



Collegedunia NCERT Notes

The Ultimate NCERT Revision Guide for Class 12 English Vistas

The Third Level Class 12 Notes

Chapter 1 · Vistas · by Jack Finney
NCERT 2026-27 Syllabus · 12th CBSE Board

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

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Introduction and Chapter Snapshot

The Third Level by the American writer Jack Finney is the opening story of the Class 12 Vistas supplementary reader. It tells of Charley, a thirty-one-year-old New Yorker who collects stamps, and his claim that he stumbled on a hidden **third level** at Grand Central Station – a level that leads not to a different platform but to the calmer world of 1894. Charley’s psychiatrist friend Sam Weiner diagnoses the sighting as a *waking-dream wish fulfilment*; Charley insists it is real. The story closes when Sam himself disappears, leaving behind a first-day cover postmarked from Galesburg, Illinois, on 18 July 1894 – bearing a six-cent dull-brown stamp with a picture of President Garfield.

1.1 Author at a Glance

Jack Finney (1911–1995) was an American writer best known for science-fiction and fantasy short stories with a strong nostalgic streak. *The Third Level* comes from his 1957 collection *The Clock of Time* (originally titled *Third Level* in its first 1957 edition). Finney’s signature theme – the wish to step out of the modern age into a remembered earlier one – runs through almost everything he wrote, including the novella *Time and Again* (1970), which uses a similar Manhattan-portal premise on a much larger canvas.

Why this chapter matters in Class 12

- Sets the tone of the Vistas supplementary reader: psychological reality first, plot second.
- Frequently asked across the Vistas 6-mark slot of the CBSE Class 12 English Core Board paper.
- Introduces three high-frequency themes that recur in *The Tiger King*, *The Enemy* and *Memories of Childhood*: escape, fantasy versus reality, and the past as a portable refuge.

1.2 Story in One Breath

A modern New Yorker, weighed down by *insecurity, fear, war, worry and all the rest of it*, finds a hidden third level at Grand Central Station, glimpses the calmer summer of 1894 on the other side, fails to step through, and then discovers from his psychiatrist's first-day cover that the escape did, in fact, work for someone else. Every theme, character and quotation in the chapter is anchored to that one shape – almost-escape for Charley, achieved escape for Sam.

Five-Word Anchor

WORRY – STATION – 1894 – CURRENCY – SAM. If you remember these five words in order, you can reconstruct the entire chapter – from the line “*insecurity, fear, war, worry and all the rest of it*” to Sam's hay, feed and grain business in Galesburg.

