

Literary Reading Work Sample Assessment

High School – For Classroom Use

Instructions

Read the following story carefully and **make notes in the margin** as you read.

Your notes may include:

- Comments that show you understand the story and your reactions to it.
- Questions you have that show what you are wondering as you read.
- Notes and observations on the **literary elements** (theme, character, plot, setting, narrator, characterization, tone, mood, etc.) and how the author uses them to create an impact.
- Notes and observations on the **literary devices** (figurative language, imagery, point of view, foreshadowing, flashback, symbolism, etc.) and how the author uses them to create an impact in the story.

Margin notes are optional, but they may add to your score for this assessment.

Student _____

Teacher _____ Class Period _____

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My Lucy Friend Who Smells Like Corn

Sandra Cisneros, Woman Hollering Creek and Other Stories, 1991

Lucy Anguiano, Texas girl who smells like corn, like Frito Bandito chips, like tortillas, something like that warm smell of nixtamal or bread the way her head smells when she's leaning close to you over a paper cut-out doll or on the porch when we are squatting over marbles trading the pretty crystal that leaves a blue star on your hand for that giant cat-eye with a grasshopper green spiral in the center like the juice of bugs on the windshield when you drive to the border, like the yellow blood of butterflies.

Have you ever eaten dog food? I have. After crunching like ice, she opens her big mouth prove it, only a pink tongue rolling around in there like a blind worm, and Janey looking in because she said, Show me. But me I like that Lucy, corn-smell hair and aqua flip-flops just like mine that we bought at the K-mart for only 79 cents same time.

I'm going to sit in the sun, don't care if it's a million trillion degrees outside, so my skin can get so dark it's blue where it bends like Lucy's. Her whole family is like that. Eyes like knife slits. Lucy and her sisters. Norma, Margarita, Ofelia, Herminia, Nancy, Olivia, Cheli, y la Amber Sue.

Screen door with no screen. BANG! Little black dog biting his fur. Fat couch on the porch. Some of the windows painted blue, some pink because her daddy got tired that day or forgot. Mama in the kitchen feeding clothes into the wringer washer and clothes rolling out all stiff and twisted and flat like paper. Lucy got her arm stuck once and had to yell Maaa! and her mama had to put the machine in reverse and then her hand rolled back, the finger black and later, her nail fell off.

Notes on my thoughts, reactions, and questions as I read:

But did your arm get flat like the clothes? What happened to your arm? Did they have to pump it with air? No, only the finger, and she didn't cry neither.

Lean across the porch rail and pin the pink sock of the baby Amber Sue on top of Cheli's flowered T-shirt, and the blue jeans of la Ofelia over the inside seam of Olivia's blouse, over the flannel nightgown of Margarita so it don't stretch out, and then you take the work shirts of their daddy and hang them upside down like this, and this way all the clothes don't get so wrinkled and take up less space and you don't waste pins. The girls all wear each other's clothes, except Olivia, who is stingy. There ain't no boys here. Only girls and one father who is never home hardly and one mother who says, Ay! I'm real tired and so many sisters there's no time to count them.

I'm sitting in the sun even though it's the hottest part of the day, the part that makes the streets dizzy, when the heat makes a little hat on the top of your head and bakes the dust and weed grass and sweat up good, all steamy and smelling like sweet corn.

I want to rub heads and sleep in a bed with little sisters, some at the top and some at the feets. I think it would be fun to sleep with sisters you could yell at one at a time or all together, instead of alone on the fold-out chair in the living room.

When I get home Abuelita will say, Didn't I tell you? and I'll get it because I was supposed to wear this dress again tomorrow. But first I'm going to jump off an old pissy mattress in the Anguiano yard. I'm going to scratch your mosquito bites, Lucy, so they'll itch you, then put Mercurochrome smiley faces on them. We're going to trade shoes and wear them on our hands. We're going to walk over to Janey Ortiz's house and say, We're never ever going to be your friend again forever! We're going to run home backwards and we're going to run home frontwards, look twice under the house where the rats hide and I'll stick one foot in there because you dared me, sky so blue and heaven inside those white clouds. I'm going to peel a scab from my knee and eat it, sneeze on the cat, give you three M & M's I've been saving for you since yesterday, comb your hair with my fingers and braid it into teeny-tiny braids real pretty. We're going to wave to a lady we don't know on the bus. Hello! I'm going to somersault on the rail of the front porch even though my chones show. And cut paper dolls we draw ourselves, and color in their clothes with crayons, my arm around your neck.

And when we look at each other, our arms gummy from an orange Popsicle we split, we could be sisters, right? We could be, you and me waiting for our teeth to fall and money. You laughing something into my ear that tickles, and me going Ha Ha Ha Ha. Her and me, my Lucy friend who smells like corn.



Demonstrate Understanding

1. Write a summary of the story. Include important main ideas and details.

Demonstrate Understanding

2. The narrator lists several things she is going to do before she goes home. Using evidence from the story, identify **three** things she wants to do.

Develop an Interpretation

3. Identify **two** things that seem most important to the narrator and explain why. Use evidence from the text to support your response.

Develop an Interpretation

4. The narrator mentions that there are no boys at her friend's house and a father who is never home. Why do you think the father is never home?

Analyze Text

5. The author uses different techniques to make the narrator and main character “come to life.” Identify **two** examples from the text and explain how the author’s words or style make the narrator or main character seem real.

Analyze Text

6. The author purposely ignores some rules of grammar and conventions. Write out **one** example where the author has chosen style over rules of language, and explain why you think the author chose to write this way.