How do people react when they are forced to leave home?

QuickWrite
What would you take if you had to leave home abruptly and you could bring only two suitcases? What would you find hard to leave behind?
**Literary Focus**

**Autobiography and Unity**  An autobiography is a person’s account of his or her own life or of part of it. Through autobiography we learn about the events in a person’s life as well as the writer’s observations about the impact of those experiences. Like all nonfiction, an autobiography should have unity: Its details should all support the main idea or topic.

**TechFocus**  As you read the story, think about how you might create a graphic depiction of it by using a storyboard program.

**Reading Focus**

**Analyzing Details**  One way to evaluate unity in a piece of writing is to analyze the details. Do all of the details contribute to the main idea of the work? Do they draw a clear picture of the subject?

**Into Action**  As you read, look for details that reveal Monica Sone’s experiences and observations. Record these details on a chart like the one below, and explain what those details reveal about her life.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Details from the Text</th>
<th>What the Details Reveal</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The internment camp housing is primitive.</td>
<td>The family’s need for privacy and comfort is disregarded.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Armed guards in towers watch the camp 24/7.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Writing Focus**

**Think as a Reader/Writer**

**Find It in Your Reading**  As you read, notice how the author uses transitions to move from one part of her story to the next. What transitional words and phrases does she use to show the passage of time and the relationship between ideas? List these transitions in your Reader/Writer Notebook.

---

**Vocabulary**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Word</th>
<th>Definition</th>
<th>Example</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>tersely (TURS lee) adv.: briefly and clearly; without unnecessary words.</td>
<td>The child tersely gave his one-word description of the pigs near the camp.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>breach (breech) n.: opening caused by a break, such as in a wall or in a line of defense.</td>
<td>Monica was small enough to wiggle into the breach.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>riveted (RIHV iht ihd) v. used as adj.: intensely focused on.</td>
<td>The family was riveted by the sight of the burning stove.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>vigil (VIH uhl) n.: keeping guard; act of staying awake to keep watch.</td>
<td>Armed guards kept a constant vigil over the Japanese Americans.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Language Coach**

**Derivations**  The English word vigil derives from the same word in Latin. In Latin, vigil means “awake.” How does this meaning connect to the English meaning shown in the Vocabulary list above?
Monica Sone
(1919—)

A Child of Two Worlds
Born in Seattle, Washington, Monica Sone lived in two worlds. Her parents were from Japan, but she was a native-born American. Growing up, Sone found it challenging to establish her identity. “I found myself switching my personality back and forth daily like a chameleon,” she says.

Remembering
While in Camp Harmony, Sone wrote several letters to a friend describing the living conditions in the camp. Her friend saved these and one day showed them to an editor at Little, Brown and Co. The editor was interested in the letters, and he asked Sone if she would consider writing a book about her camp experiences. Sone says, “I was eager to do so. This was because after I eventually left camp and moved to the eastern part of the country, I discovered that the general public knew nothing about our evacuation and imprisonment of tens of thousands of Americans. I wanted to tell our story.”

Sone’s autobiography, Nisei Daughter, was published in 1953. It was the first book about the internment camps written by an internee.

Think About the Writer
What might personal letters such as Sone’s reveal that other sources might not?

Build Background
In 1942, many thousands of Japanese Americans living on the West Coast were sent to internment camps. They had committed no crime, but the United States had gone to war with Japan. Executive Order 9066 made their confinement legal. Ironically, many of the evacuated families had sons or brothers serving in the U.S. Army in the war overseas. Most of the 120,000 Japanese Americans who were detained spent three years living behind barbed wire.

