Dust and Data

Trace how viewpoint shapes a writer's choices.

11.T.C.2.c "Evaluate the extent to which historical, disciplinary, and/or personal perspectives affect authors' stylistic and thematic choices in text. (I)"

NAME _____ DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline one phrase that shows personal experience, circle two details that show the writer's professional approach, and number two details that place the account in its historical moment. Use your marks to judge how these viewpoints shape the report's style and ideas.

County Notes After Black Sunday

1 On April 14, 1935, a black cloud crossed the Oklahoma Panhandle before supper. By morning, dust lay in the window tracks and along the kitchen table, though Mother had stuffed rags beneath the door. I wrote down the wind direction in my county notebook, then helped Father shake grit from the seed sacks. Neighbors called the storm Black Sunday. In the years since, I have kept records of rainfall, wheat yields, and the days when school closed because children could not see the road home.

2 At the courthouse, I map each farm with bare fields and measure slopes before recommending contour plowing, strip crops, or grass cover. Such plans cannot bring back a lost calf or a family that has already boarded a westbound train. Still, the figures matter. A field left uncovered can send its soil across a fence in one hard wind. Federal crews are planting lines of trees on the plains, and the men who remain ask whether those thin green rows can hold against another dark afternoon.

3 When I visit the Carter place, Mrs. Carter does not ask for a chart. She points to the empty chair where her brother used to mend harnesses, then asks if the new grass will give her boys a reason to stay. I tell her about the work crew scheduled for May, but I do not promise rain. My report will include acres, costs, and a sketch of the ridge. It will also carry the smell of dust in a bread pan and the sound of Father coughing after the storm. A map can show where soil traveled. It cannot show everything that traveled with it.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. How does the opening paragraph's movement between household details and record keeping shape the writer's style? Use two details from the paragraph.

2. What disciplinary perspective is most visible in paragraph 2? Explain how two stylistic choices reveal that perspective.

3. To what extent does the 1930s Dust Bowl setting shape the passage's ideas? Cite two historical details and explain their effect.

4. How does paragraph 3 complicate the writer's technical report? Explain what the final two sentences suggest about the limits of the writer's professional tools.

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

Choose a historical event or issue you know. Write a 100-130 word author's note explaining how one historical, disciplinary, or personal perspective would shape an imagined text about it. Name the audience, describe at least two stylistic choices, and state the theme that perspective would emphasize.

ANSWER KEY

Dust and Data

GRADE 11 · 11.T.C.2.c

PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Underline one phrase that shows personal experience, circle two details that show the writer's professional approach, and number two details that place the account in its historical moment. Use your marks to judge how these viewpoints shape the report's style and ideas. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 · ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	How does the opening paragraph's movement between household details and record keeping shape the writer's style? Use two details from the paragraph.	**It blends vivid, personal images, such as dust on the kitchen table and Father shaking seed sacks, with factual record keeping about wind, rainfall, yields, and school closures. The style is both intimate and observant.**
2	What disciplinary perspective is most visible in paragraph 2? Explain how two stylistic choices reveal that perspective.	**The writer has an agricultural or land-management perspective. Mapping farms, measuring slopes, and recommending contour plowing, strip crops, and grass cover use technical, solution-focused language.**
3	To what extent does the 1930s Dust Bowl setting shape the passage's ideas? Cite two historical details and explain their effect.	**The setting strongly shapes the passage. Black Sunday, families boarding westbound trains, and federal tree-planting crews place private losses within a wider environmental and economic crisis while introducing efforts to respond to it.**
4	How does paragraph 3 complicate the writer's technical report? Explain what the final two sentences suggest about the limits of the writer's professional tools.	**The personal details about an empty chair, Father coughing, and dust in a bread pan add losses that charts cannot measure. The final sentences suggest that maps can track soil movement but cannot fully represent human displacement, memory, or suffering.**

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

If I wrote about the 1969 Apollo 11 landing as a young engineer who tested spacecraft systems, I would use precise verbs, measurements, and a controlled, chronological structure. I would describe checklists, radio signals, fuel limits, and the quiet work behind the televised moment. My audience would be students who think exploration depends only on bold heroes. Because my professional viewpoint values evidence and procedure, my theme would be that achievement is built through careful cooperation. I would avoid treating the landing as a simple personal triumph, although I might include one brief image of families watching the broadcast to show why the mission mattered beyond the control room.

Accept other defensible evaluations when students connect a perspective to specific language, structure, imagery, or themes in the passage. For the open response, accept varied events and viewpoints if the response is 100-130 words and clearly links viewpoint to audience, stylistic choices, and theme.