

“Eleven” by Sandra Cisneros

Text-dependent Questions

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<p>In paragraph three, the author includes figurative language. How does the figurative language in the text help the reader understand the character’s feelings about getting older? (Pg. 247)</p>	<p>Cisneros writes “the way you grow old is kind of like an onion or like the rings inside a tree trunk or like my little wooden dolls that fit one inside the other, each year inside the next one”.</p> <p>All three have layers numbered like years and are part of the whole identity. This is especially true of the tree with the rings representing how an outside source can affect the growth and development of each individual ring/year and how the rings underneath affect and build upon the outer layers and years.</p>
<p>On page 27 the author stated, “Only today I wish I didn’t have only eleven years rattling inside me like pennies in a tin can.” What does this figurative language mean and how does it affect the tone of the text? (Pg. 247)</p>	<p>The pennies represent the emotions that are rattling inside of Rachel. They can represent more than one maturity or age level in a moment. This reflects her anxious tone. Her emotions are bouncing within her as loudly as pennies in a tin can.</p>
<p>Reread the first four paragraphs and note how many times the author starts a sentence with the word “and”. Why does the author make this choice? (Pg. 247)</p>	<p>The author begins a sentence with the word “and” 5 times. This reflects Rachel’s anxiety as she rambles her thoughts about her birthday. It also reflects speaking voice rather than a writing voice. This definitely sounds like Rachel as an eleven-year old narrator thinking aloud.</p>
<p>When Sylvia says the sweater belongs to Rachel, how does Rachel respond? What does this reveal about how Rachel feels about herself? (Pg. 248)</p>	<p>Rachel responds with negative self-talk, “I’m skinny, maybe because she doesn’t like me...” She feels angry when she calls Sylvia stupid. She also feels insulted because Mrs. Price believes her. She reverts to “me when I was four”, when she partially responds in a little voice.</p>
<p>Why does Rachel feel that Mrs. Price is “right”? Give evidence from the text to support your answer. (Pg. 248)</p>	<p>Rachel feels that Mrs. Price is older and wiser. The common perception is that older equals wiser. She states, “Because she’s older and the teacher, she’s right and I’m not.” It also demonstrates authority trumping childhood, even when the child is right.</p>
<p>In paragraph twelve beginning “Not mine, not mine, not mine”, what does the text and how Rachel responds to the situation tell us about Rachel’s character? (Pg. 248)</p>	<p>Rachel shows maturity by controlling her emotions. Rather than reverting to a crying three year-old, she emotionally removes herself from the uncomfortable moment by remembering the birthday celebration that awaits her when she gets home.</p>
<p>How does Rachel feel about the sweater? Include evidence from the text to support your answer. (Pg. 248)</p>	<p>Rachel hates the sweater so much that it upsets her. Rachel calls it an ugly sweater, all raggedy and old. She is upset over Sylvia’s claim that it belongs to Rachel, not claiming the sweater as hers. She calls it a big red mountain and she moves it to the corner of her desk with a ruler. She devises all these plans on how to get rid of the sweater (i.e. throw over schoolyard fence,</p>

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	hang on parking meter, toss in alley).
Identify each time Rachel claims “not mine”. Why does the author repeat this refrain throughout the story and how does it affect the overall meaning and tone of the text? (Pg. 248)	Even though Rachel is eleven, she speaks with the whiney tone of a three-year old. Her thoughts of the sweater consume her entire being. A more mature person can compartmentalize. The refrain “not mine, not mine, not mine” demonstrates Rachel’s determination that she is right and Mrs. Price is wrong. This connects to the Big Idea because Rachel is reverting to her inner 3-year old.
In paragraph nineteen, count the words that begin with the sentence “My face all hot...” Identify other sentences from paragraphs fourteen through nineteen that are of similar lengths. Why does the author choose to write such lengthy sentences in paragraphs fourteen through nineteen? (Pg. 249)	There are 58 words. For further examples of long run-on sentences, please check paragraphs fourteen, eighteen, and nineteen. The author’s change in sentence structure reflects a change in Rachel’s internal dialogue. The run-on-, a list of Rachel’s body reactions (face all hot, spit coming out of mouth, animal noises, no more tears, shaking body) reflects Rachel’s intensity of emotions, culminating with her crying in class.
When the text states, “Mrs. Price pretends like everything’s okay”, what age does this reflect? Why? (Pg. 249)	Someone who is mature would admit they were wrong and apologize, without ignoring the problem. Mrs. Price does not do this, which shows less maturity and that even people of older ages do not always act in a mature manner. Responses will vary.
In paragraph five and in the last paragraph, Rachel says she wants to be 102. In each instance, why does Rachel want to be 102? (Pg.249)	In paragraph five, Rachel would have had the wisdom to handle the situation with Mrs. Price. She says “if I was one hundred and two I’d have known what to say when Mrs. Price put the red sweater on my desk”. In the last paragraph, Rachel wants the red sweater incident to be far in the past, “far away like a runaway balloon, like a tiny o in the sky, so tiny-tiny you have to close your eyes to see it”.
How has Rachel grown older today? Include evidence from the text to support your answer. (Pg. 249)	Rachel has accepted the fact that she is eleven and life will require people to bear difficulties. She has learned that we all carry with us the years that come before, sometimes reverting to the child within us. This is demonstrated in the last paragraph when Rachel says “I’m eleven today. I’m eleven, ten, nine, eight, seven, six, five, four, three, two, and one, but I wish I was one hundred and two”.