Preview the Selection
In this excerpt from her autobiography, Monica Sone tells about her family’s experience in Camp Harmony, an internment camp to which her family, as Japanese Americans, was forced to relocate.
When our bus turned a corner and we no longer had to smile and wave, we settled back gravely in our seats. Everyone was quiet except for a chattering group of university students, who soon started singing college songs. A few people turned and glared at them, which only served to increase the volume of their singing. Then suddenly a baby’s sharp cry rose indignantly above the hubbub. The singing stopped immediately, followed by a guilty silence. Three seats behind us, a young mother held a wailing red-faced infant in her arms, bouncing it up and down. Its angry little face emerged from multiple layers of kimonos, sweaters, and blankets, and it, too, wore the white pasteboard tag pinned to its blanket. A young man stammered out an apology as the mother gave him a wrathful look. She hunted frantically for a bottle of milk in a shopping bag, and we all relaxed when she had found it.

We sped out of the city southward along beautiful stretches of farmland, with dark, newly turned soil. In the beginning we devoured every bit of scenery which flashed past our window and admired the massive-muscled workhorses plodding along the edge of the highway, the rich burnished copper color of a browsing herd of cattle, the vivid spring green of the pastures, but eventually the sameness of the country landscape palled on us. We tried to sleep to escape from the restless anxiety which kept bobbing up to the surface of our minds. I awoke with a start when the bus filled with excited buzzing. A small group of straw-hatted Japanese farmers stood by the highway, waving at us. I felt a sudden warmth toward them, then a twinge of pity. They would be joining us soon.

1. white pasteboard tag: All Japanese American families registering for evacuation were given numbered tags to wear and to attach to their luggage. Monica’s family became number 10710.

2. palled: became boring or tiresome.
About noon we crept into a small town. Someone said, “Looks like Puyallup, all right.” Parents of small children babbled excitedly, “Stand up quickly and look over there. See all the chick-chicks and fat little piggies?” One little city boy stared hard at the hogs and said tersely, “They’re bachi—dirty!”

Our bus idled a moment at the traffic signal, and we noticed at the left of us an entire block filled with neat rows of low shacks, resembling chicken houses. Someone commented on it with awe, “Just look at those chicken houses. They sure go in for poultry in a big way here.” Slowly the bus made a left turn, drove through a wire-fence gate, and to our dismay, we were inside the oversized chicken farm. The bus driver opened the door, the guard stepped out and stationed himself at the door again. Jim, the young man who had shepherded us into the buses, popped his head inside and sang out, “OK, folks, all off at Yokohama, Puyallup.”

We stumbled out, stunned, dragging our bundles after us. It must have rained hard the night before in Puyallup, for we sank ankle deep into gray, glutinous mud. The receptionist, a white man, instructed us courteously, “Now, folks, please stay together as family units and line up. You’ll be assigned your apartment.”

We were standing in Area A, the mammoth parking lot of the state fairgrounds.

A family on the way to a Japanese internment camp.

Vocabulary tersely (TURS lee) adv.: briefly and clearly; without unnecessary words.

3. glutinous: sticky; gluey.
There were three other separate areas, B, C, and D, all built on the fairgrounds proper, near the baseball field and the racetracks. This camp of army barracks was hopefully called Camp Harmony.

We were assigned to apartment 2–I–A, right across from the bachelor quarters. The apartments resembled elongated, low stables about two blocks long. Our home was one room, about eighteen by twenty feet, the size of a living room. There was one small window in the wall opposite the one door. It was bare except for a small, tinny wood-burning stove crouching in the center. The flooring consisted of two-by-fours laid directly on the earth, and dandelions were already pushing their way up through the cracks. Mother was delighted when she saw their shaggy yellow heads. “Don’t anyone pick them. I’m going to cultivate them.”

Father snorted, “Cultivate them! If we don’t watch out, those things will be growing out of our hair.”

Just then Henry stomped inside, bringing the rest of our baggage. “What’s all the excitement about?”

Sumi replied laconically, “Dandelions.” Henry tore off a fistful. Mother scolded, “Arra! Arra! Stop that. They’re the only beautiful things around here. We could have a garden right here.”

“Are you joking, Mama?”

