

Tracks to Tomorrow

Analyze plot, character responses, themes, and setting in a historical fiction scene.

6.7 "Multiple genres: listening, speaking, reading, writing, and thinking using multiple texts--literary elements. The student recognizes and analyzes literary elements within and across increasingly complex traditional, contemporary..."

NAME _____

DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK _____ Read it twice

YOUR JOB Number the plot stages in order: 1 exposition, 2 rising action, 3 climax, 4 falling action, and 5 resolution. Circle the flashback, and underline details that show how the 1942 setting affects Aiko's choices.

Aiko's Suitcase

- ① In spring 1942, twelve-year-old Aiko lived with her family at Tanforan Assembly Center, a former racetrack in California where Japanese Americans were forced to live before being sent to longer-term camps. Their room was a horse stall, scrubbed clean but still smelling of hay. As Aiko mended a torn sleeve, she remembered her grandmother teaching her to stitch cherry blossoms onto festival cloths in their old neighborhood. Now the cloth was packed away. Aiko wanted to stay quiet, yet she also wanted her younger brother Ken to feel safe.
- ② At lunch, Ken returned from the water line with a bloody knee and said older boys had shoved him. Aiko's stomach tightened. She could report them, but Ken begged her not to make trouble. Then a guard announced that families would leave by train the next morning. Ken ran toward the gate, shouting that he would not go. Aiko chased him across the dusty track. When he grabbed the locked gate, she pulled him back as a train whistle sounded beyond the fence.
- ③ Back in the stall, Aiko washed Ken's knee and admitted that she was afraid too. Together, they opened the suitcase and chose one small festival cloth to carry. Their parents joined them, adding a family photograph. In the morning, Aiko held Ken's hand as they boarded the train. The trip was still frightening, but Aiko spoke to him about the garden they would plant wherever they arrived. Keeping a family memory, she decided, could help them face an uncertain future.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE _____ Use the passage

1 Infer two themes in the passage. Give one piece of text evidence for each theme.

2 How do Aiko's internal feelings and her external actions develop the plot? Use at least two details from the passage.

3 Identify the exposition, rising action, climax, falling action, and resolution. Then identify the flashback and explain what it reveals about Aiko.

4 How does the historical and cultural setting influence Aiko's choices and the events of the plot?

3 YOUR TURN _____ Your own words

Write a 6 to 8 sentence scene set in a real historical or cultural setting. Include a flashback, a character's internal feeling and external action, rising action, climax, falling action, and resolution, then end with two themes your scene suggests.

PART 1 • READ AND MARK

Number the plot stages in order: 1 exposition, 2 rising action, 3 climax, 4 falling action, and 5 resolution. Circle the flashback, and underline details that show how the 1942 setting affects Aiko's choices. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 • ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	Infer two themes in the passage. Give one piece of text evidence for each theme.	One theme is that family memories can give people strength during change. Aiko's family carries a festival cloth and photograph. Another theme is that people can face fear by supporting one another. Aiko admits she is afraid, holds Ken's hand, and speaks about a future garden.
2	How do Aiko's internal feelings and her external actions develop the plot? Use at least two details from the passage.	Aiko feels afraid and wants to stay quiet, but her concern for Ken leads her to chase him, pull him from the gate, wash his knee, and hold his hand. Her actions move the family from the conflict at the gate toward leaving together.
3	Identify the exposition, rising action, climax, falling action, and resolution. Then identify the flashback and explain what it reveals about Aiko.	Exposition: Aiko's family lives in a horse stall at Tanforan. Rising action: Ken is hurt, families are told they will leave, and he runs to the gate. Climax: Aiko pulls Ken back from the locked gate as the train whistle sounds. Falling action: Aiko and Ken choose a festival cloth, and their parents add a photograph. Resolution: Aiko and Ken board the train while she imagines planting a garden. The flashback is Aiko remembering her grandmother teaching her to stitch cherry blossoms. It reveals that family traditions matter to her.
4	How does the historical and cultural setting influence Aiko's choices and the events of the plot?	Because Japanese Americans are confined at Tanforan and must leave by train, Aiko cannot simply return to her old neighborhood or avoid the move. The family's festival cloth and photograph connect them to their Japanese American family traditions, so Aiko chooses to carry a memory of home.

PART 3 • YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

During the 1969 Apollo 11 mission, Elena watched a small black-and-white television in her grandparents' crowded apartment. Because the neighborhood had gathered around the only working set, she felt responsible for keeping her little cousin quiet. When the screen flickered, Elena remembered her grandmother describing how families shared radio news during World War II. As the lunar module neared the moon, the signal faded, and her cousin began to cry. Elena took his hand and asked the room to wait silently until the picture returned. When the announcer confirmed the landing, everyone cheered, and Elena laughed with relief. Later, she wrote that shared patience can turn fear into hope and that family stories connect people across generations.

Accept reasonable theme statements that are supported by specific details. Students may mark slightly different boundaries for plot stages if they correctly explain how each event functions in the plot.