

Grade 4 Mini-Assessment

Excerpt from “What Had We Done?” from *We Were There, Too!* by Terry Grimmer

This grade 4 mini-assessment is based on an excerpt from the book, *We Were There, Too!* This text is considered to be worthy of students’ time to read and also meets the expectations for text complexity at grade 4. Assessments aligned to the Common Core State Standards (CCSS) will employ quality, complex texts such as these.

Questions aligned to the CCSS should be worthy of students’ time to answer and therefore do not focus on minor points of the text. Questions also may address several standards within the same question because complex texts tend to yield rich assessment questions that call for deep analysis. In this mini-assessment there are seven selected-response questions and two paper/pencil equivalents of a technology enhanced item that address the Reading Standards listed below, and one optional constructed-response question that addresses the Reading, Writing, and Language Standards listed below.

We encourage educators to give students the time that they need to read closely and write to the source. While we know that it is helpful to have students complete the mini-assessment in one class period, we encourage educators to allow additional time as necessary.

*Note for teachers of English Language Learners (ELLs): This assessment is designed to measure students’ ability to read and write in English. Therefore, educators will not see the level of scaffolding typically used in instructional materials to support ELLs—these would interfere with the ability to understand their mastery of these skills. If ELL students are receiving instruction in grade-level ELA content, they should be given access to unaltered practice assessment items to gauge their progress. Passages and items should not be modified; however, **additional information about accommodations you may consider when administering this assessment to ELLs is available in the teacher section of this resource.***

The questions align to the following standards:

RI.4.1	Cite several pieces of textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text.
RI.4.2	Determine two or more central ideas in a text and analyze their development over the course of the text; provide an objective summary of the text.
RI.4.3	Analyze the interactions between individuals, events, and ideas in a text (e.g., how ideas influence individuals or events, or how individuals influence ideas or events).
RI.4.4	Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text, including figurative, connotative, and technical meanings; analyze the impact of a specific word choice on meaning and tone.
RI.4.5	Analyze the structure an author uses to organize a text, including how the major sections contribute to the whole and to the development of the ideas.
RI.4.7	Determine an author’s point of view or purpose in a text and analyze how the author distinguishes his or her position from that of others.

RI.4.8	Trace and evaluate the argument and specific claims in a text, assessing whether the reasoning is sound and the evidence is relevant and sufficient to support the claims.
W.4.2	Write arguments to support claims with clear reasons and relevant evidence.
W.4.4	Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development, organization, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience.
W.4.9	Draw evidence from literary or informational texts to support analysis, reflection, and research.
L.4.1	Demonstrate command of the conventions of standard English grammar and usage when writing or speaking.
L.4.2	Demonstrate command of the conventions of standard English capitalization, punctuation, and spelling when writing.
L.4.3	Use knowledge of language and its conventions when writing, speaking, reading, or listening.
L.4.5	Demonstrate understanding of figurative language, word relationships, and nuances in word meanings.

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The assessment questions in this document align with the CCSS and reflect the instructional shifts implied by the standards. To learn more about these topics, please go to the following link:

www.achievethecore.org

Grade 4 Mini-Assessment

“What Had We Done?” from *We Were There, Too!* by Terry Grimmersey

Today you will read a personal narrative from an author who, as a young Japanese American girl, was forced to live in a prison camp on the West Coast of the United States with her family during World War II. You will then answer several questions based on the text. I will be happy to answer questions about the directions, but I will not help you with the answers to any questions. You will notice as you answer the questions that some of the questions have two parts. You should answer Part A of the question before you answer Part B.

Take as long as you need to read and answer the questions. If you do not finish when class ends, come see me to discuss when you may have additional time.

Now read the text and answer the questions. I encourage you to write notes in the margin as you read the passage.



Courtesy of the Library of Congress # LC-USZ62-17124

Introduction: *The author of this excerpt was a child living in California when Japanese warplanes attacked Pearl Harbor in Hawaii. Read the text to see what happened to her as a result of the bombing and many Americans’ reactions to it.*

TEACHERS: Due to copyright issues, for access to the text obtain a copy of the book cited below.

We Were There, Too! Young People in U.S. History by Phillip Hoose. The excerpt used for this assessment begins on page 205 with the words, “We didn’t talk about the war much . . .” and ends on page 208 with the words “for us to rent a place to live.”

