

Directions: Read the passage below and answer the question(s) that follow.

Section 1

The History Lesson

Last year, when my next-door neighbor fell and broke her hip, she wound up using a walker for a few months once she returned from the convalescent hospital. Not surprisingly, she had a hard time doing the things she used to do, like carrying groceries in from her car. When my mother saw this, she suggested I go over and help her. I didn't mind; my neighbor, Miss Chavez, had always been nice to me. Whenever we were outside at the same time, we would talk about the weather, her cats, or how I was doing in school. Miss Chavez had known me since I was a baby, but I realized that I really did not know much about her, except that she was a retired second-grade teacher.

After my mother talked to me about helping Miss Chavez, I made it a point to watch for her car on Saturday afternoons when she returned from shopping. Soon I started doing other things to help out besides toting her groceries. Since it was fall, her yard needed raking regularly, so on the weekends, I would rake and bag up the leaves, sometimes filling a dozen large bags. Although my mother, always a stickler for proper etiquette, had cautioned me not to accept any kind of payment, Miss Chavez would have warm cookies or muffins waiting for me after I finished.

I realized then that I had never been in her house before she broke her hip, and I was comforted the minute I entered by the welcoming atmosphere she had hidden within her home. I noticed the dainty lace curtains in the window near the table billowing softly, allowing fresh air to enter. I felt comforted and a longing to enjoy the time I had to spend with Miss Chavez.

We sat and talked at the small table in her cozy yellow kitchen while we ate some of her homemade muffins. From our discussions I discovered Miss Chavez had moved to California as a child. Her family had come from Oklahoma in 1934, chased west by drought. I had heard of the Dust Bowl in my history classes, but could not remember much about it. Miss Chavez, however, brought it to life for me.

Miss Chavez's voice was low and thoughtful as she described what it was like to live where rain refused to fall year after year. The soil was so dry that deep, angry cracks formed, and the wind picked up the soil and blew it away, piling it against the house, the barn, and the fences. Dust continued to swirl in the air, she told me, seeping in under the front and back doors and around window frames, collecting insistently on everything in the house, no matter how many times a day her family cleaned.

Of course, her family's farming was no longer possible, yet they hung on for a few years, her scared, desperate parents borrowing money from the bank, hoping that the drought would break. When it didn't, they could not repay the loans; the bank repossessed the farm, and the family was evicted. The worst part, Miss Chavez told me, was having to abandon the animals, especially Nick, her horse. The bank planned to sell the livestock, the farm machinery, and the furniture, the same way they sold the house, to collect on the money owed. Miss Chavez said that she cried about Nick all the way to California. She told me that her parents, usually strict about the family not showing emotion, did not have the heart to scold her for her display of grief.

Although Miss Chavez does not need help anymore with chores, I still enjoy bringing her groceries into her charming home on Saturday afternoons. I wish I could do more for her. I wish I could bring back the farm; I wish I could bring Nick back into her life.

Directions: Answer the following question(s) relating to the passage titled "The History Lesson".

1 TEACHER READS:

Read the question to yourself and select the best answer.

Which piece of evidence from the text *best* demonstrates the narrator's empathy for Miss Chavez's life experiences?

- A. We sat and talked at the small table in her cozy yellow kitchen while we ate some of her homemade muffins.
- B. Miss Chavez's voice was low and thoughtful as she described what it was like to live where rain refused to fall year after year.
- C. She told me that her parents, usually strict about the family not showing emotion, did not have the heart to scold her for her display of grief.
- D. I wish I could do more for her. I wish I could bring back the farm; I wish I could bring Nick back into her life.

Master ID: 181643 Revision: 1

Correct: **D**

Rationale:

- A. Student(s) may not have understood that to have empathy means to have a shared feeling about something. Student(s) may not have understood that in this portion of the story, the narrator and Miss Chavez are merely talking and there is no indication that the narrator has empathy for Miss Chavez.
- B. Student(s) may not have understood that this sentence describes Miss Chavez as she tells her life story to the narrator, but does not show the narrator's feelings toward Miss Chavez.
- C. Student(s) may not have understood that in this portion of the story, Miss Chavez is describing her experience. Student(s) may not have understood that this sentence does not give indication of the narrator's reaction or feelings about Miss Chavez's story.
- D. Correct answer

Standards:

CCSS.LA.9-10.RL.9-10.1

Directions: Answer the following question(s) relating to the passage titled "The History Lesson".

