



# Collegedunia NCERT Solutions

*The Third Level Class 12 English Handwritten Notes: notebook-style revision pages for Jack Finney's time-slip story (2026-27)*

## Chapter 1: The Third Level

### About this Chapter

**The Third Level** is the opening Vistas supplementary chapter by Jack Finney. These handwritten-style notes follow the rhythm of a student's last-week revision notebook: short paragraphs, marked-up keywords, frame boxes around dates and quotes, and a compact glossary. Use them as a final-pass refresh before the Class 12 English Core Board paper.

**Topics covered:** Quick facts • Setting • Charley's anxiety frame • Discovery in the tunnels • Currency conversion • Sam's letter • Themes • Glossary • Quote bank

#### Quick Formula Sheet

##### One-liner.

A New Yorker stumbles on a hidden third level at Grand Central that opens into the summer of 1894.

##### Key line.

"The modern world is full of insecurity, fear, war, worry and all the rest of it."

Also see for this chapter: [NCERT Solutions](#) · [Notes](#)

### Notebook Page 1 – Quick Facts

- **Author:** Jack Finney (American, 1911–1995). Known for nostalgic science-fiction.
- **Source:** short story from the 1957 collection *The Third Level* (later reissued as *The Clock of Time*).
- **Reprinted in:** Vistas, Class 12, Chapter 1.
- **Genre:** science-fiction / fantasy with a nostalgia streak.
- **Narrator:** Charley, a 31-year-old New Yorker, first person.
- **Wife:** Louisa.
- **Friend / psychiatrist:** Sam Weiner.
- **Setting now:** Grand Central Station, New York (1950s frame).
- **Setting then:** Galesburg, Illinois, summer of 1894.

## Notebook Page 2 – Setting Map

Two places at once. Memorise them as *now* and *then*.

### Now vs Then

**Now** = New York, Grand Central, 1950s.

**Then** = Galesburg, Illinois, summer of 1894.

- Enters Grand Central from *Vanderbilt Avenue*.
- First level = long-distance trains (e.g. the *Twentieth Century*).
- Second level = suburban trains.
- Third level = Charley's discovery: a smaller room with gaslights, brass spittoons, 1894 clothes.
- Galesburg: *big old frame houses, huge lawns, trees that roof the streets, fire-flies, palm-leaf fans, cigars on the lawn.*
- Dating anchor: First World War still *twenty years off*; Second World War *forty-plus years in the future*.

## Notebook Page 3 – Charley's Anxiety Frame

- Presidents of the *New York Central* and the *New York, New Haven and Hartford* railroads insist there are only *two* levels.
- Charley says there are *three*, because he has been on the third level.
- Sam Weiner diagnoses the sighting as a "*waking-dream wish fulfilment*".
- Sam's reason: the modern world is full of "*insecurity, fear, war, worry and all the rest of it*" and Charley wants to escape.
- Charley's reply: *everybody* he knows wants to escape.
- Stamp collecting, Sam says, is "*a temporary refuge from reality*".
- Counter-evidence: Charley's grandfather started the collection, and he had no need to escape *any* reality.

### Exam Tip

For any "why does Charley want to escape" question, quote the *insecurity, fear, war, worry* line verbatim. It is the most marks-friendly line in the chapter.

## Notebook Page 4 – Discovery in the Tunnels

- One summer night, Charley works late at the office.
- Catches the subway home from Grand Central because it is faster than the bus.
- He is *31*, wears a *tan gabardine suit* and a *straw hat with a fancy band*.
- Passes a dozen men dressed just like him = ordinary, not running from anything.

- Going to the subway he *gets lost* in the tunnels (has happened before: once came out at the *Roosevelt Hotel*, once on *Forty-sixth Street*).
- Corridor angles *left* and slants *downward*.
- Hears a hollow roar of open space → short flight of stairs → third level.

