the backyard of a farmhouse, hanging out shirts. The house has a concrete driveway and a ramp up to the door – good enough to skate.

I'm on this train a lot, and sometimes I wonder about all the places I look into.

I WONDER WHAT IT WOULD BE LIKE TO LIVE IN THEM AND HAVE ONE OF THOSE FARMERS, SAY, FOR A DAD, INSTEAD OF RAYMOND.

Last night at the table, when I asked if I could buy my new board today, that was right when the storm broke.

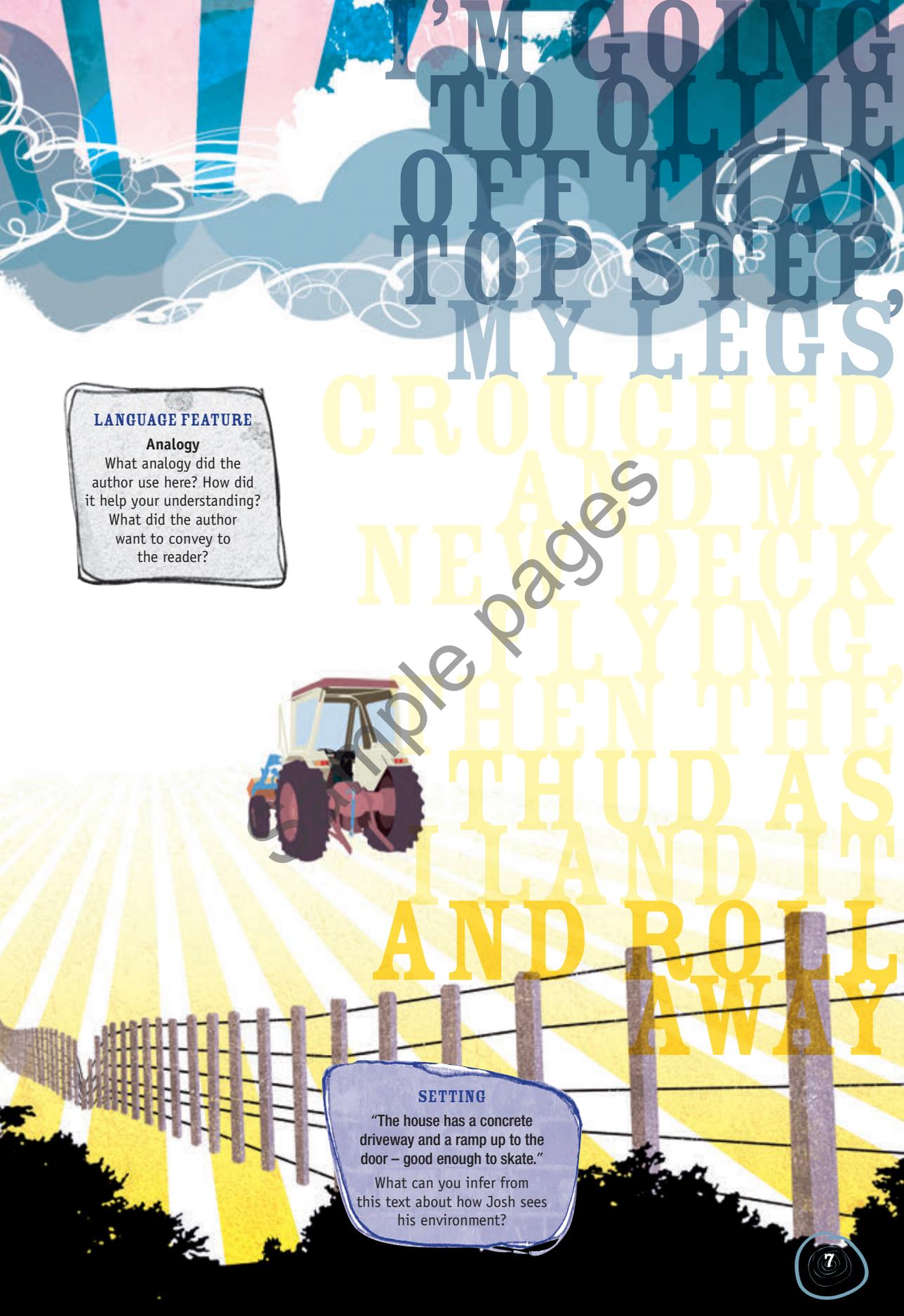
Outside it was thunder and rain falling on the roof so hard it was like we were under a waterfall. And, inside, it was Raymond going on at me about skateboarding – on and on, like the rain.

I just thought of how our town looked as if it was cut off by water some days – as if trying to reach it was hopeless – and yet the train would always get through.

And that's how it is, because here I am, and the guard is calling out the next stop.

The train lets out a blast and I pick up my backpack and check everything's there – my wheels, my skate trucks, my hardware and my skate tool.

I jump out onto the platform and I'm thinking about that five-stair – how I'm going to ollie off that top step, my legs crouched and my new deck flying, then the thud as I land it and roll away.



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Multiple pages

LANGUAGE FEATURE

Analogy

What analogy did the author use here? How did it help your understanding?

What did the author want to convey to the reader?



SETTING

"The house has a concrete driveway and a ramp up to the door – good enough to skate."

What can you infer from this text about how Josh sees his environment?