

Question	Level 3	Level 4	Level 5	Level 6
<p>1. Reread the passage “Homemade Taffy”, lines 10-17. How is this part of the story important to the whole story?</p> <p><i>Going to her grandmother’s home on Friday afternoon was something Amalia had been doing since she was little. For the last two years, since they started fourth grade, her friend Martha accompanied her most Fridays. Every week Amalia looked forward to the time she spent at her grandmother’s house. But today was different.</i></p> <p><i>Amalia paused before answering, “She is not coming back anymore, Abuelita. ¡Nunca más!” Despite Amalia’s efforts to control her feelings, her voice cracked and her brown eyes watered.</i></p> <p><b>Analyzing Parts of a Story in Relation to the Whole</b></p>	<p><i>Responses at this level tend to name a story element (problem/solution/setting / character/theme) that was featured in a particular part in the story (in this case, “the problem”). Students also mention how that particular part of the story fits into the rest of the story, without elaborating on anything about the rest of the story.</i></p>	<p><i>Responses at this level discuss how a particular part affects or is affected by other parts of the story. Students name the story element that is featured in this part and also include specific details from other parts of the story, perhaps to explain a decision or change.</i></p>	<p><b>Information to look for in students’ responses:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Response identifies this part as setting up the <u>problem</u> or <u>conflict</u> or hints at a <u>problem</u> to come; provides background on <u>Amalia’s relationship with her grandmother</u>; introduces the <u>setting</u></li> <li>● Responses may discuss how this passage supports the development of the theme, such as             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ It can be hard to say goodbye to a friend.</li> <li>○ When life is challenging, family can be a comfort and a help.</li> <li>○ Family traditions and routines can be comforting when life is hard.</li> <li>○ When you are sad, doing something familiar (like making the taffy) can get your mind off of your troubles.</li> <li>○ Sad situations do not always have a clear or happy solution but it helps when others understand what you are going through.</li> </ul> </li> </ul> <p><i>Responses at this level use literary language to explain how a particular part of the story is important to the whole story. In addition to discussing the story element(s) featured in this part, students may also discuss how this part supports a larger idea or theme in the text. Fifth-grade responses may also consider the author’s word choice or craft techniques, and often quote the text. Responses must be supported by evidence from the text.</i></p>	<p><b>Information to look for in students’ responses:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● See Level 5 + evidence of a deeper level of analysis ...</li> </ul> <p><i>Responses at this level use literary language to explain how a particular part of the story is important to the whole story. Students are also able to explain how a small part of the text supports larger ideas or themes, develops a character, or plays another important role in the story. Responses must be supported by evidence from the text.</i></p>

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<p>2. The author of “Homemade Taffy” wrote lines 1-6 the way that she did, but she could have just written that the grandmother noticed that Amalia was upset.</p> <p>Why do you think the author might have decided to write this part in the way that she did? Think about what you know about author’s craft techniques and goals to support your response.</p> <p><i>Analyzing Author’s Craft</i></p>	<p><i>Responses at this level note which choices the author makes and why the author wrote that way (because . . .). These responses may also include why the author’s choice is important to the story.</i></p>	<p><i>Responses at this level name one or more craft techniques used by the author, as well as the goals the author is trying to achieve. That is, there is an effort to explain the significance of the craft choice.</i></p>	<p><b>Information to look for in students’ responses. Responses show an understanding of one or more of these:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The author didn’t just race past this part, but instead she stretched out the introduction to show many things that are important to the story. The author balanced the use of dialogue, descriptive details and small actions to help readers see that there is a problem and that the grandmother is concerned about her granddaughter.</li> <li>• The author also didn’t just tell that the grandmother and granddaughter had a close relationship, but she <i>showed</i> this by the way she used dialogue, such as “What is it Amalia? Is something bothering you?”</li> <li>• The author didn’t just say that the grandmother’s house was a comforting place, but she used description and word choice (e.g. <u>soft glow</u>, <u>honey</u> from the stove top, <u>subtle hint of pink</u>) to show this.</li> <li>• The author didn’t just say that the grandmother spoke to her granddaughter in Spanish, but she used Spanish words in italics (e.g. <i>hijita</i>) help the reader visualize the scene.</li> </ul> <p><i>Responses at this level use literary language to name a couple of craft techniques the author uses across the story and his or her reasons for using them. Students may consider how the text would have been different if the author had made different craft choices. That is, there’s an understanding that the choices were deliberate ones with important effects.</i></p>	<p><b>Information to look for in students’ responses:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• See Level 5 + evidence of a deeper level of analysis and/or a more thorough response including more than one of the craft techniques identified in Level 5.</li> <li>• The author didn’t just say that the grandmother’s house was a comforting place, but she used description and word choice (e.g. <u>soft glow</u>, <u>honey</u> from the stove top, <u>subtle hint of pink</u>) to show that the setting is one of comfort and familiarity. This word choice helps to set a mood.</li> <li>• The author didn’t just say that the grandmother spoke to her granddaughter in Spanish, but she used Spanish words in italics (e.g. <i>hijita</i>) to help the reader visualize the scene and understand the importance of the characters’ culture to the story.</li> </ul> <p><i>Responses at this level continue to use literary language to name various craft techniques the author uses and to explain the author’s specific goals in using these. Students at this level can discuss the author’s treatment of character, setting, and problem as well as the impact of the author’s craft choices and language on the story’s tone or mood.</i></p>

