Have you ever heard people say “There are many ways to be smart?” Read the passage below and learn how Gonzalo finds out that there is more than one way of being smart.

Gonzalo
by Paul Fleischman

1 The older you are, the younger you get when you move to the United States.

2 They don’t teach you that equation in school. Big Brain, Mr. Smoltz, my eighth-grade math teacher, hasn’t even heard of it. It’s not in Gateway to Algebra. It’s Garcia’s Equation. I’m the Garcia.

3 Two years after my father and I moved here from Guatemala I could speak English. I learned it on the playground and watching lots of TV. Don’t believe what people say—cartoons make you smart. But my father, he worked all day in a kitchen with Mexicans and Salvadorans. His English was worse than a kindergartner’s. He would only buy food at the bodega down the block. Outside of there he lowered his eyes and tried to get by on mumbles and smiles. He didn’t want strangers to hear his mistakes. So he used me to make phone calls and to talk to the landlady and to buy things in stores where you had to use English. He got younger. I got older.

4 Then my younger brothers and mother and Tío Juan, her uncle, came north and joined us. Tío Juan was the oldest man in his pueblo. But here he became a little baby. He’d been a farmer, but here he couldn’t work. He couldn’t sit out in the plaza and talk—there aren’t any plazas here, and if you sit out in public some gang driving by might use you for target practice. He couldn’t understand TV. So he wandered around the apartment all day, in and out of rooms, talking to himself, just like a kid in diapers.

5 One morning he wandered outside and down the street. My

Richness: Students who have immigrated to the United States, or whose families have, may have strong connections to the themes and ideas in this passage. See especially: Questions 1, 10

Purpose: The first sentence is Gonzalo’s hypothesis, which he sets out to prove in his narration of Tío Juan’s experience with the garden. See especially: Questions 3, 10

Style: The narrator’s voice is pronounced, bringing the character of Gonzalo to life.

Relationships: The text contains subtle hints about the relationships between members of the Garcia family. The most pronounced is the switching of roles between parent and child based on knowledge of the English language and social codes. See especially: Questions 3, 6, 10
mother practically fainted. He doesn’t speak Spanish, just an
Indian language. I finally found him standing in front of the
beauty parlor, staring through the glass at a woman with a drier
over her head. He must have wondered what weird planet he’d
moved to. I led him home, holding his hand, the way you would
with a three-year-old. Since then I’m supposed to babysit him
after school.

6 One afternoon I was watching TV, getting smart on The Brady
Bunch. Suddenly I looked up. He was gone. I checked the halls
on all five floors of the apartment house. I ran to the street. He
wasn’t in the bodega or the pawnshop. I called his name, imag-
ing my mother’s face when she found out he’d fallen through
a manhole or been run over. I turned the corner, looking for the
white straw hat he always wore. Two blocks down I spotted it.
I flew down the sidewalk and found him standing in front of a
vacant lot, making gestures to a man with a shovel.

7 I took his hand, but he pulled me through the trash and into
the lot. I recognized the man with the shovel—he was the jan-
tor at my old school. He had a little garden planted. Different
shades of green leaves were coming up in rows. Tío Juan was
smiling and trying to tell him something. The man couldn’t
understand him and finally went back to digging. I turned Tío
Juan around and led him home.

8 That night he told my mother all about it. She was the only one
who could understand him. When she got home from work the
next day she asked me to take him back there. I did. He studied
the soil. Then the soil. He felt it, then smelled it, then actually
tasted it. He chose a spot not too far from the sidewalk. Where
my mother changed busses she’d gone into a store and bought
him a trowel and four packets of seeds. I cleared the trash, he
turned the soil. I wished we were farther from the street and I
was praying that none of my friends or girlfriends or enemies
saw me. Tío Juan didn’t even notice people—he was totally
wrapped up in the work.