## Notebook Page 5 – What He Sees on the Third Level

- Room *smaller* than the second level.
- Fewer ticket windows and train gates.
- Information booth in the centre is *wood and old-looking*.
- Clerk wears a *green eyeshade* and *long black sleeve protectors*.
- Lighting = flickering *open-flame gaslights*.
- *Brass spittoons* on the floor.
- A man with a *gold pocket watch*, *derby hat*, *black four-button suit with tiny lapels*, *big black handlebar mustache*.
- A woman in a dress with *leg-of-mutton sleeves* and *skirts to the top of her high-buttoned shoes*.
- On the tracks: a *small Currier & Ives locomotive* with a *funnel-shaped stack*.

### ✗ Common Mistake

Spell it *Currier & Ives* (the famous 19th-century American print firm), not “Carrier and Ives”. The locomotive is the visual proof he has slipped into the 1890s.

## Notebook Page 6 – The Two Pieces of Proof

- Walks to a newsboy: the paper is *The World*.
- *The World* has not been published for years.
- Lead story = President *Cleveland*.
- Front page later found in the Public Library files, printed *June 11, 1894*.
- He sees *Galesburg, Illinois* on the destination boards = the town where his grandfather lived and where he himself went to school.
- He decides to buy *two coach tickets*, one way, for himself and Louisa.

## Notebook Page 7 – The Currency Conversion

- Clerk eyes the fancy hatband but figures the fare.
- Charley has enough modern money for two coach tickets.
- Clerk stares at the bills: “*That ain’t money, mister*” → thinks Charley is trying to “*skin*” him.
- Modern money is the wrong size: *half again as big* and different-looking compared with 1894 bills.
- Charley walks out fast = no nice jail, even in 1894.

- Next day, lunch hour: draws *three hundred dollars* from the bank (nearly all they had).
- Coin dealer charges a premium: \$300 modern buys *less than \$200* in old-style bills.
- Why worth it? *Eggs were 13 cents a dozen in 1894.*
- But he can *never again* find the corridor to the third level, however often he tries.

### Exam Tip

The two numbers worth memorising: *\$300 modern* → *< \$200 in 1894 bills* and *eggs at 13c a dozen*. They show Charley's effort is serious, not whimsical.

## Notebook Page 8 – Sam's First-Day Cover

- Louisa is worried; for a while Charley stops looking.
- Then Sam Weiner *disappears*.
- Charley had often told Sam about Galesburg; Sam liked the sound of it.
- One night, going through his oldest first-day covers, Charley finds one that should not be there.
- The cover is addressed to *his grandfather* at Galesburg.
- Postmark: *July 18, 1894*.
- Stamp: *six-cent, dull brown, picture of President Garfield*.
- Inside the envelope, instead of blank paper, a note.

### The note inside the envelope

**941 Willard Street, Galesburg, Illinois. July 18, 1894.**

*"I got to wishing that you were right . . . I found the third level! I've been here two weeks . . . down the street at the Daly's, someone is playing a piano, and they're all out on the front porch singing 'Seeing Nelly Home.' . . . Come on back, Charley and Louisa. Keep looking till you find the third level! It's worth it, believe me!"*

Signed: *Sam*.

## Notebook Page 9 – The Twist Ending

- At the stamp and coin store, Charley learns Sam bought *eight hundred dollars'* worth of old-style currency.
- Enough to set up a *hay, feed and grain business* in 1894 Galesburg.
- Sam had always said that was what he really wished he could do.
- He cannot go back to his old business = *Sam was Charley's psychiatrist*.
- Punchline: the man who diagnosed the third level as a *waking-dream wish fulfilment* ends up living inside that wish himself.

### X Common Mistake

Don't say Sam was Charley's neighbour or colleague. He is *the psychiatrist* who called Charley's vision a *waking-dream wish fulfilment*. The whole irony of the ending depends on this single fact.