QUESTIONS:

1. How is the text mainly organized?

- A. by identifying problems faced by Japanese Americans after the attack on Pearl Harbor and then the solutions to those problems
- B. by listing the causes of the attack on Pearl Harbor and then explaining the effects on Americans
- C. by comparing and contrasting how much Americans differed in their reactions to the attack on Pearl Harbor
- D. by sharing events in the order in which they happened to a Japanese American after the attack on Pearl Harbor

2. The following question has two parts. Answer Part A and then answer Part B.

Part A: What is the meaning of the word “report” as it is used in paragraph 2?

- A. a description of an event
- B. to present oneself to authority
- C. to repeat a message to someone
- D. a statement of a student’s grades

Part B: Why is the word “report” important at this point in the text?

- A. It shows that the father is going to have to survive on his own.
- B. It represents how formally people communicated during war time.
- C. It suggests the attack on Pearl Harbor had not been told correctly.
- D. It introduces the beginning of changes forced on the family.

3. The following question has two parts. Answer Part A and then answer Part B.

Part A: What is the most likely reason the author includes paragraph 10?

- A. to demonstrate that people immediately became kinder to Japanese Americans when the war ended
- B. to show that the war caused many families in America to become poorer
- C. to show that Japanese Americans quickly forgave those who had not treated them kindly
- D. to demonstrate that not everyone in America held the same beliefs

Part B: In paragraph 10 below, choose the three details that help to support the correct answers from Part A.

“But two kind things also took place on that day. After school, a small boy came to me and handed me a box of chocolates. I cried at that gesture of kindness. And a girl named Sybil invited me to her home. They lived in a garage attached to a small house. They had come from the Midwest to work in the orange and lemon groves of California. They invited me to stay for dinner and all we had was corn soup and bread. They were the first poor people I had ever met but they didn’t seem poor because they were so rich with love.”

4. What is **best** revealed by the author's statement in paragraph 10, ". . . but they didn't seem poor because they were so rich with love"?

- A. She missed having her family together when she was separated from her father.
- B. She had learned from her experience not to judge others.
- C. She valued a sense of belonging more than having possessions.
- D. She still did not understand what had happened to make people dislike her.

5. The following question has two parts. Answer Part A and then answer Part B.

Part A: What main idea is developed throughout the text?

- A. Japanese Americans were treated unkindly even before Pearl Harbor.
- B. Japanese Americans were treated terribly after the bombing of Pearl Harbor.
- C. The governments of Japan and the United States were both unfair to Japanese Americans.
- D. The prison camps built after Pearl Harbor were only for people who were not American citizens.

Part B: Which sentence **best supports this main idea?**

- A. "We didn't talk about the war much at home but I read the paper from cover to cover trying to find out what was going on." (paragraph 1)
- B. "My brother was crying on my lap and I tried to keep him calm." (paragraph 3)
- C. "And I fought anyone who picked on my brother or sisters." (paragraph 7)
- D. "They told me that if I ever spoke Japanese again I would be sent back to camp behind the barbed wire." (paragraph 9)

6. According to the entire passage, what caused the most conflicts for the author?

- A. her appearance
- B. her being a female
- C. her American father at home
- D. her Japanese mother's behavior at the camp

