

Reading Like a Reviewer

Use clear criteria and connections to judge a text.

8R9 "Choose and develop 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 the three criteria Ortiz uses. Circle one piece of evidence for each criterion, then number the two connections she makes to other texts or ideas.

Reviewing History Through Fiction

- ① Reviewer Lena Ortiz evaluates the historical novel *Paper Cranes at Dusk*, set in 1942. Her first criterion is historical accuracy. The book explains that Executive Order 9066 allowed the military to create exclusion zones, then shows Emi's family leaving Seattle for Minidoka, an incarceration camp in Idaho. Ortiz checks these details against museum records and notices one weakness: a scene suggests every Japanese American was sent away, although some people lived outside the exclusion zones. This error makes the novel less reliable.
- ② Ortiz's second criterion is perspective. She asks whether Emi has choices, doubts, and family relationships, rather than serving only as a symbol of suffering. Emi argues with her brother about obeying camp rules and records her grandmother's recipes, so Ortiz finds her voice complex. Ortiz connects the novel to Jeanne Wakatsuki Houston's memoir *Farewell to Manzanar*. Both texts show families losing freedom, but the memoir offers firsthand memories from Manzanar, while the novel imagines life at Minidoka. The connection helps Ortiz separate documented experience from invented scenes.
- ③ Finally, Ortiz judges the novel's craft. She values clear scenes and dialogue that reveal how policies affect ordinary people. A quiet scene in which Emi folds a paper crane after receiving a censored letter makes loss feel personal without claiming that this exact event happened. Ortiz also connects the story to present-day debates about belonging and civil rights. Because the novel combines researched history, a respectful Japanese American perspective, and vivid writing, she recommends it, while warning readers to verify its historical claims with firsthand accounts and reliable sources.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE _____ Use the passage

1 What is Ortiz's first criterion? Explain how the error she identifies affects the novel's quality under that criterion.

2 What criterion does Ortiz use to evaluate Emi's portrayal? Give two details that show the novel meets this criterion.

3 How does comparing the novel with *Farewell to Manzanar* help Ortiz evaluate the novel?

4 Which of Ortiz's criteria is best supported by the paper-crane scene? Explain why.

3 YOUR TURN _____ Your own words

Choose a historical novel, memoir, or article you have read. In 90 to 120 words, name three criteria you would use to evaluate it, then use evidence to judge its quality. Make two meaningful connections to another text, an idea, an era, a cultural perspective, or your experience.

PART 1 • READ AND MARK

Underline the three criteria Ortiz uses. Circle one piece of evidence for each criterion, then number the two connections she makes to other texts or ideas. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 • ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	What is Ortiz's first criterion? Explain how the error she identifies affects the novel's quality under that criterion.	Her first criterion is historical accuracy. The claim that every Japanese American was sent away is inaccurate, so it makes the novel less reliable.
2	What criterion does Ortiz use to evaluate Emi's portrayal? Give two details that show the novel meets this criterion.	Ortiz evaluates perspective. Emi argues with her brother about camp rules and records her grandmother's recipes, showing that she has relationships, choices, and a complex voice.
3	How does comparing the novel with <i>Farewell to Manzanar</i> help Ortiz evaluate the novel?	The comparison helps Ortiz distinguish documented, firsthand memories in the memoir from imagined scenes in the novel. Both texts show families losing freedom, but they offer different kinds of evidence.
4	Which of Ortiz's criteria is best supported by the paper-crane scene? Explain why.	Craft is best supported. The quiet, specific scene makes Emi's loss feel personal and shows how policies affect an ordinary person.

PART 3 • YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

I evaluate *Farewell to Manzanar* using accuracy, a full family perspective, and effective scenes. As a memoir, it gives Jeanne Wakatsuki Houston's firsthand memories of being incarcerated at Manzanar, so it is strong evidence of one family's experience. Its family perspective is powerful because her parents and siblings respond differently to camp life. The clear scenes make the unfairness feel immediate. I connect it to *Paper Cranes at Dusk*: both portray Japanese American families losing freedom, but the novel invents events. I also connect the memoir to civil-rights debates, because government actions can limit people's rights when fear replaces fairness.

Accept other reasonable criteria when students define them through specific evidence. Strong responses make two relevant connections and distinguish between a text's evidence, perspective, and quality.