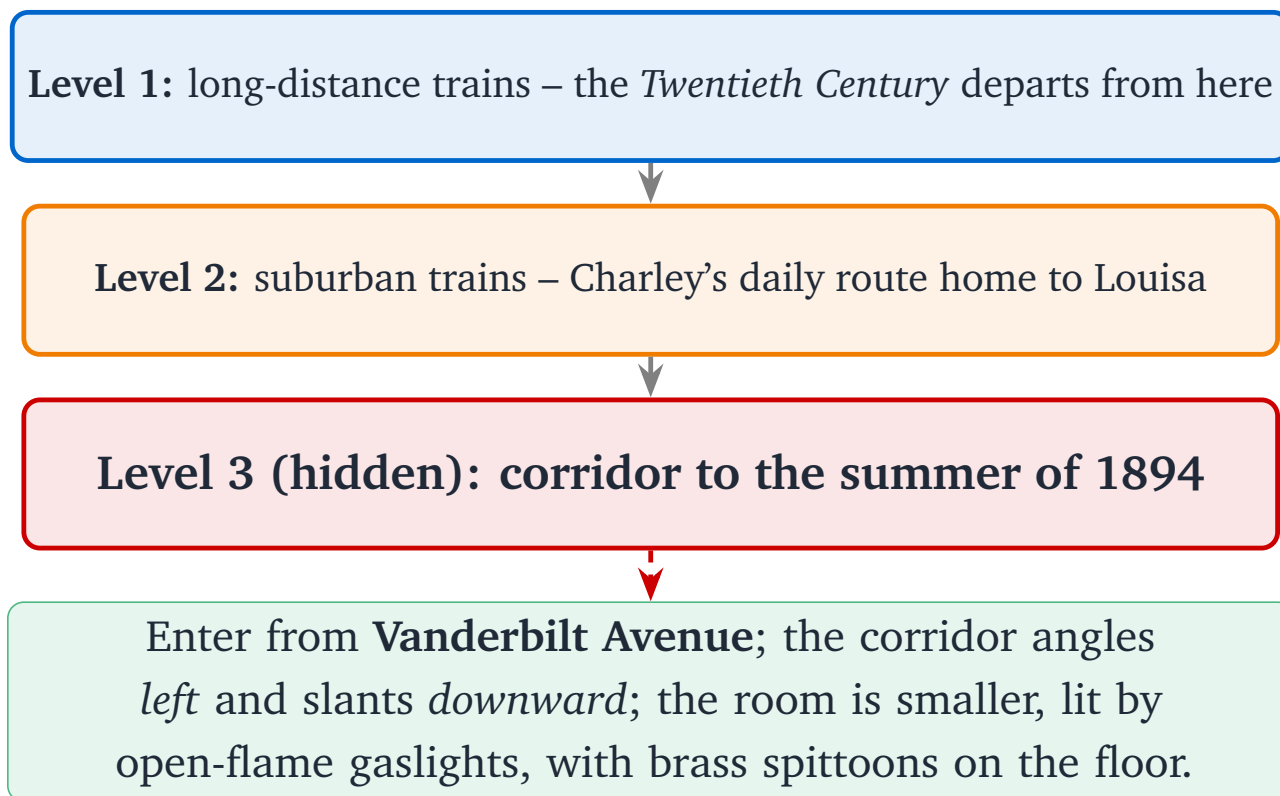
1.3 Setting at a Glance

The story is set in two places at once. The 1950s frame is **New York City** – specifically Grand Central Station, where Charley enters from **Vanderbilt Avenue**, descends past the first level (where the long-distance *Twentieth Century* train departs) and the second level (suburban trains), and then claims the third level branches off the labyrinth of tunnels below. The escape destination is **Galesburg, Illinois**, in the summer of **1894** – a peaceable mid-Western town with big old frame houses, huge lawns, tremendous trees whose branches roof the streets, fireflies, gas lamps and palm-leaf fans on the lawn. Finney sets the second place up as a deliberate contrast with the first.

Where Galesburg actually is

Galesburg, Illinois is a real town about 200 miles south-west of Chicago. Charley actually went to school there, and his grandfather lived there too (it was the grandfather who started Charley's stamp collection). The dating (1894) places the escape just before the wars and the Depression: the First World War is still twenty years off and the Second World War over forty years in the future. A reader in 1950 sees 1894 the way we now see 1990 – old enough to be safe, close enough to be reachable.

Diagram – Grand Central Station: the Three Levels



Plot Summary – Scene by Scene

The plot of *The Third Level* happens in three quiet arcs: the anxiety frame, the discovery in the tunnels, and the letter that arrives after the search fails. Reading the story scene by scene helps you write any answer – 1-mark, 3-mark, or 6-mark – without missing a beat.

2.1 Scene 1: Charley’s Anxiety Frame

The story opens not with Grand Central Station but with Charley’s state of mind. He has been telling people about a third level he has discovered at the station. The presidents of the New York Central and the New York, New Haven and Hartford railroads insist there are only two levels. His friends and his wife Louisa worry that he is making it up; Sam, his psychiatrist friend, calls the sighting a *waking-dream wish fulfilment* and explains that “*the modern world is full of insecurity, fear, war, worry and all the rest of it*” and that Charley just wants to escape. Charley does not deny the diagnosis; he simply notes that *everybody* he knows wants to escape. When his friends point to his stamp collecting as proof, Sam agrees that the hobby is “*a temporary refuge from reality*” – a line that will quietly come back to haunt him in the closing pages.

Why Finney opens with the diagnosis

By giving the reader the psychiatrist’s diagnosis *before* the discovery of the third level, Finney is signalling how to read what follows. The third level is therefore set up as a

phenomenon to be read psychologically. Any answer that ignores this opening frame loses marks.

2.2 Scene 2: The Discovery in the Tunnels

One summer night Charley works late at the office. Wearing a tan gabardine suit and a straw hat with a fancy band, he hurries through Grand Central to catch the subway home to Louisa. He gets lost in the labyrinth of tunnels and corridors beneath the station – a thing that has happened to him before; once he came out in the lobby of the **Roosevelt Hotel**, another time in an office building three blocks away on Forty-sixth Street. This time the corridor angles left and slants downward; he hears a hollow roar of open space ahead, takes a short flight of stairs, and emerges on the **third level**. The room is smaller than the second level, with fewer ticket windows and train gates. The information booth in the centre is wood and old-looking; the clerk inside wears a **green eyeshade and long black sleeve protectors**. The lighting is different – not the modern fluorescent of the upper levels, but **open-flame gaslights** that flicker. There are **brass spittoons** on the floor. A man across the room snaps open a **gold pocket watch** from his vest pocket; he wears a **derby hat**, a black four-button suit with tiny lapels, and a big black handlebar mustache. A woman steps in wearing a dress with **leg-of-mutton sleeves** and skirts to the top of her high-buttoned shoes. On the tracks, Charley catches a glimpse of a small **Currier & Ives locomotive** with a funnel-shaped stack.