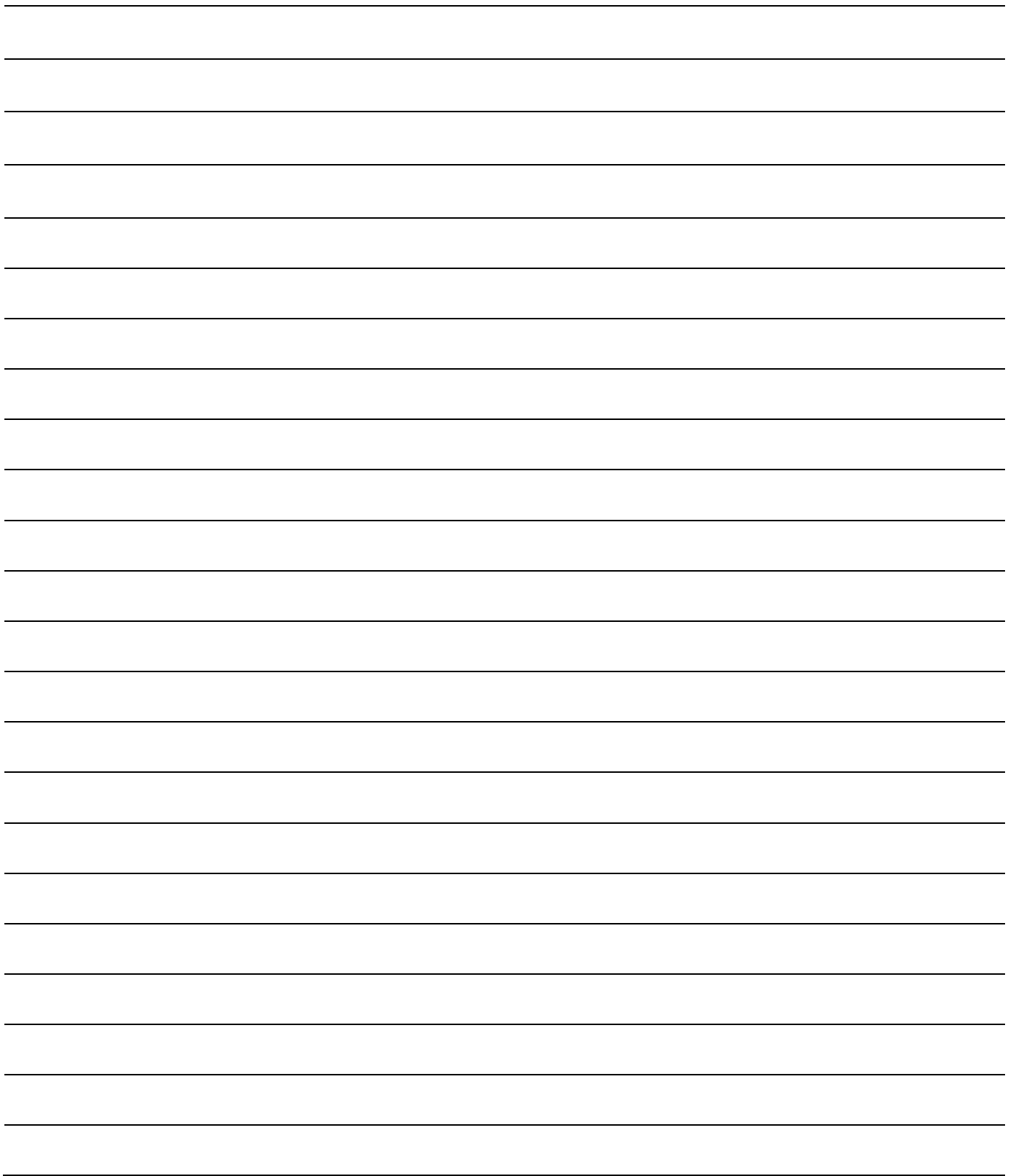
7. Which details from the text **best** show a difference in the author's old life prior to the attack on Pearl Harbor compared to her new one after the attack?

- A. "Oranges from our orchard" in paragraph 5 to "now he worked packing fruit, trying to make enough money" in paragraph 11.
- B. "There was a telephone call from my grandmother" in paragraph 1 to "I never could speak Japanese again" in paragraph 9.
- C. "Just me and mother and the other kids" in paragraph 2 to "They were the first poor people I had ever met" in paragraph 10.
- D. "I could see the panic on the faces of the adults" in paragraph 1 to "The adults who gathered at the washtub gossiped that we'd never get out" in paragraph 8.

8. In paragraph 3, what do “blinding,” “six inches of dust,” and “no shade” suggest?
- A. The family had a difficult time figuring out where they had been bussed to.
 - B. The area where the family had to move was a hard environment.
 - C. The family wanted to complain about their conditions but were afraid to do so.
 - D. The area where the family was moved was not yet full of people living there.
9. How do the author’s feelings about her Japanese American heritage change throughout the text? Complete the chart below by choosing the correct description for her feelings at each part of the text and writing it in the box in the second column. Then select the correct evidence for each feeling and write in the box in the third column.

	Feeling	Evidence
Beginning		
Middle		
End		

Choices for Feelings	Choices for Evidence
confused	“We didn’t know if we could ever go back home.”
worried	“Why did they need guns? What had we done?”
embarrassed	“I loved both countries.”
angry	“I was so hurt I couldn’t look anyone in their eyes.”