I chided Henry, “Of course she’s not. After all, she has to have some inspiration to write poems, you know, with all the ‘nari keri’s.’ I can think of a poem myself right now:

Oh, Dandelion, Dandelion, Despised and uprooted by all, Dance and bob your golden heads For you’ve finally found your home With your yellow fellows, nari keri, amen!”

Henry said, thrusting the dandelions in Mother’s black hair, “I think you can do ten times better than that, Mama.”

Sumi reclined on her sea bag and fretted, “Where do we sleep? Not on the floor, I hope.”

“Stop worrying,” Henry replied disgustedly.

Mother and Father wandered out to see what the other folks were doing and they found people wandering in the mud, wondering what other folks were doing. Mother returned shortly, her face lit up in an ecstatic smile, “We’re in luck. The latrine is right nearby. We won’t have to walk blocks.”

We laughed, marveling at Mother who could be so poetic and yet so practical.

6. nari keri’s: referring to a phrase used to end many Japanese poems, meant to convey wonder and awe.
7. sea bag: large canvas bag like the ones sailors use to carry their personal belongings. Each person was allowed to bring only one sea bag of bedding and two suitcases of clothing to the internment camps.
Japanese Internment Camps

Immediately after the declaration of Executive Order 9066 in February 1942, the U.S. government constructed internment camps in parts of Arkansas, California, Arizona, Colorado, Idaho, Washington, Utah, and Wyoming. By August 1942, most of the Japanese Americans in the western part of the country were imprisoned in these camps. Over half of these internees were children. Internees faced many difficulties. The physical environment was often harsh, the food was bad, and the people had little or no privacy. Traditional family structure and discipline were hard to maintain. Released in 1945, at the end of World War II, internees returned home to find their property stolen and their livelihoods gone. They had to wait more than forty years for an apology and compensation from the U.S. government.

Ask Yourself

What hardships did Sone face while forced to live in an internment camp?

Father came back, bent double like a wood-cutter in a fairy tale, with stacks of scrap lumber over his shoulder. His coat and trouser pockets bulged with nails. Father dumped his loot in a corner and explained, “There was a pile of wood left by the carpenters and hundreds of nails scattered loose. Everybody was picking them up, and I hustled right in with them. Now maybe we can live in style, with tables and chairs.”

The block leader knocked at our door and announced lunchtime. He instructed us to take our meal at the nearest mess hall. As I untied my sea bag to get out my pie plate, tin cup, spoon, and fork, I realized I was hungry. At the mess hall we found a long line of people. Children darted in and out of the line, skiing in the slithery mud. The young stood impatiently on one foot, then the other, and scowled, “The food had better be good after all this wait.” But the issei stood quietly, arms folded, saying very little. A light drizzle began to fall, coating bare black heads with tiny sparkling raindrops. The chow line inched forward.

Lunch consisted of two canned sausages, one lob of boiled potato, and a slab of bread. Our family had to split up, for the hall was too crowded for us to sit together. I wan-

8. issei: Japanese who immigrated to North America. Issei were forbidden by law to become U.S. citizens.
dered up and down the aisles, back and forth along the crowded tables and benches, looking for a few inches to squeeze into. A small issei woman finished her meal, stood up, and hoisted her legs modestly over the bench, leaving a space for one. Even as I thrust myself into the breach, the space had shrunk to two inches, but I worked myself into it. My dinner companion, hooked just inside my right elbow, was a baldheaded, gruff-looking issei man who seemed to resent nesting at mealtime. Under my left elbow was a tiny, mud-spattered girl. With busy, runny nose, she was belaboring her sausages, tearing them into shreds and mixing them into the potato gruel which she had made with water. I choked my food down.

