Bread and Hope

Read historical fiction and a literary selection published in 1930.

6.T.PM.1.b "Read and comprehend one genre of literature from a particular time period. (I)"

NAME _____ DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

YOUR JOB As you read, underline three details that show the time period and circle one detail that shows Lena's feelings.

Bread on Saturday

1 On Saturday morning in 1933, Lena balanced a tin pail on her bicycle handlebars and pedaled toward the Chicago bakery. Her father had been out of work since the steel mill cut its crew, and every coin mattered. At the shop, a sign offered day-old bread for three cents. Lena counted her pennies twice before choosing a loaf. She wished the small kitchen at home could smell like cinnamon instead of coal smoke and thin soup.

2 Outside, men waited beside a brick building where a relief office gave families food tickets. Lena recognized Mr. Ortiz from upstairs, although his clean collar was frayed at the edge. He tipped his hat and said the office line was longer than yesterday. Lena wanted to ask whether he had found work, but she only held out the bread. Mr. Ortiz broke off a piece for his little girl, then promised to pay Lena back when he could.

3 That evening, Lena's mother spread the loaf across four plates and saved the heel for tomorrow. The radio announced that President Roosevelt was speaking again, but the family kept it low so the neighbors could sleep. Lena thought about Mr. Ortiz's promise. It did not fill the soup pot, yet it made her feel less alone. She folded the bread wrapper into a neat square and decided to carry water for Mrs. Ortiz before school on Monday.

1 WORKS CITED

Use with the passage

Period excerpt: Langston Hughes, Not Without Laughter (Alfred A. Knopf, 1930), chapter 1, p. 3. Primary scan: https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Langston_Hughes_-_Not_Without_Laughter.pdf. Public-domain U.S. 1930 publication.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. What two details show that this scene takes place during the Great Depression?

2. How do the economic conditions affect Lena's family? Use one detail from the passage.

3. How does Lena's thinking change by the end of the passage?

4. Why is this passage historical fiction instead of a nonfiction account? Use one time-period detail and one story detail.

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

Period-origin reading: fiction from the 1930s. Read this opening from Langston Hughes, Not Without Laughter, Alfred A. Knopf, 1930, chapter 1, printed page 3. Unlike Bread on Saturday, a classroom story set in 1933, this novel was actually published in the period. Pullet means young hen; sulphurous means sulfur-like/yellow here; sultry means hot and close.

Aunt Hager Williams stood in her doorway and looked out at the sun. The western sky was a sulphurous yellow and the sun a red ball dropping slowly behind the trees and house-tops. Its setting left the rest of the heavens grey with clouds.

"Huh! A storm's comin'," said Aunt Hager aloud.

A pullet ran across the back yard and into a square-cut hole in an unpainted piano-box which served as the roosting-house. An old hen clucked her brood together and, with the tiny chicks, went into a small box beside the large one. The air was very still. Not a leaf stirred on the green apple-tree. Not a single closed flower of the morning-glories trembled on the back fence. The air was very still and yellow. Something sultry and oppressive made a small boy in the doorway stand closer to his grandmother, clutching her apron with his brown hands.

Answer: What change does Aunt Hager expect? Give two details that build the tense mood and explain how the boy responds. Then write a 3-sentence historical-fiction scene set during the Great Depression in a different U.S. location. Include two accurate details of the era and show a character facing a problem caused by economic hardship.

ANSWER KEY

Bread and Hope

GRADE 6 · 6.T.PM.1.b

PART 1 · READ AND MARK

As you read, underline three details that show the time period and circle one detail that shows Lena's feelings. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 · ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	What two details show that this scene takes place during the Great Depression?	**Possible details include the mill layoffs, the cheap day-old bread, the relief office giving food tickets, and President Roosevelt speaking on the radio.**
2	How do the economic conditions affect Lena's family? Use one detail from the passage.	**Money is scarce, so Lena carefully counts pennies to buy inexpensive bread, and her mother divides one loaf among four plates.**
3	How does Lena's thinking change by the end of the passage?	**Mr. Ortiz's promise makes Lena feel less alone, and she decides to help his family by carrying water for Mrs. Ortiz.**
4	Why is this passage historical fiction instead of a nonfiction account? Use one time-period detail and one story detail.	**It uses real period details, such as relief offices and Roosevelt's radio speeches, but it tells an invented story about Lena, Mr. Ortiz, and the bread.**

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

Period reading: Aunt Hager expects a storm. The yellow sky and very still air create an uneasy mood; the boy moves close to his grandmother and clutches her apron, suggesting worry. This is an excerpt of a novel published in 1930, not merely a modern story set then.

Historical-fiction creation: In 1937, Mateo's family reached a migrant camp near Bakersfield, California, after leaving their drought-damaged farm in Oklahoma. His mother checked for fruit-picking jobs, but every opening had already been filled. Mateo traded a jar of peaches for a pair of shoes so he could start school on Monday.

Accept equivalent details that accurately connect the story to the Great Depression and explain how the setting affects the characters. For the writing task, accept varied locations and problems if the response has three sentences, two accurate era details, and a hardship-related conflict. Also check actual comprehension of Hughes's supplied 1930 novel excerpt: approaching storm, two relevant tense-mood details and the boy's response supported by the text. Preserve the author's dialect as literary voice, not an error to correct. Publication date establishes provenance; do not assert that this scene depicts the Depression itself.