

Abuela Invents the Zero
Analysis Questions

1. The story begins and ends on the same idea. What important difference exists between the first and last paragraph? Explain your answer.

Difference:

Explanation:

2. In writing, we talk about “tone” and “voice.” If tone is the *way* the narrator or a character speaks (which ultimately reveal his/her attitudes), voice is a sense of *who* is speaking (male/female, young/old, etc.). While we do know that Constancia/Connie is a girl and that she is old enough to drive, we are still left to guess as to about how old she might be. About how old would you guess Connie might be? How would you describe her tone? Write a quote of her speaking in that tone, and then explain how the tone and the “voice” seem to match? (In other words, if we had no idea whether or not Connie drove, but she still had to escort her grandmother to church, would we still have the same rough guess on her age? Why? How does *how* she speaks match well with *who* is speaking?)

Age:

Tone:

Example:

How/Why they match:

3. Connie seems to have feel no real sense of connection to her Abuela, and she goes on to call her “ridiculous” and “bizarre.” Find two specific examples (quotes or specific paraphrases) that show that Connie doesn’t feel connected to Abuela, explaining each one, and then find two examples (quotes or specific paraphrases) that show **why** Connie generally finds Abuela to be so embarrassing. These should not be the same examples as the ones you use for lack of connection.

Lack of connection example 1:

Explanation:

Lack of connection example 2:

Explanation:

Embarrassing example 1:

Embarrassing example 2:

4. Hyperbole means a huge exaggeration. Connie uses hyperbole a few times throughout the story. Find at least two examples of hyperbole in the text and write the sentence verbatim, or word for word, and then explain why it's an example of hyperbole. Be careful not to grab things that are simply figurative language that help to illustrate an idea. Look for her saying things that are tremendously exaggerated.

Example 1

Sentence:

Explanation:

Example 2

Sentence:

Explanation:

5. The title says that Abuela invented the zero. It's an interesting idea, in that she clearly hasn't, and this story could have easily been "Abuela Talks about the Zero." In what ways/how could Abuela have "invented" the zero as seen in this story? Explain your answer.

Answer:

Explanation:

6. What would you argue is the story's main/central theme? Give specific evidence from the story for your reasoning.

Theme:

Support/Evidence:

7. We see in this story how a dynamic protagonist helps to create and shape a story's theme. What/where is the **first** (in terms of chronology) clear example of Connie's shifting/changing to begin to understand her role in hurting her grandmother? Write the quote or the specific paraphrase. Why is her being dynamic important to the story's theme?

Example of her changing:

Importance of her being dynamic:

8. This story is told in flashback mode, much like "The Tell-Tale Heart." How does the flashback structure help shape/develop either the protagonist's character or the theme in unique ways? Explain your answer.

Answer:

Explanation: