Fields of Memory

Track context, character choices, and a text's social purpose.

9.RL.3 "Integration of Concepts Describe how the historical or social function of a text depends on its context (e.g., cultural, situational, historical, geographical)..."

NAME _____ DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline details that establish the 1942 setting, and circle decisions that the setting causes Aiko or her family to make. Number one detail that helps show what removal meant in daily life.

The Tin Box

1 On an April morning in 1942, Aiko stood beside her father's strawberry rows near Seattle. A notice nailed to the farm gate ordered people of Japanese ancestry to report for removal within a week. The paper used official words, but the empty road made its meaning plain. Aiko's father folded the notice into his pocket and told her to pick only berries ripe enough to sell that day. Their neighbors had stopped buying, afraid to be seen at the farm. At sixteen, Aiko wanted to argue, yet she carried the crates quietly toward the shed.

2 By noon, Mrs. Morales, who ran the nearby grocery, came with two jars and no wagon. She paid full price for berries, then asked whether Aiko could hide a tin box in the shed. Inside were farm receipts, a school photograph, and a deed bearing Aiko's grandfather's name. "Keep these dry," Mrs. Morales said. Aiko understood that the box could not stop the order, but it might protect proof that her family had belonged there. When a truck sounded on the highway, Aiko chose the driest corner behind the seed sacks.

3 That evening, the family packed one suitcase each, because the order allowed only what they could carry. Aiko slipped a notebook between sweaters. Before leaving, she copied the gate notice word for word, including its date. Years later, she read those lines at a community meeting where former farmers compared memories and documents. Her notebook did more than record a family's loss. In a time when official notices sounded distant and neutral, her careful copy showed how a government command entered a teenager's work, home, and future. The strawberry field, the shed, and the road gave listeners a map of what had been taken.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. How does the 1942 setting shape why Aiko's father tells her to pick only berries that can be sold that day?

2. How do the strawberry field, the shed, and the highway help move the plot forward?

3. How does Aiko's response to the setting change from the first paragraph to the third paragraph?

4. What social and historical function does Aiko's notebook serve when she reads it at the community meeting?

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

Write a four-sentence historical-fiction mini-scene set in a real social or historical context. Include two setting details, show one choice that setting forces a character to make, and use the final sentence to explain what the scene helps readers understand about that context.

ANSWER KEY

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GRADE 9 · 9.RL.3

PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Underline details that establish the 1942 setting, and circle decisions that the setting causes Aiko or her family to make. Number one detail that helps show what removal meant in daily life. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 · ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	How does the 1942 setting shape why Aiko's father tells her to pick only berries that can be sold that day?	**The removal order gives the family only a week before leaving, and neighbors have stopped buying from the farm, so they must quickly sell what they can.**
2	How do the strawberry field, the shed, and the highway help move the plot forward?	**The field is where the family receives and feels the effects of the order, the shed provides a hiding place for the tin box, and the truck on the highway creates urgency as Aiko hides it.**
3	How does Aiko's response to the setting change from the first paragraph to the third paragraph?	**At first, she wants to argue but works quietly. Later, she actively preserves the notice by copying it into her notebook.**
4	What social and historical function does Aiko's notebook serve when she reads it at the community meeting?	**It preserves personal evidence of Japanese American removal and shows how an official government order affected a teenager's daily life, home, and future.**

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

During the 1960 Greensboro sit-ins, Leon stood outside a lunch counter that served white customers only. The polished stools inside were full, while shoppers watched from the aisle. Because the policy kept him from sitting with his classmates, Leon chose to carry their message to people waiting on the sidewalk. His choice helps readers understand how segregation shaped ordinary spaces and pushed young people to protest.

Accept supported explanations that connect the removal order, anti-Japanese discrimination, and the farm setting to character choices and plot events. For the open task, accept any accurate historical or social context if the response includes setting details, a setting-driven choice, and a clear explanation of significance.