Information for Teachers: Quantitative and Qualitative Analyses of the Text

Regular practice with complex texts is necessary to prepare students for college and career readiness, as outlined in Reading Standard 10. The excerpt for this mini-assessment has been placed at grade 4, and the process used to determine this grade-level placement is described below. “Appendix A of the Common Core” and the “Supplement to Appendix A: New Research on Text Complexity” lay out a research-based process for selecting complex texts.

1. Place a text or excerpt within a **grade band** based on at least one¹ quantitative measure according to the research-based conversion table provided in the Supplement to Appendix A: New Research on Text Complexity (www.corestandards.org/resources).
2. Place a text or excerpt at a **grade level** based on a qualitative analysis.

Quantitative Analysis

Passage Title	Quantitative Measure #1	Quantitative Measure #2
“What Had We Done?”	Lexile: 600-700	FK: 4.5

After gathering the quantitative measures, the next step is to place the quantitative scores in the Conversion Table found in the Supplement to Appendix A (www.corestandards.org/resources) and determine the **grade band** of the text.

Figure 1 reproduces the conversion table from the Supplement to Appendix A, showing how the initial results from the Lexile and the Reading Maturity measure were converted to grade bands.

Figure 1: Updated Text Complexity Grade Bands and Associated Ranges from Multiple Measures⁷

Common Core Band	ATOS	Degrees of Reading Power [®]	Flesch-Kincaid [§]	The Lexile Framework [®]	Reading Maturity	SourceRater
2 nd – 3 rd	2.75 – 5.14	42 – 54	1.98 – 5.34	420 – 820	3.53 – 6.13	0.05 – 2.48
4 th – 5 th	4.97 – 7.03	52 – 60	4.51 – 7.73	740 – 1010	5.42 – 7.92	0.84 – 5.75
6 th – 8 th	7.00 – 9.98	57 – 67	6.51 – 10.34	925 – 1185	7.04 – 9.57	4.11 – 10.66
9 th – 10 th	9.67 – 12.01	62 – 72	8.32 – 12.12	1050 – 1335	8.41 – 10.81	9.02 – 13.93
11 th – CCR	11.20 – 14.10	67 – 74	10.34 – 14.2	1185 – 1385	9.57 – 12.00	12.30 – 14.50

The quantitative data show a difference between two measures. Qualitative data will help clarify the difference in the two measures and narrow the text complexity to a specific grade level.

¹ For higher-stakes tests, it is recommended that two corresponding text complexity measures be used to place a text in a grade band. When two measures are used, both placing the text in the same **band**, the results provide additional assurance that the text selected is appropriate for the band.

Find the **grade level** of the text within the designated grade band, engage in a systematic analysis of the characteristics of the text. The characteristics that should be analyzed during a qualitative analysis can be found in Appendix A of the CCSS. (www.corestandards.org)

Qualitative Analysis	Excerpt from “What Had We Done?”	Where to place within the band?				
		Too low for grade band	early to mid 4	mid 4 to early 5	mid to end 5	Too high for grade band
Category	Notes and comments on text, support for placement in this band					
Structure (both story structure or form of piece)	This informational narrative is structured in chronological order, with the main character describing events from the bombing of Pearl Harbor, to placement in a prison camp, and then back home. She provides insight into the conflicting feelings of being a Japanese American and her family’s shift from a more affluent lot in life to losing everything and struggling to survive. The main idea of unfair treatment is evident while the additional ideas of judging others and responsibility are not explicitly stated but can be inferred through the events and the characters’ thoughts and actions.					
Language Clarity and Conventions	The text structure of the narrative is story-like, making it engaging and easy to follow in first person. Most of the vocabulary is accessible. The more challenging vocabulary is surrounded by context, but some may still prove difficult: panic, declared, barbed wire fence, guards, gossiped, release, insulting, gesture, executive. Due to the historical content, multiple and close readings are required.					
Knowledge Demands (life, content, cultural/literary)	The text includes historical information and a time period that is probably unfamiliar: WWII and Pearl Harbor. Readers may not have experience or knowledge of families with blended cultures and the impact of the world events upon these situations.					
Levels of Meaning (chiefly literary)/ Purpose (chiefly informational)	There are two main purposes in the text. The main character describes the changes in her family’s life as a result of the bombing of Pearl Harbor through personal events and her inner thoughts. There is also description of the manner in which Japanese Americans were treated, as seen through her family experiences and interactions with other Japanese Americans, Americans, and the government. With close reading, these levels of meaning should be recognized by readers.					
Overall placement: Grade 4	Quantitative measures indicate this text as early grades 2 and 3, but the challenge of the multiple meanings, sophisticated topic, and knowledge demands make this text most appropriate for grade 4, most likely mid- or end-of-year.					

