

Reviewing River Lanterns

Evaluate a review using evidence and connections.

7R9 "Use established criteria in order to evaluate the quality of texts. Make connections to other texts, ideas, cultural perspectives, eras, and personal experiences. (RI&RL)"

NAME _____

DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK _____ Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline two places where the reviewer uses a criterion or evidence to judge the novel's quality. Circle one connection to another text, idea, cultural perspective, or era, then number the sentence with the reviewer's final judgment.

A Review of *River of Lanterns*

- ① When I evaluate historical fiction, I ask whether the setting fits the time period, whether characters have believable goals, and whether the story gives more than one viewpoint. In *River of Lanterns*, a novel set in 1912, twelve-year-old Mei helps her family run a laundry in a growing Western town. The author includes details such as hand irons, train schedules, and crowded boarding rooms. These details make daily life feel specific rather than like a vague "olden days" backdrop.
- ② The novel is strongest when Mei and her older brother disagree about how safely to respond after a customer insults their family. Mei wants to speak publicly, while her brother fears losing work. Their conflict gives each character a clear goal and shows that one family does not share one opinion. Still, the town's mayor appears only as a cruel obstacle. Because he has no motives or complexity, the novel offers a thinner view of people who held power.
- ③ I connected Mei's determination to the speaker in Langston Hughes's poem "Mother to Son," who urges a child to keep climbing despite hardship. Both texts value persistence, but they use different forms: Hughes uses a single speaker and metaphor, while the novel builds tension through scenes and dialogue. I also thought about how stories from immigrant communities can challenge the old idea that the American West belonged only to cowboys. Overall, the novel meets most of my criteria, although a fuller portrayal of the mayor would improve it.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE _____ Use the passage

1 How do the details about hand irons, train schedules, and boarding rooms help the novel meet one of the reviewer's criteria?

2 Does the reviewer think the novel fully succeeds at showing more than one viewpoint? Use evidence about the family and the mayor.

3 What theme connects *River of Lanterns* and "Mother to Son," and how does each text present that theme differently?

4 What old idea about the American West does the reviewer say the novel challenges?

3 YOUR TURN _____ Your own words

Choose a text you know well. In 4 or 5 sentences, judge its quality using two criteria, give evidence for each judgment, and connect it to another text, idea, cultural perspective, era, or your life.

PART 1 • READ AND MARK

Underline two places where the reviewer uses a criterion or evidence to judge the novel's quality. Circle one connection to another text, idea, cultural perspective, or era, then number the sentence with the reviewer's final judgment. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 • ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	How do the details about hand irons, train schedules, and boarding rooms help the novel meet one of the reviewer's criteria?	They make daily life feel specific rather than vague, helping the 1912 setting seem convincing.
2	Does the reviewer think the novel fully succeeds at showing more than one viewpoint? Use evidence about the family and the mayor.	Not fully. Mei and her brother have different goals and opinions, but the mayor is only a cruel obstacle with no motives or complexity.
3	What theme connects <i>River of Lanterns</i> and "Mother to Son," and how does each text present that theme differently?	Both texts value persistence through hardship. Hughes uses one speaker and a metaphor, while the novel uses scenes and dialogue.
4	What old idea about the American West does the reviewer say the novel challenges?	It challenges the idea that the American West belonged only to cowboys by presenting a story from an immigrant community.

PART 3 • YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

I judge *The Giver* by Lois Lowry using clear world-building and meaningful character change. The rules about jobs, memories, and family units make the community's control understandable. Jonas changes from accepting the rules to questioning them, so his choices matter. The novel connects to Kurt Vonnegut's "Harrison Bergeron" because both show societies that limit individual choice, but Jonas acts quietly while Vonnegut uses exaggeration.

Accept any defensible evaluation that names two criteria, gives relevant evidence from the chosen text, and makes a meaningful connection. The connection may identify a similarity, difference, or insight about another text, idea, culture, era, or personal experience.