

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

## Section 1

### An Important Role

Read the following passage and answer the question(s).

Cecelia's parents, older brother, and uncle all shared a small, three-bedroom house in South Los Angeles. In order to keep the small house tidy and running like a well-oiled machine, each family member had an important duty. Like a musical ensemble, each member of the family relied on the other to do their part. Since Cecelia was the youngest and the smallest, she sometimes felt useless and unneeded; however, her mother assured her repeatedly that no job was too unimportant or too little. "Everyone is needed, meine Bärchen." Because of this, Cecelia made sure all of her chores were always done; she didn't want to let a family member down who was relying on her.

Family was important to Cecelia, especially since the move to the United States from Germany. In some respects it was a difficult transition, but it also showed Cecelia that she was an integral part of the family. Since finances were tight, Cecelia's mother would often take odd jobs here and there and Cecelia was put in charge of evening dinners, cleaning, and laundry. Although it was often hard work, Cecelia felt needed and was glad to be able to help.

On an afternoon in December, Cecelia's family huddled around the loyal old RCA radio to listen to the Benny Goodman orchestra: a weekly Sunday ritual. Instead of hearing the orchestra play "Stardust" or "The One O'Clock Jump," the family unexpectedly heard the familiar voice of Edward R. Murrow. Mr. Murrow normally reported on various news events at 7:00 p.m. during weekdays, so Cecelia wondered why, on a Sunday, it was his voice she was hearing. In a deep and serious tone, he announced that Pearl Harbor had been attacked by Japanese airplanes and that there were many casualties. Although Cecelia knew that this news could not be good, she didn't really understand what it all meant. Where is Pearl Harbor? What did this have to do with her? Why is Japan bombing the United States and why is everyone in her family whispering around her? Cecelia would not have to wait long to get answers to her questions.

During the next few days at school Cecelia learned that Pearl Harbor was in Hawaii and that the United States had officially entered the war. Once again, Cecelia didn't really see the relevance to her. It was as if she was watching a movie at the Nickelodeon down the street— everything seemed to be moving in slow motion and she was just an observer in all of it— able to walk away at any time and return to normal life. The next evening at dinner, Cecelia's uncle announced, "I'm enlisting." Her brother chimed in, "Me too! We are going down to the war office tomorrow to fill out the paperwork." Instantly, everything in Cecelia's mind went from slow motion to eighty miles per hour. Cecelia felt as if she was no longer an observer of a "movie;" now she was in it.

That night Cecelia had a hard time falling asleep. She kept thinking about her home in Germany and how she and her brother used to play "Polizei und Räuber" or "Cops and Robbers." Her brother would always play the part of the policeman and run into the room to save the captive, Baldur, their 60 pound Rottweiler. Even back then, her brother helped those in need.

It wasn't long before the once familiar domestic sounds grew absent from Cecelia's house. Cecelia's brother and uncle left for training camp, her father was working long hours to make up for the missing income from her uncle, and her mother filled a job at a nearby factory to help with the now vacant positions from the men that went to war.

The whole country seemed to be consumed with war, including Cecelia's family. Edward Murrow's reports came more and more often on the RCA, but Cecelia was the only one there to hear them. Everyone in Cecelia's family was feverishly doing something to help their newly embraced country with the war, except for Cecelia. Although she was forced to go to school during the day, in the afternoons the once teeming house was now desolate and lonely. Cecelia grew despondent and longed for, once again, being a part of a musical ensemble.

Directions: Answer the following question(s) relating to the passage titled "An Important Role".

Cecelia grew depressed and sullen. When her grades started to slip, Cecelia's teacher, Ms. Michaels, kept her after class one day. "Is something bothering you Cecelia?" As is the case for most nine-year-olds, the first thing out of Cecelia's mouth was "no." But after she saw that Ms. Michaels was not going to let this matter go so easily, she said, "Well, everyone in my family is doing something to help the country, but I can't 'cause I'm too little." Ms. Michaels responded, "I think I have an idea that might be able to help you Cecelia."

Ms. Michaels handed Cecelia a brightly colored flier with large bold letters that said at the bottom "WAR DEPARTMENT." Cecelia studied the flier carefully as she trudged home. "I don't understand what I am supposed to do with this," she said to herself. Her eyes were drawn to the last line: "Help America's Boys by Conserving and Donating Materials." She read it over and over again. She felt the old familiar spark of vigor inside of her. The moment Cecelia got home she raced to her backyard and found the rusty old wagon behind the shed that was left by the previous tenants.

Cecelia had a spring in her step as she and her wagon promenaded around the neighborhood. House after house, Cecelia asked for materials that were listed on the flier: rubber, tin, rags, aluminum. To her relief, every person who answered the door was happy to donate something. Upon the homeowners' direction, Cecelia gladly rummaged through garages and backyards to find needed materials. On more than one occasion, she was called a "model citizen" and an "exemplary role model for other young girls." Before Cecelia knew it, her wagon was full and Cecelia was filled with a rewarding sense of accomplishment. Although she should have been exhausted, Cecelia felt invigorated as she proudly marched her overflowing wagon to the war office. She knew that she was now an integral member of a new musical ensemble, and that her role was necessary and important.

**1 TEACHER READS:**

Read the question to yourself and select the best answer.

**Which sentence *best* describes the main idea of the story?**

- A. A girl loves her family and is willing to do anything for it.
- B. A girl learns that she has an important purpose.
- C. A girl finds a creative way to help out with the war.
- D. A girl is a good student, but misses her family.