9 He showed me exactly how far apart the rows should be and
how deep. He couldn’t read the words on the seed packets, but
he knew from the pictures what seeds were inside. He poured
them into his hand and smiled. He seemed to recognize them,
like old friends. Watching him carefully sprinkling them into
the troughs he’d made, I realized that I didn’t know anything
about growing food and that he knew everything. I stared at his
busy fingers, then his eyes. They were focused, not faraway or
confused. He’d changed from a baby back into a man.
Teacher Guide for FAST-R Passage:
FAST-R: Formative Assessments of Student Thinking in Reading

The annotated answer key below highlights common reasons students might choose each answer, and the sidebars give more insight into the questions, to help you understand patterns of student responses. Always make time to follow up with students in conferences to ensure that the patterns you diagnose are consistent with students’ reading and thinking strategies.

Note: You may find it helpful to refer to the “Types and Levels of Thinking Assessed on FAST-R” sheet from your teacher resource folder as you examine your students’ responses. The icon in the right-hand column, below, corresponds to that sheet’s more detailed explanations of the kinds of thinking each type of question asks of readers.

1. According to the selection, where is the Garcia family from?
   A. Ecuador (OOB)
   B. Guatemala (√)
   C. Mexico (OOP2)
   D. Spain (OOP2)

2. Based on the clues in paragraph 2, what could Gateway to Algebra be?
   √ A. a textbook
     B. a t.v. show (OOP2, ¶3)
     C. a video game (OOB)
     D. a store (OOP2, ¶3)

3. The last two sentences of paragraph 3 are very short. What is the effect of these short sentences?
   √ A. They make clear the difference between Gonzalo and his father.
     B. They make a point about Mr. Garcia’s poor writing skills. (OOP2)
     C. They show how much Gonzalo’s father and uncle are alike. (OOP1)
     D. They prepare the reader for the next paragraph. (OOB)

4. The word “bodega” means “grocery store” in what language?
   A. Vietnamese (OOB)
   B. English (OOP2)
   C. Indian (OOP1)
   √ D. Spanish

5. According to the selection, what kind of work did Tío Juan do in his pueblo?
   A. kitchen work (OOP2, ¶2)
   B. janitorial work (OOP2, ¶7)
   C. farming (√)
   D. doctoring (OOB)

6. According to the passage, what helped Gonzalo “get smart?”
   A. Mr. Smoltz and algebra class (OOP1)
   B. Tio Juan and the garden (OOB)
   C. his mom and dad (OOP2)
   √ D. cartoons and The Brady Bunch

FE2: Recognize the explicit meaning from varied wording in the text
MI1: Determine implicit meaning from words in context
MI5: Determine meaning by using an understanding of literary concepts
FE1: Identify evidence explicitly stated in the text
7. According to the selection, what is the FIRST clue that finding the garden is important to Tío Juan?
   A. Tío Juan always wears his white straw hat. (OOP1, ¶6)
   B. Tío Juan turns around and follows Gonzalo home. (OOP1, ¶7)
   C. Tío Juan wanders from room to room in the apartment. (OOP1, ¶4)
   √ D. Tío Juan smiles and tries to tell the man with the shovel something. (¶7)

8. Read the sentence about Tío Juan and the seeds in the box below.
   He seemed to recognize them, like old friends.
   What does this sentence from the story mean?
   A. Tío Juan thinks the seeds look old. (OOB)
   ✓ B. Tío Juan is very familiar with growing seeds.
   C. Tío Juan remembers that his friends like to plant seeds. (OOB)
   D. Tío Juan gives seeds to people he likes. (OOB)

9. Which of the following is a clue that Gonzalo's attitude toward Tío Juan changes in paragraph 9?
   A. Tío Juan watched Gonzalo pour the seeds in his hand. (OOP2)
   B. Gonzalo becomes frustrated with his uncle and leaves. (OOB)
   C. Tío Juan knew what kind of seeds were inside the packets. (OOP1)
   ✓ D. Gonzalo realizes that he doesn't know anything about gardening but Tío Juan knew a lot.

