

## My Painting

Text Source: CUE©2009

## 7<sup>th</sup> Grade Fiction

I wanted to show people how I felt about my new country. My family had moved here 5 years ago when I was just 7 years old. When we came I did not know any English. Everything was novel, and I was surprised every day. I had lived in a **remote** village far from the city. Now I was living in a city where there were so many people, every day was a discovery about living in an urban area in America.

We would take the elevated train downtown. There we viewed buildings that **noted** architects had designed. These architects were so famous that people all over the world knew their names, but I had never heard of them before. I looked up and was astonished at how immense the buildings were. I wondered how they had been constructed to reach what looked like a mile into the sky. Then I saw a construction site where I observed workmen putting up a steel framework, and I knew that the tall buildings had those strong frames.

I went to a school that was bigger than my whole village. More than 1,000 students go to the school. I remember my first day was full of trepidation. The principal was friendly, and the teacher was supportive, but I was **mystified**. I could not understand what the teacher and students were saying. Then another student came up to me during lunch. She said hello in Russian, and I was so glad to hear a familiar language from her that I felt much better.

The teacher arranged for her to sit next to me for the rest of the school year to help me comprehend what they were saying. I appreciated this special support, and she was my official translator. But I wanted to learn English; I wanted to be independent, so every day after school we would go to my home. She would help me learn English. To **reciprocate**, my mother would cook her family dinner. Once a week they would come to dinner and we would have long conversations. We would try hard to learn English, so instead of Russian everyone would converse in English.

Now I have learned English, and I have learned so much about the United States, and still I discover new insights all the time. I will put some symbols in my painting that show how I feel about this land. I want to communicate that it is a land of helpful people and a land of many heritages. It is a land of collaboration. People here work together to contribute to progress. I'm thinking of putting a flag in the background and then putting people holding hands in the foreground. I'll make a sketch first and then I will paint it.

Making a painting is a lot like writing an essay. First you think of the idea you want to **express**. Then you think of ways to communicate that idea. I think my painting will be a great way to tell people how I feel about my new homeland.

## Infer Meaning of Word from Context – Fiction

Questions developed for Chicago Public Schools by CUE, 2009.

Choose the best answer for each question.

1. What does **remote** mean in the passage?

- a. small
- b. distant
- c. urban
- d. village

2. What does **noted** mean in the passage?

- a. architect
- b. famous
- c. urban
- d. surprising

3. What does **mystified** mean in the passage?

- a. learned
- b. smart
- c. ready
- d. confused

4. What does **reciprocate** mean in the passage?

- a. return
- b. remember
- c. respond
- d. recall

5. Write your own answer to this question. What does **express** mean in the passage? How do you know?

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### TEACHER NOTES: Develop Students' Skills: Exercise Thinking

These questions have not been validated, so decisions about student's achievement should not be made based on their responses. They are intended to exercise skills. Recommended activities include: students work in pairs to choose the best response; give students the questions without the responses so they generate their own answers; students make up additional questions; students make up questions like these for another passage.

**Answers:** You can remove this answer key and then give it to students and ask them to figure out the basis for the correct response.

Item	1	2	3	4
Answer	b	b	d	a

Question 5 is open-ended. Here is a suggested response.

Express means communicate. The meaning is clear because it is about how painting is like writing.