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<p>3. What themes are especially important so far in “Homemade Taffy”?</p> <p>Provide evidence to support your ideas.</p> <p><i>Determining Themes/Cohesion</i></p>	<p><i>Responses at this level name a life lesson that a character in the story learns, most often at the end. Students tend to retell a part of the story that shows this lesson.</i></p>	<p><i>Responses at this level explore one theme across the text. Students are not yet able to name multiple themes, but can explain how one theme emerges in more than one part of the text. Some students may do this by showing the absence of the theme at the start of the text, and the presence of it by the end, while other students may cite a couple examples of the theme developing across the text.</i></p>	<p><b>Information to look for in students’ responses:</b></p> <p>Responses name <u>more than one theme</u> and discuss how these themes are developed in different parts of the text. Possible themes include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● It can be hard to say goodbye to a friend.</li> <li>● When life is challenging, family can be a comfort and a help.</li> <li>● Family traditions and routines can be comforting when life is hard.</li> <li>● When you are sad, doing something familiar (like making the taffy) can get your mind off of your troubles.</li> <li>● Sad situations do not always have a clear or happy solution but it helps when others understand what you are going through.</li> </ul> <p><i>Responses at this level name more than one theme that the text develops. Students can explain how parts of the text develop each theme and will reference specific details or quote the text. If asked, they can discuss the techniques that the author uses to highlight at least one of the themes.</i></p>	<p><b>Information to look for in students’ responses:</b></p> <p>See Level 5 + students must weigh which themes are most strongly supported and will incorporate literary devices, such as symbolism. For example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Life’s challenges are like <i>melcocha</i>; they pull and stretch you and give you ups and downs.</li> </ul> <p><i>Responses at this level address more than one theme developed in the text, and will detail how parts of the text support each one. Students can weigh which themes are most strongly supported across the text and may write about literary devices, such as symbolism, that support the themes.</i></p>

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<p>4. “Homemade Taffy” from <i>Love, Amalia</i> and “Losing Livie” from <i>Out of the Dust</i> explore some similar themes/life lessons. Compare and contrast a theme or lesson that is developed in both stories.</p> <p><i>Comparing and Contrasting Story Elements and Themes</i></p>	<p><i>Usually when third-graders are asked to compare and contrast it’s about something concrete, like the setting. If a student in fourth or fifth grade is asked to compare themes between two stories and the student does so in a third-grade fashion, he or she is apt not to talk about theme, but instead to compare something more concrete. For example, the response may compare the topic of the two texts. Another response might compare the characters.</i></p>	<p><i>Responses at this level identify a similar theme and explain the similarities and differences in how it is developed.</i></p>	<p><b>Information to look for in students’ responses:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Identification of a shared theme such as, “Both texts have a similar theme: it can be hard to say goodbye to a friend.”</li> <li>● These themes are developed differently. In “Homemade Taffy” Amalia has just learned that her friend, Martha, is moving. The story shows Amalia’s sadness and upset at this shocking news.</li> <li>● In “Losing Livie” the narrator describes a farewell party for her friend. She knows she must say goodbye to her friend, and she is not angry or shocked, but it’s still hard. The narrator also seems jealous that her friend is leaving.</li> </ul> <p><i>Responses at this level identify a shared theme and explain the similarities and differences in how it is developed. To do this, students discuss craft techniques each author uses to develop the theme.</i></p>	<p><i>The expectations for sixth grade are different from fifth only if the texts being compared consist of a text that comes in two forms—one visual, and one a written text. That doesn’t apply in this instance. So sixth-grade level work will be the same as fifth-grade work.</i></p>