Question Annotations: Correct Answer and Distractor Rationales

Question Number	Correct Answer(s)	Standards	Rationales for Answer Options
1	D	RI.4.5, RI.4.1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A. Although problems are identified throughout, solutions are not always evident. Additionally, the text is not organized with the presentation of these problems followed by solutions. B. Although the effects of Pearl Harbor on Japanese Americans are present, there is little mention of other Americans. In addition, there is no discussion of the causes of Pearl Harbor, therefore eliminating the possibility of a cause/effect organization. C. Although the text does mention the various ways Japanese Americans were treated, it does not directly compare and contrast the overall reactions to the Pearl Harbor attack. D. This is the correct answer. The text takes the reader chronologically through the author’s experiences from the bombing of Pearl Harbor, to the prison camp, and then back home.
2 Part A	B	RI.4.4, RI.4.1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A. Although the notice the family receives describes the actions they need to take, this definition is a noun and does not fit the placement of “report” used as a verb. B. This is the correct answer. The word “report” is referring to the family being told where to go and present themselves to authority. C. Although the text identifies characters reporting out on what they have heard, this paragraph does not include the repetition of a message. D. Although this meaning may be familiar in the school setting, there is no mention of a student’s performance in this text.
2 Part B	D	RI.4.4, RI.4.1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A. Although the father will be separated from his family, his survival is not a focus of this text. B. Although the family received communication, there is no evidence of formality during this time. C. Although there is mention of the Pearl Harbor attack, there is no discussion of the validity of events presented. D. This is the correct answer. The notice received by the family asking them to report to the bus station is important as it begins the sequence of changes that take place. This includes a move to a prison camp, the father’s separation, mistreatment, and losing everything they knew.

Question Number	Correct Answer(s)	Standards	Rationales for Answer Options
3 Part A	D		<p>A. Although the family had kind interactions, this paragraph does not demonstrate an overall change in the way Japanese Americans were treated.</p> <p>B. Although the author’s family became poor, there is no mention of Pearl Harbor’s impact on other American families.</p> <p>C. Although the author is receptive to the kindness of these individuals, there is no indication they were previously unkind. Therefore, forgiveness is not evident.</p> <p>D. This is the correct answer. Paragraph 10 demonstrates that the family was treated with kindness, regardless of being Japanese American. This is contrary to the rest of the passage where there is evidence of mistreatment.</p>
3 Part B	<p>“handed me a box of chocolates”</p> <p>“Sybil invited me to her home.”</p> <p>“They invited me to stay for dinner.”</p>	RI.4.8, RI.4.1	<p>Correct answers:</p> <p>“Handed me a box of chocolates” is a gesture demonstrating that the boy did not take issue with the author being Japanese American, as many others did in the text.</p> <p>“Sybil invited me to her home.” This shows a sign of welcoming, which was contrary to the treatment by others in the text.</p> <p>“They invited me to stay for dinner.” Inviting to share in a meal is a sign of kindness and non-judgment.</p> <p>Distractors:</p> <p>“They lived in a garage.” This demonstrates the economic status of the family, not its beliefs towards Japanese Americans.</p> <p>“They had come from the Midwest to work” shows where the family had resided before, not their belief system.</p> <p>“All we had was corn soup and bread” describes the modest meal, not the family’s attitude toward Japanese Americans.</p> <p>“They were the first poor people I had ever met” speaks to the author’s first interaction with a lower-class family and does not support any beliefs.</p>