10. What is the MAIN theme of this selection?
    A. Old people should take care of themselves. (OOP1)
    ✓ B. Different kinds of knowledge are valuable in different situations.
    C. Too much knowledge can become a dangerous thing. (OOB)
    D. Gardening is more important for children than watching television. (OOP1)

Open Response Prompt:
Reread the last sentence from the selection in which Gonzalo talks about Tío Juan. What events in the selection lead Gonzalo to think Tío Juan has changed from a baby to a man? Support this statement with important and specific details from the selection.

He seemed to recognize them, like old friends.
The older you are, the younger you get when you move to the United States.

They don’t teach you that equation in school. Big Brain, Mr. Smoltz, my eighth-grade math teacher, hasn’t even heard of it. It’s not in *Gateway to Algebra*. It’s Garcia’s Equation. I’m the Garcia.

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Then my younger brothers and mother and Tío Juan, her uncle, came north and joined us. Tío Juan was the oldest man in his *pueblo*. But here he became a little baby. He’d been a farmer, but here he couldn’t work. He couldn’t sit out in the *plaza* and talk—there aren’t any plazas here, and if you sit out in public some gang driving by might use you for target practice. He couldn’t understand TV. So he wandered around.

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**Gonzalo**

by Paul Fleischman

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**Spotlight On: Seedfolks**

“Gonzalo” is one of thirteen stories that make up the book *Seedfolks*, which is set in Cleveland, Ohio and focuses on a city garden which affects the lives of several people in the neighborhood. Each chapter focuses on one person’s connection to the garden. As each character’s background is revealed, the reader begins to understand the characters’ different perspectives and the motivations for their actions. The characters overcome their prejudices and language barriers to understand that their differences actually make their neighborhood a better place.

The author, Paul Fleischman, based his characters on people and stories that touched his life, and the character Gonzalo is based on a student he used to tutor.

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1 *bodega* — Spanish word for grocery store
2 *pueblo* — Spanish word for village
3 *plaza* — Spanish word which means “a public square in a city or town”
the apartment all day, in and out of rooms, talking to himself, just like a kid in diapers.

One morning he wandered outside and down the street. My mother practically fainted. He doesn’t speak Spanish, just an Indian language. I finally found him standing in front of the beauty parlor, staring through the glass at a woman with a drier over her head. He must have wondered what weird planet he’d moved to. I led him home, holding his hand, the way you would with a three-year-old. Since then I’m supposed to babysit him after school.

One afternoon I was watching TV, getting smart on *The Brady Bunch*. Suddenly I looked up. He was gone. I checked the halls on all five floors of the apartment house. I ran to the street. He wasn’t in the *bodega* or the pawnshop. I called his name, imagining my mother’s face when she found out he’d fallen through a manhole or been run over. I turned the corner, looking for the white straw hat he always wore. Two blocks down I spotted it. I flew down the sidewalk and found him standing in front of a vacant lot, making gestures to a man with a shovel.

I took his hand, but he pulled me through the trash and into the lot. I recognized the man with the shovel—he was the janitor at my old school. He had a little garden planted. Different shades of green leaves were coming up in rows. Tío Juan was smiling and trying to tell him something. The man couldn’t understand him and finally went back to digging. I turned Tío Juan around and led him home.

That night he told my mother all about it. She was the only one who could understand him. When she got home from work the next day she asked me to take him back there. I did. He studied the sun. Then the soil. He felt it, then smelled it, then actually tasted it. He chose a spot not too far from the sidewalk. Where my mother changed busses she’d gone into a store and bought him a trowel and four packets of seeds. I cleared the trash, he turned the soil. I wished we were farther from the street and I was praying that none of my friends or girlfriends or enemies saw me. Tío Juan didn’t even notice people—he was totally wrapped up in the work.

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4 *The Brady Bunch* — a popular TV show in the 1970s about an American family
Directions: Answer the following multiple-choice questions by filling in the circle for the best answer on your answer sheet.

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*Continue answering questions on the next page*
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Write your answer to the open response prompt in the lined space below if your teacher directs you to do so.