

Name _____

Date _____

Close Reading of Excerpt from *Sharing a Desert Home*

First Reading #1: Read the text below. Annotate by highlighting or underlining key information. In the left column, record key ideas in your own words. In the right column, record any questions you may have.

Key Ideas	Text	Questions
	<i>This text is an excerpt from the “Sharing a Desert Home: Life on the Colorado River Indian Reservation” by Ruth Y. Okimoto. Access to the original text can be purchased through the Poston Community Alliance.</i> Meanwhile, several miles north of Camp I, Indian students at the Colorado River Indian School were also writing down their thoughts about the war in their school paper, the <i>Colorado River Star</i>. Whereas the students in Camp I shared their stories about life in the camps, the students at the Colorado River Indian School wrote about the war and its impact on their reservation. Even the young students were aware that Japanese American detainees – as well as Italian and German prisoners of war (POWs) – were living on their reservation. The students wrote about the POWs working at the American Indian School, doing chores such as painting the classrooms or helping the CRIT farmers with their crops. One CRIT student wrote about the Japanese American farm near the school. “The Japanese farmers are showing on the school land here what can be done in this valley toward vegetable raising. They have been raising vegetables, not by the basketful, but by the truckload – and fine ones, too. Their cantaloupes, lettuce, spinach, and other vegetables have been as good as can be grown any place. They have shown that this valley has great possibilities as a vegetable growing center.” The WRA had leased property from the Indian school for the Japanese farmers to raise vegetables for the camps. With the Japanese Americans leveling the land and cleaning the stumps, the school secured labor benefits to subjugate school land that it could not afford to do in the past. The <i>Colorado River Star</i> began as a school publication but eventually became a community paper with information about CRIT that was sent to American Indian soldiers stationed abroad. The two schools – Poston and the Colorado River Indian School – were in close proximity, but seemed worlds apart as the students wrote of their separate realities. In both cases, however, Caucasian teachers or administrators had the final say in how each paper was compiled.	

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Second Reading #2: Answer the following questions using the text.

1. How did writing by Japanese American students differ from writing by Native American students?

2. What did Native American students write about in their school paper?

3. How did the CRIT student quoted in the second paragraph view the Japanese American farmers?

4. What circumstances allowed the school to subjugate school land for farming?

5. What does the author mean by, "The two schools – Poston and the Colorado River Indian School – were in close proximity, but seemed worlds apart as the students wrote of their separate realities."? What is the author trying to convey?

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Third Reading #3: Work with a partner to discuss the following questions:

1. What is the purpose of this excerpt?
2. How does it add to what you have learned in this lesson?
3. Why do you think the author included the quote from a CRIT student's writing (in the second paragraph)?
4. The author wrote that, "In both cases, however, Caucasian teachers or administrators had the final say in how each paper was compiled." Why do you think this was the case? How might this have impacted the published papers?