Question Number	Correct Answer(s)	Standards	Rationales for Answer Options
4	C	L.4.5, RI.4.1	<p>A. Although the author is back together with her family, this quote does not relate to her feelings while being separated from her father.</p> <p>B. Although the author has experience with being judged and has a new perspective, she does in fact make a judgment here with this family declaring them “rich with love”.</p> <p>C. This is the correct answer. The author no longer defines wealth by having possessions. She realizes that her sense of belonging is of more value than material items.</p> <p>D. Although the author may be confused as to why others dislike her, this quote demonstrates her being accepted.</p>
5 Part A	B	RI.4.2, RI.4.8, RI.4.1	<p>A. Although Japanese Americans were treated unkindly following Pearl Harbor, the text does not indicate maltreatment before Pearl Harbor.</p> <p>B. This is the correct answer. The text demonstrates how Japanese Americans were treated following the attack on Pearl Harbor through the events of prison camp, FBI visit, school interactions, and losing everything once back home.</p> <p>C. Although paragraph 11 mentions the government taking away everything, the idea is not developed any further.</p> <p>D. Although the experience at the prison camp is explored, the author is a U.S. citizen and was sent as well. This statement is not entirely valid as well as not supported or developed as a main idea.</p>
5 Part B	D	RI.4.2, RI.4.8, RI.4.1	<p>A. Although this quotation demonstrates the author’s curiosity about the events surrounding the war, it focuses on the time period before Pearl Harbor and does not explore the mistreatment afterwards.</p> <p>B. Although this quotation demonstrates how the author’s sibling felt during the trip to the prison camp, it does not elaborate or support on the terrible treatment they endured.</p> <p>C. Although this quotation does indicate the author’s need to defend her siblings when they were teased, it does not show how Japanese Americans were treated overall following Pearl Harbor. In fact, the teasing was occurring in a prison camp of other Japanese Americans.</p> <p>D. This is the correct answer. The FBI’s threat of being sent back to camp supports how Japanese Americans were mistreated following the bombing of Pearl Harbor.</p>

Question Number	Correct Answer(s)	Standards	Rationales for Answer Options
6	A	RI.4.3, RI.4.1	<p>A. This is the correct answer. “That summer I did a lot of fighting. I couldn’t take people staring at me because I didn’t look Japanese” and “And at school it no longer mattered that I didn’t look Japanese—now I was a ‘Jap’” demonstrate the author’s internal and external struggles with her appearance.</p> <p>B. Although the author does struggle with fitting in with other girls at camp, this is not developed through the entire passage.</p> <p>C. Although the family has to deal with the father remaining at home while they are at camp, this does not present an ongoing struggle for the author.</p> <p>D. Although the author’s mother seems despondent about being sent to camp, and the author feels additional responsibility, this does not create an ongoing source of conflict throughout the passage.</p>
7	A	RI.4.3, RI.4.1	<p>A. This is the correct answer. These quotations show the level of prosperity the family once had (with their own fruit trees) compared to their new state of life where they need to pick fruit for income.</p> <p>B. “There was a phone call from my grandmother” is the point where the news of Pearl Harbor is shared. “I never could speak Japanese again” refers to the threat from the FBI. Although these quotes both involve the idea of communication, they do not make a direct comparison between an old way of life and new.</p> <p>C. “Just me and mother and the other kids” refers to the family members being sent to the camp without their father. “They were the first poor people I had ever met” refers to the kind family who invited the author to dinner. Both quotations mention a group of people, but do not contrast the author’s old and new life.</p> <p>D. “I could see the panic on the faces of the adults” refers to the moment the family found out about the bombing of Pearl Harbor. “The adults who gathered at the washtub gossiped that we’d never get out” refers to the prisoners at the camp. Although both quotes mention adults and occur in two settings, they do not contrast the author’s life before and after Pearl Harbor.</p>
8	B	L.4.5, RI.4.1	<p>A. Although these conditions are contrary to what the author is used to, the family does not question the actual location.</p> <p>B. This is the correct answer. These terms refer to the desolate and dry location as well as the hot, shining sun with no shade. These conditions are difficult and contrary to what the author is used to.</p> <p>C. Although these conditions were difficult, the family does not indicate the need to complain or a fear of doing so.</p> <p>D. Although the description seems desolate, there is no indication of the camp’s prior population. Additionally, “blinding” and “no shade” do not refer to a number of people living in an area.</p>

