

Words at Home

Trace how a 1943 setting shapes a character's choices and a story's events.

6.7.D "analyze how the setting, including historical and cultural settings, influences character and plot development."

NAME _____

DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK _____ Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline details that show the 1943 wartime setting or Diné family culture. Circle the thought, choice, or event that each setting detail influences.

Nizhoni's Report

- ① In the spring of 1943, Nizhoni lived with her family near Window Rock on the Navajo Nation. Her older brother, Ben, had left to join the U.S. Marine Corps. At school, teachers had once told Nizhoni to speak only English, so she kept her Diné words quiet in class. At home, Grandmother corrected her pronunciation while they ground corn and prepared food for a family gathering. Nizhoni loved the sound of the language, but she wondered whether it mattered beyond their home.
- ② One afternoon, a neighbor brought a letter from Ben. He wrote that the Marines had trained him and other Diné speakers to send coded messages during the war. The language they knew at home could help protect military plans because enemies did not understand it. Ben could not reveal where he was, but he asked Nizhoni to keep learning every word. For the first time, she saw her language as something powerful, not something to hide.
- ③ The next week, Nizhoni learned that her school would hold a war-bond assembly. Her teacher asked each student to write an English report about helping the war effort. Nizhoni chose to describe how Diné speakers served as code talkers. She asked to begin with a short Diné greeting, even though she felt nervous. After the teacher agreed, Nizhoni spoke clearly before the crowd. Her decision connected her family's language to a public moment, and the report became the assembly's main event.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE _____ Use the passage

1 How does the school's English-only rule affect Nizhoni at the beginning of the story?

2 What wartime detail in Ben's letter changes Nizhoni's thinking about Diné? Explain the change.

3 Which details from Nizhoni's home life show cultural setting, and how do they influence her?

4 How does the 1943 school assembly move the plot forward?

3 YOUR TURN _____ Your own words

Write exactly four sentences about a character in a historical time or cultural community different from the passage. Include two setting details, then show how the setting causes the character to make a choice and causes one event in the plot.

PART 1 • READ AND MARK

Underline details that show the 1943 wartime setting or Diné family culture. Circle the thought, choice, or event that each setting detail influences. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 • ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	How does the school's English-only rule affect Nizhoni at the beginning of the story?	It makes Nizhoni keep her Diné words quiet in class and question whether her language matters outside home.
2	What wartime detail in Ben's letter changes Nizhoni's thinking about Diné? Explain the change.	Ben explains that Diné speakers use the language to send coded military messages. Nizhoni begins to see the language as powerful instead of something to hide.
3	Which details from Nizhoni's home life show cultural setting, and how do they influence her?	Grandmother corrects her Diné pronunciation while the family prepares food for a gathering. These details show that the language is valued and practiced at home, helping Nizhoni recognize its importance.
4	How does the 1943 school assembly move the plot forward?	The wartime assembly gives Nizhoni a public chance to report on code talkers. She chooses to use a Diné greeting, speaks to the crowd, and makes her family's language part of the event.

PART 3 • YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

During the Great Depression, Eli lives on an Oklahoma farm where his family saves every scrap of cloth. Before a community quilting bee, his grandmother tells stories while neighbors stitch patterns from old shirts. When the school announces a contest for a new flag, Eli decides not to buy fabric. He sews a small flag from saved cloth, and his neighbors choose it for the town hall.

Accept answers that connect specific historical or cultural details to Nizhoni's thoughts, choices, and later events. For the open response, accept varied settings if the student includes two details and clear cause-and-effect between setting, character choice, and plot event.