We cheered loudly when trucks rolled by, distributing canvas army cots for the young and hardy, and steel cots for the older folks. Henry directed the arrangement of the cots. Father and Mother were to occupy the corner nearest the woodstove. In the other corner, Henry arranged two cots in an L shape and announced that this was the combination living room–bedroom area, to be occupied by Sumi and myself. He fixed a male den for himself in the corner nearest the door. If I had had my way, I would have arranged everyone’s cots in one neat row, as in Father’s hotel dormitory.

We felt fortunate to be assigned to a room at the end of the barracks, because we had just one neighbor to worry about. The partition wall separating the rooms was only seven feet high, with an opening of four feet at the top, so at night, Mrs. Funai next door could tell when Sumi was still sitting up in bed in the dark, putting her hair up. “Mah, Sumi-chan,” Mrs. Funai would say through the plank wall, “are you curling your hair tonight, again? Do you put it up every night?” Sumi would put her hands on her hips and glare defiantly at the wall.

The block monitor, an impressive nisei9 who looked like a star tackle, with his crouching walk, came around the first night to tell us that we must all be inside our room by nine o’clock every night. At ten o’clock, he rapped at the door again, yelling, “Lights out!” and Mother rushed to turn the light off not a second later.

Throughout the barracks, there was a medley10 of creaking cots, whimpering infants, and explosive night coughs. Our attention was riveted on the intense little woodstove, which glowed so violently I feared it would melt right down to the floor. We soon learned that this condition lasted for only a short time, after which it suddenly turned into a deep freeze. Henry and Father took turns at the stove to produce the harrowing11 blast which all but singed our army blankets but did not penetrate through them. As it grew quieter in the barracks, I could hear the light patter of

---

10. medley: jumble; mixture.
11. harrowing: extremely distressing.
rain. Soon I felt the splat! splat! of raindrops digging holes into my face. The dampness on my pillow spread like a mortal bleeding, and I finally had to get out and haul my cot toward the center of the room. In a short while, Henry was up. “I’ve got multiple leaks, too. Have to complain to the landlord first thing in the morning.”

All through the night I heard people getting up, dragging cots around. I stared at our little window, unable to sleep. I was glad Mother had put up a makeshift curtain on the window, for I noticed a powerful beam of light sweeping across it every few seconds. The lights came from high towers placed around the camp, where guards with tommy guns kept a twenty-four-hour vigil. I remem-bered the wire fence encircling us, and a knot of anger tightened in my breast. What was I doing behind a fence, like a criminal? If there were accusations to be made, why hadn’t I been given a fair trial? Maybe I wasn’t considered an American anymore. My citizenship wasn’t real, after all. Then what was I? I was certainly not a citizen of Japan, as my parents were. On second thought, even Father and Mother were more alien residents of the United States than Japanese nationals, for they had little tie with their mother country. In their twenty-five years in America, they had worked and paid their taxes to their adopted government as any other citizen.

Of one thing I was sure. The wire fence was real. I no longer had the right to walk out of it. It was because I had Japanese ancestors. It was also because some people had little faith in the ideas and ideals of democracy. They said that after all these were but words and could not possibly ensure loyalty. New laws and camps were surer devices. I finally buried my face in my pillow to wipe out burning thoughts and snatch what sleep I could.

**Read and Discuss** What have we learned about life at Camp Harmony?

**Vocabulary** vigil (VIHJ uhl) n.: keeping guard; act of staying awake to keep watch.

**Literary Focus** Unity  How has the author’s mood changed from the beginning of the selection to this point? Does this change of mood contribute to the work’s unity or detract from it? Explain.
Camp Harmony

**Quick Check**

1. Summarize, or write a short restatement of, the main events in “Camp Harmony.”

**Read with a Purpose**

2. What are Monica Sone and her family’s reactions to their new situation?

**Reading Skills: Analyzing Details**

3. Review the details you listed as you read, and identify the main idea of the selection. Did any details seem out of place or disrupt the unity of the autobiography? Explain.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Details from the Text</th>
<th>What the Details Reveal</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The internment camp housing is primitive.</td>
<td>The family’s need for privacy and comfort is disregarded.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Main idea:**

**Literary Analysis**

4. Analyze Sone describes her mother as “poetic and yet so practical.” State one example from the text that illustrates each quality.