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Correct: **B**

Rationale:

- A. Student(s) may have not understood that although Cecelia loves her family, this sentence is not the best description of what the overall idea of the story is.
- B. Correct answer
- C. Student(s) may have not understood that although Ms. Michaels gives Cecelia a creative idea to help with the war, it is not a sentence that demonstrates the overall main idea of the story.
- D. Student(s) may have not understood that although this statement may be true, it is not a sentence that demonstrates the overall main idea of the story.

Standards:

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

Directions: Answer the following question(s) relating to the passage titled "An Important Role".

**2 TEACHER READS:**

Read the question to yourself and select the best answer.

**Which sentence from the story aids in the development of the theme of the story?**

- A. Although Cecelia knew that this news could not be good, she didn't really understand what it all meant.
- B. It wasn't long before the once familiar domestic sounds grew absent from Cecelia's house.
- C. She knew that she was now an integral member of a new musical ensemble, and that her role was necessary and important.
- D. The whole country seemed to be consumed with war, including Cecelia's family.

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Correct: C

Rationale:

- A. Student(s) may have not understood that this sentence shows that Cecelia is somewhat confused by what is going on concerning the war; it does not show that she has an important role to fulfill or a desire to be a part of something.
- B. Student(s) may have not understood that this sentence describes how lonely Cecelia felt since her family was busy helping with the war effort.
- C. Correct answer
- D. Student(s) may have not understood that this sentence shows that Cecelia's family is involved in helping out the war effort, not that Cecelia feels a desire to be a part of the war effort, or fulfill a certain role.

Standards:

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

Directions: Answer the following question(s) relating to the passage titled "An Important Role".

**3 TEACHER READS:**

Read the question to yourself and select the best answer.

**Which sentence from the story *best* demonstrates the theme of the story?**

- A. Even back then, her brother helped those in need.
- B. Although she was forced to go to school during the day, in the afternoons the once teeming house was now desolate and lonely.
- C. On more than one occasion, she was called a "model citizen" and an "exemplary role model for other young girls."
- D. "Everyone is needed, meine Bärchen."

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Correct: **D**

Rationale:

- A. Student(s) may have understood that this sentence is important because it helps describe the main character's brother; however, it does not demonstrate the overall theme of the story.
- B. Student(s) may not have understood that this sentence helps with the development of the plot in leading to a climax, but it is not a statement that demonstrates the theme of the story.
- C. Student(s) may not have understood that although this sentence shows how others view Cecelia after taking on this "job," it does not demonstrate the overall 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 "An Important Role".

4 **TEACHER READS:**

Read the question to yourself and select the best answer.

**Which excerpt from the story *best* demonstrates that Cecelia is motivated and inspired?**

- A. In order to keep the small house tidy and running like a well-oiled machine, each family member had an important duty.
- B. Although she should have been exhausted, Cecelia felt invigorated as she proudly marched her overflowing wagon to the war office.
- C. Cecelia grew despondent and longed for, once again, being a part of a musical ensemble.
- D. Ms. Michaels handed Cecelia a brightly colored flier with large bold letters that said at the bottom "WAR DEPARTMENT." Cecelia studied the flier carefully as she trudged home

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Correct: **B**

Rationale:

- A. Student(s) may not have understood that although this sentence states that every family member is essential in keeping things running in the house, it does not specifically imply that Cecelia feels a part of something that motivates or inspires her.
- B. Correct answer
- C. Student(s) may not have understood that this statement explains that Cecelia has a desire to be a part of something again and therefore does not currently feel motivated, needed, or inspired.
- D. Student(s) may not have understood that these sentences show that Cecelia is given information that can help her find her role to help with the war effort, but at this point, she has not yet determined specifically what she can do. Student(s) may not have understood that the word "trudged" used in the second sentence also shows that Cecelia is not motivated or inspired.

Standards:

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

Directions: Answer the following question(s) relating to the passage titled "An Important Role".

**5 TEACHER READS:**

Read the question to yourself and select the best answer.

**Which sentence from the story *best* demonstrates that Cecelia was not very informed about worldwide events?**

- A. Ms. Michaels handed Cecelia a brightly colored flier with large bold letters that said at the bottom "WAR DEPARTMENT."
- B. Everyone in Cecelia's family was feverishly doing something to help their newly embraced country with the war, except for Cecelia.
- C. Since Cecelia was the youngest and the smallest, she sometimes felt useless and unneeded; however, her mother assured her repeatedly that no job was too unimportant or too little.
- D. Although Cecelia knew that this news could not be good, she didn't really understand what it all meant.

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Correct: **D**

Rationale:

- A. Student(s) may not have understood that Cecelia's teacher is helping Cecelia find ways to help out with the war effort; this does not necessarily mean that Cecelia was not informed about worldwide events.
- B. Student(s) may not have understood that even though Cecelia does not know what she can do to help with the war effort, it does not mean that she is not informed about worldwide events.
- C. Student(s) may not have understood that even though Cecelia is the youngest in her family, it does not necessarily mean that she would not be informed about worldwide events.
- D. Correct answer

Standards:

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

Directions: Answer the following question(s).

- 6 Write a detailed paragraph describing how Cecelia and her family play important roles within their home and their country. Be sure to cite at least two concrete details from the story to support your explanation.

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Standards:

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

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