## Notebook Page 10 – Themes and Symbols

- *Escape from modern anxiety* = the central theme; “insecurity, fear, war, worry and all the rest of it”.
- *Past as refuge* = Galesburg 1894 is the peaceable opposite of 1950s New York.
- *Fantasy vs reality* = Sam's diagnosis vs Sam's actual disappearance.
- *Time-space intersection* = third level lets the same Grand Central staircase reach two centuries.
- Symbol: *third level* = the private exit from modern life.
- Symbol: *stamp collection* = “temporary refuge from reality” according to Sam.
- Symbol: *gaslights and brass spittoons* = the sensory marker that Charley is no longer in 1950s.
- Symbol: *Currier & Ives locomotive* = the visual proof of 1894.

## Notebook Page 11 – Glossary Flash Cards

- *Gabardine* = a tightly woven worsted fabric; Charley's tan suit.
- *Derby* = a hard, round-crowned felt hat; worn by the man with the gold watch.
- *Leg-of-mutton sleeves* = 1890s women's sleeves, wide at the shoulder, tight at the wrist.
- *Eyeshade* = a stiff green visor worn by clerks to soften gaslight.
- *Sleeve protectors* = long black armbands worn over the forearm to keep cuffs clean.
- *Spittoons* = brass floor receptacles for tobacco juice.
- *Currier & Ives* = 19th-century American print firm whose locomotive images defined the look of that era.
- *First-day cover* = an envelope mailed on the day a new stamp is issued; the postmark proves the date.
- *Waking-dream wish fulfilment* = a daydream that gives the dreamer what real life cannot.
- *Hay, feed and grain business* = a small-town store that supplies fodder for horses and farm animals; Sam's new trade in 1894.

## Notebook Page 12 – Quote Bank

### 🗨️ Quotes worth memorising

- “The modern world is full of insecurity, fear, war, worry and all the rest of it.”
- “A temporary refuge from reality.”
- “I’m just an ordinary guy named Charley, thirty-one years old.”
- “Sometimes I think Grand Central is growing like a tree, pushing out new corridors and staircases like roots.”
- “That ain’t money, mister.”
- “Eggs were thirteen cents a dozen in 1894.”
- “Come on back, Charley and Louisa. Keep looking till you find the third level! It’s worth it, believe me!”
- “His old business? Why, Sam was my psychiatrist.”

## Notebook Page 13 – Last-Minute Board Tips

- For any *escape* question, lead with the *insecurity, fear, war, worry* quote and name Galesburg 1894 as the destination.
- For any *proof* question, give both pieces = *June 11, 1894 newspaper and July 18, 1894 first-day cover*.
- For any *Sam* question, end with the twist = the psychiatrist himself fled to the third level.
- For any *Charley reliable?* question, list three anchors: stamp hobby, ordinary clothes, real Galesburg.
- For any *symbol* question, pick two from the symbol list and link each to one sentence in the text.
- Always spell the destination *Galesburg, Illinois* and the stamp president *Garfield* (not Cleveland = that’s the newspaper).
- Compare with *Adventure* by Jayant Narlikar (Hornbill XI): both stories use time-slips to question what is “real”.

### Related Collegedunia Resources

#### Same chapter — other resources:

- [NCERT Solutions](#)
- [Revision Notes](#)
- [NCERT Book PDF](#)

#### Continue learning:

- [Ch 2: The Tiger King](#)
- [Ch 3: Journey to the End of the Earth](#)
- [Class 12 English Vistas — All Chapters](#)

### Key Takeaways

- Author: Jack Finney; narrator: Charley, 31; wife Louisa; friend / psychiatrist Sam Weiner.

- Setting: Grand Central Station (1950s) and Galesburg, Illinois (summer 1894).
- Diagnosis: third level = “waking-dream wish fulfilment” from a world full of “insecurity, fear, war, worry”.
- Sensory proof on the third level: gaslights, brass spittoons, derby hat, leg-of-mutton sleeves, Currier & Ives locomotive.
- Documentary proof: *The World* dated June 11, 1894; first-day cover postmarked July 18, 1894 with a six-cent Garfield stamp.
- Twist: Sam himself disappears to Galesburg 1894 with \$800 of old-style currency to start a hay, feed and grain business.

End of The Third Level Handwritten Notes