5. Interpret How would you define the mood of the people on the bus at the beginning of the journey to Camp Harmony? at the end of the journey?

**Literary Skills: Autobiography and Unity**

6. Analyze Sone says the camp “was hopefully called Camp Harmony.” Do you think the name is appropriate, or is it ironic? Support your answer with evidence from the text.

**Literary Skills Review: Point of View**

7. Analyze What time period is covered in this excerpt? How does the use of chronological organization contribute to the work’s unity?

8. Evaluate Identify at least two personal observations that Sone makes. Why are these observations appropriate in an autobiography but not in another type of nonfiction work, such as an encyclopedia?

**Writing Focus**

Think as a Reader/Writer

**Use It in Your Writing** Review the transitions you recorded as you read. Then, write a brief autobiographical essay about an important day in your life. Use transitional words and phrases to show how the details you include are connected to your main idea.

Were you surprised by the internees’ reactions to their situation? With whom did you identify the most? Why?
Vocabulary Development

Verify Word Meanings Using Restatement

In your reading, you probably come across words whose meanings you think you know, but you are not quite sure about. How can you verify their meanings? One strategy is to look at a word’s context—the words and sentences that surround it—for clues.

One type of context clue is restatement, a rephrasing of a word in more familiar terms. For example, if you were unfamiliar with the word resourceful, you could probably make a good guess about its meaning by noting the restatement, which appears in boldface in the following sentence:

The resourceful internees were able to think of ways to deal with their situation. They collected scraps of wood to make furniture.

Your Turn

Rewrite the following sentences to include restatements of the boldface Vocabulary words. Your restatements can be in the same sentence or in an additional sentence. Circle your restatement.

1. One little boy stared at the hogs and said tersely, “Dirty.”
2. Guards with tommy guns kept a constant vigil around the prison camp.
3. The narrator thrust herself into the tiny breach between two people sitting on the bench.
4. The family’s attention was riveted on the burning stove.

Language Coach

Derivations When you learn a new word, pay attention to related words that are derived from, or come from, the same root, such as hazard and hazardous. Write down and define two words that derive from the same root as the following words from the selection:

- emerged (page 515)
- quarters (page 517)
- instructed (page 518)

Referring to a dictionary may be helpful.

Academic Vocabulary

Talk About . . .

In a small group, discuss your reactions to injustice. Then, answer the following questions:

1. How would you define injustice?
2. When have you observed injustice in your community or on TV?
3. What do you think can be done to combat injustice?

Use Academic Vocabulary words in your discussion.
Grammar Link

Using Correct Verb Tenses

A common error in using verbs is switching tenses in the same or nearby sentences. The **tense** of a verb indicates the time of the action—for example, past, present, or future. When describing events that occur at the same time, be sure your verbs are in the same tense.

**INCONSISTENT** Monica’s mother saw the dandelion and is delighted.

**CONSISTENT** Monica’s mother saw the dandelion and was delighted.

**CONSISTENT** Monica’s mother sees the dandelion and is delighted.

### Your Turn

Read the following paragraph, and decide whether it should be rewritten in the present or past tense. Then, change the verb forms as necessary to make the tense consistent throughout the paragraph.

[1] Monica Sone’s mother sees the best in things and admired the dandelions. [2] She planned a garden of them and is grateful for any type of beauty. [3] She is even happy about the nearness of the latrine, though the others were not so thrilled. [4] Like her mother, Sone’s father has been grateful for good things, however small. [5] He finds a pile of lumber and loose nails and envisioned these scraps as the family’s furniture.

### Writing Applications

Now, choose another tense and write a short paragraph of your own, using that tense consistently throughout your paragraph.