Question Number	Correct Answer(s)	Standards	Rationales for Answer Options		
9	See right column.	RI.4.8, RI.4.1		Feeling	Evidence
			Beginning	worried	“We didn’t know if we could ever go back home.”
			Middle	confused	“Why did they need guns? What had we done?”
			End	embarrassed	“I was so hurt I couldn’t look anyone in their eyes.”
			Correct answers:		
Beginning: After the attack on Pearl Harbor, the author is sent, along with her mother and siblings, to a prison camp. At this early point in the text, she is worried and uncertain about her future as a Japanese American and worried about being back home reunited with her father.			Middle: At the prison camp, the author is very confused as to why the guards are carrying guns. The Japanese Americans in the camp have not demonstrated violence and were not personally responsible for the attack on Pearl Harbor. This is confusing as all members of the same heritage are being treated as criminals.		
End: After returning home, the author is feeling embarrassed by her heritage when she is treated poorly at school. She is called a ‘Jap’ and receives insulting Valentines, making her feel that she couldn’t look anyone in their eyes.			Incorrect answers:		
Angry: At no point in the text does the author present a feeling of anger in regard to her Japanese heritage.			“I loved both countries” reveals the sense of pride the author feels regarding her heritage.		

Question Number	Correct Answer(s)	Standards	Rationales for Answer Options
10	See right column.	RI.4.2, RI.4.3, RI.4.1, W.4.2, W.4.4, W.4.9, L.4.1, L.4.2, L.4.3	<p>Strong student responses will include points such as:</p> <p>The author’s life changed significantly after the attack on Pearl Harbor –</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Immediately after the attack, the author was faced with worry about her mother possibly being sent back to Japan. • The author had to learn more responsibility in order to take care of her family if her mother was forced to leave. She had to learn to “wash and iron clothes and clean house” and during the bus ride she had the “responsibility to take care of the other kids.” • She also had to worry about her family being split because her father was not to be sent to the prison camps. • She was forced to give up possessions as the family was allowed only “one suitcase” for their belongings. • She was moved from her home in a lovely place with orange orchards to a harsh environment where the “sun was blinding,” the wind “was blowing hard,” there was “six inches of dust,” and “no shade anywhere.” Her family had to live in one small room in a poorly made building and sleep on cots with straw mattresses. • She had to watch her mother be very sad about the situation (e.g., “mother just slumped down onto one of the cots”). • The way they lived every day was very different. They had to wait in lines for the restroom and eat food that was very basic (“powdered stuff, cooked prunes, and oatmeal”). • She became a fighter to defend both herself and her brother and sisters. • Once she was out of the prison camps, people were horrible to her, even classmates. For example, she got really mean Valentines and was called names like “Jap.” This really hurt her feelings and she “couldn’t look anyone in their eyes” anymore, showing she was becoming defeated and depressed. • She mentions that she had never met poor people before, but she has learned they really aren’t poor because they have what is important: love. • Finally, the family’s whole financial situation changed because the governments of the U.S. and Japan took everything they had away from them. Her father had to work a job very unlike his previous one and make much less money than he did before, so the family struggled to “make enough money for us to rent a place to live.”

Using the Mini-Assessments with English Language Learners (ELLs)

Mini-Assessment Design and English Language Learners

Each mini-assessment is designed using the best practices of test design. English Language Learners will benefit from the opportunity to independently practice answering questions about grade-level complex texts.

Prior to delivering the mini-assessment, teachers should read through each item. If there is language in the question stems specific to the standards (e.g., plot, theme, point of view), make sure that students have been introduced to these concepts prior to taking the assessment. Teachers should not pre-teach specific vocabulary words tested in the assessment (e.g., words students are asked to define) and should only pre-teach language that would impede students from understanding what the question is asking.

The mini-assessments attend to the needs of all learners, and ELLs specifically, by including texts that:

- *Are brief and engaging:* Texts vary in length, but no individual text is more than three pages long.
- *Embed student-friendly definitions:* Footnotes are included for technical terms or words that are above grade level when those words are not surrounded by context that would help students determine meaning.

Informational text sets, such as those included in the mini-assessment, specifically attend to the needs of ELLs by:

- *Building student knowledge:* Mini-assessments often include multiple texts or stimuli on the same topic:
 - For sets with two texts or stimuli, the first text is generally broader, providing a foundation in the content and introducing key vocabulary, and the second text provides more detail or contrast on the same topic. This allows ELLs to dig into the features of the passage being assessed rather than being inundated with dissimilar content and vocabulary.
 - For sets with more than two texts or stimuli, there is an “anchor” text that provides introductory information on the topic.
- *Containing ideas that lend themselves to discussion from a variety of perspectives:* Often these pairs or sets of texts present multiple perspectives on the same topic.