2 TEACHER READS:

Read the question to yourself and select the best answer.

Which excerpt best demonstrates the text's theme?

- A. Soon I started doing other things to help out besides toting her groceries. Since it was fall, her yard needed raking regularly, so on the weekends, I would rake and bag up the leaves, sometimes filling a dozen large bags.
- B. The soil was so dry that deep, angry cracks formed, and the wind picked up the soil and blew it away, piling it against the house, the barn, and the fences.
- C. Of course, her family's farming was no longer possible, yet they hung on for a few years, her scared, desperate parents borrowing money from the bank, hoping that the drought would break.
- D. Although Miss Chavez does not need help anymore with chores, I still enjoy bringing her groceries into her charming home on Saturday afternoons. I wish I could do more for her.

Master ID: 181490 Revision: 1

Correct: **D**

Rationale:

- A. Student(s) may not have understood that this sentence provides information about how the narrator does chores to help Miss Chavez and also begins enjoying being of service to her; however, the story has not yet developed enough to derive the theme.
- B. Student(s) may not have understood that this sentence provides a part of the description that Miss Chavez conveys to the narrator about growing up during the time of the Dust Bowl. Student(s) may not have understood that although this sentence supports the theme, it is not the best choice for a clear demonstration of the theme.
- C. Student(s) may not have understood that this sentence conveys a description of Miss Chavez's experience growing up. Student(s) may not have understood that although this sentence helps to support the main idea of the story, it is not the best choice for a clear demonstration of the theme of the story.
- D. Correct answer

Standards:

CCSS.LA.9-10.RL.9-10.2

Directions: Answer the following question(s) relating to the passage titled "The History Lesson".

3 TEACHER READS:

Read the question to yourself and select the best answer(s).

The following question has two parts. First, answer part A. Then, answer part B.

Which statement *best* summarizes the central idea of the text?

- A. Once you learn someone's past, you may find a passion to get someone something that reminds them of their past, as the narrator wanted to get a horse for Mrs. Chavez.
- B. After speaking with someone, you can learn a lot from each other about how different the current world is from the world of the past.
- C. From listening to someone's stories, you can become saddened by history and feel hopeless and sorry for them, as the narrator felt for Mrs. Chavez.
- D. From talking to a person, you can learn about respecting elders for what they have experienced and what they can teach younger generations.

Master ID: 450126 Revision: 1

Correct: **DB**

Rationale:

- A. Student(s) may have assumed that the last sentence of the passage was to be taken literally, as if the narrator was actually going to buy a horse.
- B. Student(s) may have assumed they both learned something, but the story never indicated that Mrs. Chavez learned anything.
- C. Student(s) may have thought Mrs. Chavez's stories were sad and assumed that Mrs. Chavez was still sad, but the story never indicated that she was overly sad.
- D. Correct answer

Standards:

CCSS.LA.9-10.RL.9-10.2

Directions: Answer the following question(s) relating to the passage titled "The History Lesson".

Which detail from the text *best* supports your answer from part A?

- A. Soon I started doing other things to help out besides toting her groceries. Since it was fall, her yard needed raking regularly, so on the weekends, I would rake and bag up the leaves, sometimes filling a dozen large bags.
- B. I felt comforted and a longing to enjoy the time I had to spend with Miss Chavez...I had heard of the Dust Bowl in my history classes, but could not remember much about it. Miss Chavez, however, brought it to life for me.
- C. The worst part, Miss Chavez told me, was having to abandon the animals, especially Nick, her horse... Miss Chavez said that she cried about Nick all the way to California.
- D. I wish I could do more for her. I wish I could bring back the farm; I wish I could bring Nick back into her life.

Master ID: 450126 Revision: 1

Correct: **DB**

Rationale:

- A. Student(s) may have thought this showed how the author wanted to help Mrs. Chavez to make her happier.
- B. Correct answer
- C. Student(s) may have thought that, since this was so sad, that Mrs. Chavez was still very sad.
- D. Student(s) may have taken this section literally and assumed that the narrator was going to buy Mrs. Chavez a horse.

Standards:

CCSS.LA.9-10.RL.9-10.2

Directions: Answer the following question(s).

- 4 Write a detailed paragraph describing how the speaker's understanding of Miss Chavez evolves throughout the story. Be sure to cite at least two concrete details from the story to support your explanation.

Master ID: 472338 Revision: 1

Standards:

CCSS.LA.9-10.W.9-10.2.a

CCSS.LA.9-10.W.9-10.2.b