Outside the Sentence

How history and identity shape a narrator's words

11.3.R.1 "Students will analyze the extent to which historical, cultural, and/or global perspectives affect authors' stylistic choices in grade-level literary and informational texts."

NAME _____ DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline two places where the narrator's words contrast with official language, and circle one detail that shows the family's cultural perspective. Number your marks so you can refer to them in your answers.

The Address

1. In 1942, the notice on our Oakland block said families of Japanese ancestry had to leave. My father read it aloud, though he had read every word twice already. At school I had learned to say *we* when we talked about the United States. Now the notice called us "persons of Japanese ancestry," as if my parents and I lived outside the sentence. Mother wrapped our plates in newspaper, careful to save the blue one Grandma used at supper. She did not ask whether the dishes would survive. She asked how many bags each person could carry.

2. At Tanforan, a former racetrack south of San Francisco, a worker called the place an assembly center. I tried the words aloud: assembly sounded like a school bell, a place where you might leave after the last class. Our room had been a horse stall. Dust settled on Mother's folded blankets before she could set them down. The walls did not reach the roof, and strangers' voices came through the gaps. When Grandma asked in Japanese whether I was cold, I answered in English, "Only at night." Neither language made the room warmer.

3. That evening Father took a pencil from his pocket and wrote our old street address on the back of the notice. He made the numbers dark enough to show through the paper. "Keep it," he said. I could have described the whole block: the grocer who saved bruised peaches for us, the bus that sighed at the corner, a neighbor who stopped waving after December. Instead I wrote one line beneath his numbers: *We lived here.* It was smaller than the government's notice, and just as deliberate. I folded the paper so both lines faced outward.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. In the first paragraph, how does the contrast between *we* and "persons of Japanese ancestry" convey the narrator's view of the notice?

2. Why does the narrator compare "assembly" to a school bell before describing the horse stall? Explain how the historical situation gives this word choice its force.

3. How does the brief exchange in Japanese and English shape the reader's understanding of the narrator's cultural perspective?

4. How strongly does the family's forced removal shape the style of the final paragraph? Support your judgment with two choices the author makes.

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

Imagine an Oakland neighbor in 1942 watching the family leave. Write two sentences from that neighbor's point of view, then two sentences explaining how the neighbor's historical position shaped at least two stylistic choices in your writing.

ANSWER KEY

Outside the Sentence

GRADE 11 · 11.3.R.1

PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Underline two places where the narrator's words contrast with official language, and circle one detail that shows the family's cultural perspective. Number your marks so you can refer to them in your answers. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 · ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	In the first paragraph, how does the contrast between *we* and "persons of Japanese ancestry" convey the narrator's view of the notice?	**The narrator sees the family as part of the United States, but the notice reduces them to a category set apart from that shared "we."**
2	Why does the narrator compare "assembly" to a school bell before describing the horse stall? Explain how the historical situation gives this word choice its force.	**The school comparison makes "assembly center" sound ordinary and temporary. The horse stall exposes the gap between that official term and the family's confinement.**
3	How does the brief exchange in Japanese and English shape the reader's understanding of the narrator's cultural perspective?	**Moving between the two languages shows the narrator's connection to both Grandma and an English-speaking American life. The final sentence shows that neither language can change their conditions.**
4	How strongly does the family's forced removal shape the style of the final paragraph? Support your judgment with two choices the author makes.	**It shapes the paragraph strongly: the father writes their old address on the notice, and the narrator answers it with the short line "We lived here." Both choices turn official paper into a record of the home they were forced to leave.**

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

The house across the street went quiet before breakfast, but no moving truck came. I watched the mother lift one suitcase while the notice at the corner fluttered like a flag no one wanted to claim. I contrasted the quiet house with the absent truck because this neighbor can see that the family's departure is not an ordinary move. The unwanted flag suggests a neighbor who has heard wartime calls for loyalty but is beginning to question what the government is doing.

Accept supported interpretations that connect a specific stylistic choice to the 1942 removal or the narrator's cultural perspective. For Part 3, look for two narrative sentences and two explanatory sentences addressing distinct choices.