

Name _____



Layered Identity

Directions: Read the personal narrative essay excerpt below. As you read, pay attention not only to the author's ideas but also to **your own reading process**; what helped you understand and what made the text challenging.

Answer the comprehension questions first, then respond to the reflection prompts about **your strategies and challenges**. Be specific in your reflections, using examples from your reading experience.

Between Two Languages

When I first arrived in the United States at age eleven, I felt like I was living between two invisible walls. At home, I spoke Spanish, the language of warmth, humor, and comfort. At school, I was expected to think and speak only in English, a language that felt sharp, full of rules I kept breaking without realizing it.

Over time, I learned to translate myself, adjusting tone and vocabulary depending on who I was with. But in translation, something was always lost: the jokes that didn't land in English, the sayings my grandmother used that made no sense to my classmates. I began to wonder: was I becoming two different people, or just one person trying to be whole?

Now, as an adult, I understand that my identity is not split but layered. My cultural background doesn't weigh me down; it gives me depth. What once felt like walls now feels like bridges, connecting me to more than one world.

1. What contrast does the narrator describe between home and school life?
2. What does the narrator mean when they say they "learned to translate" themselves?
3. How does the narrator's understanding of identity change from childhood to adulthood?
4. What metaphors does the narrator use to describe their immigrant experience, and what do they represent?