The mini-assessments attend to the needs of all learners, and ELLs specifically, by including questions that:

- *Feature a variety of academic words:*
 - Each mini-assessment contains at least one vocabulary item. Items assessing vocabulary test one of the following:
 - The meaning of Tier 2 academic words in context.
 - The meaning of a figurative word/phrase in context.
 - The impact of word choice on meaning and/or tone.
 - MOST vocabulary items test Tier 2 words.
 - All tested words are chosen because:
 - They are central to the meaning of the text.
 - They are surrounded by sufficient context to allow students to determine meaning.
- *Highlight “juicy” sentences that feature grade-appropriate complex structures, vocabulary, and language features:* Most mini-assessments include at least one item assessing Reading for Literature or Reading: Informational text standard 5. These items point students to analyze the structure of the text. While standard 5 items specifically focus on the structure of the text, other items require the analysis of language features, vocabulary, and relationships between ideas, all of which build student understanding of texts.
- *Provide graphic organizers to help students capture and reflect on new knowledge:* Most mini-assessments include at least one item mimicking a “technology enhanced item.” These items include things like tables and charts.
- *Provide writing activities that allow students to use new vocabulary and demonstrate knowledge of new concepts:* Most mini-assessments include an optional writing prompt that allows students to write about the text(s).

Administration Guidelines for ELLs

When assessing ELL students, appropriate accommodations may be considered. Modifications to the assessment itself should not be made. According to the *Accommodations Manual: How to Select, Administer, and Evaluate Use of Accommodations for Instruction and Assessment of English Language Learners, First Edition*:

- “Modifications refer to practices or materials that change, lower, or reduce state-required learning expectations. Modifications may change the underlying construct of an assessment.”
- “Accommodations are accessibility supports [that] do not reduce learning expectations. They meet specific needs of students in instruction and assessment and enable educators to know that measures of a student’s work produce valid results.”

Teachers **may** choose to make accommodations that meet the unique needs of ELLs. Prior to delivering any practice assessment, especially if the mini-assessment is to be used in a more formal setting (e.g., as part of a district benchmark assessment), teachers should research what accommodations will be

available to students during their state’s summative assessment. For example, some states allow ELLs to use a bilingual dictionary during an assessment; other states do not allow this. Ensure your ELLs are practicing with the accommodations they can expect to see on the summative. Some examples of appropriate accommodations include:

- Reading the directions aloud to students multiple times.
- Providing student directions in student native language.
- Allowing students additional time to complete the mini-assessments.
- Exposing students to item types prior to the assessment.
- Reading the scoring expectations for the writing prompt aloud to students.

Because the goal of literacy mini-assessments is to measure grade-level literacy as students progress toward college- and career-readiness, teachers must be careful **not** to make modifications that may be commonly used in classroom instruction. Examples of modifications that should **not** be used include:

- Reading passages aloud for students.
- Adding student glossaries of unfamiliar terms.
- Pre-teaching tested vocabulary words.

In any testing setting, teachers must be careful to choose accommodations that suit the needs of each individual student.

Additional Resources for Assessment and CCSS Implementation

Shift 1 – Complexity: *Regular practice with complex text and its academic language*

- See Appendix B for examples of informational and literary complex texts
http://www.corestandards.org/assets/Appendix_B.pdf
- See the Text Complexity Collection on www.achievethecore.org

Shift 2 – Evidence: *Reading, writing, and speaking grounded in evidence from text, both literary and informational*

- See Close Reading Exemplars for ways to engage students in close reading on
<http://www.achievethecore.org/steal-these-tools/close-reading-exemplars>
- See the Basal Alignment Project for examples of text-dependent questions
<http://www.achievethecore.org/basal-alignment-project>

Shift 3 – Knowledge: *Building knowledge through content-rich nonfiction*

- See Appendix B for examples of informational and literary complex texts
http://www.corestandards.org/assets/Appendix_B.pdf

Sample Scoring Rubric for Text-Based Writing Prompts:

http://achievethecore.org/content/upload/Scoring_Rubric_for_Text-Based_Writing_Prompts.pdf