To make sure, Charley walks over to a newsboy and looks at the stack of papers at his feet. The masthead reads *The World* – a New York paper that has not been published for years. The lead story is about **President Cleveland**. (Charley later finds the same front page in the Public Library files; it is printed **June 11, 1894**.) He sees the destination boards and reads **Galesburg, Illinois** – the town where he went to school and where his grandfather lived – on one of them.

2.3 Scene 3: The Currency Conversion

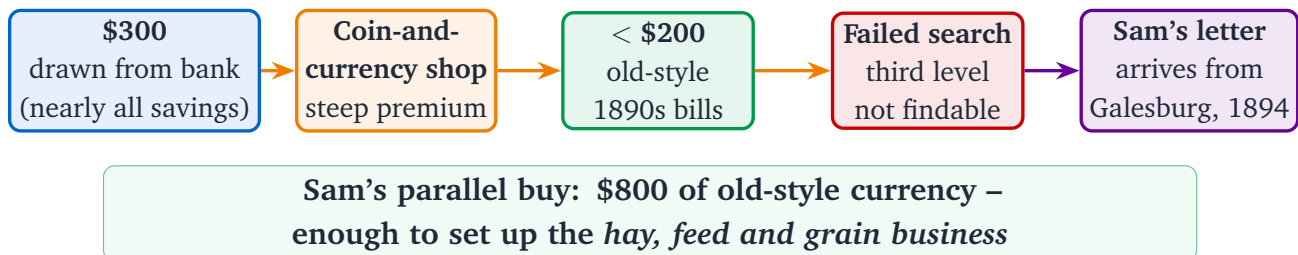
Charley decides to buy two tickets to Galesburg – one for himself and one for Louisa – so they can spend a quiet summer there. He has enough on him for two coach tickets, one way; the clerk figures the fare and is ready to issue the tickets. But when Charley counts out the money, the clerk stares. “*That ain’t money, mister;*” the clerk says, glancing at the cash drawer beside him for help. Charley’s bills are the modern kind – smaller, with a different look. The old-style 1890s bills, he realises, were *half again as big*. He gets out of the station fast before the clerk can call for the police – jail in 1894 would be no better than jail today.

The next day during the lunch hour, Charley draws **three hundred dollars** out of the bank – nearly all the savings he and Louisa have – and walks into a coin-and-currency shop. He hands over the three hundred and walks out with **less than two hundred dollars** in old-style 1890s bills. He has paid a steep premium, but he does not mind: eggs were thirteen cents a dozen in 1894. The detail is crucial: Charley is not just curious about the third level; he is *preparing* to leave for it.

Key Quotation – Charley’s Reasons

“... the modern world is full of insecurity, fear, war, worry and all the rest of it, and ... I just want to escape. Well, who doesn’t?”

— Charley reporting Sam’s diagnosis | NCERT page 1

Diagram – The Currency Chain: How Charley Prepared to Leave**2.4 Scene 4: The Failed Search**

Armed with the old-style currency, Charley goes back to Grand Central, but he cannot find the third level again. He searches through the tunnels and corridors for night after night. His wife Louisa eventually joins him in the search. By now both of them are emotionally invested – the third level is no longer Charley’s private obsession but the shared object of their evenings.

2.5 Scene 5: Sam’s Letter

Then **Sam Weiner** disappears. Nobody knows where he has gone, but Charley suspects: Sam was a city boy who had always said he liked the sound of Galesburg whenever Charley described it. One night, fussing with his grandfather’s old stamp collection, Charley finds a first-day cover that should not have been there. The envelope is addressed to his grandfather at his Galesburg home; the postmark is **July 18, 1894**; the stamp is a **six-cent dull-brown one with a picture of President Garfield**. Inside, instead of the usual blank paper, is a letter:

Key Quotation – Sam’s Letter

“I got to wishing that you were right. Then I got to believing you were right. And, Charley, it’s true; 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!”

— Sam to Charley | NCERT page 6 (the letter is from **941 Willard Street, Galesburg, Illinois**)

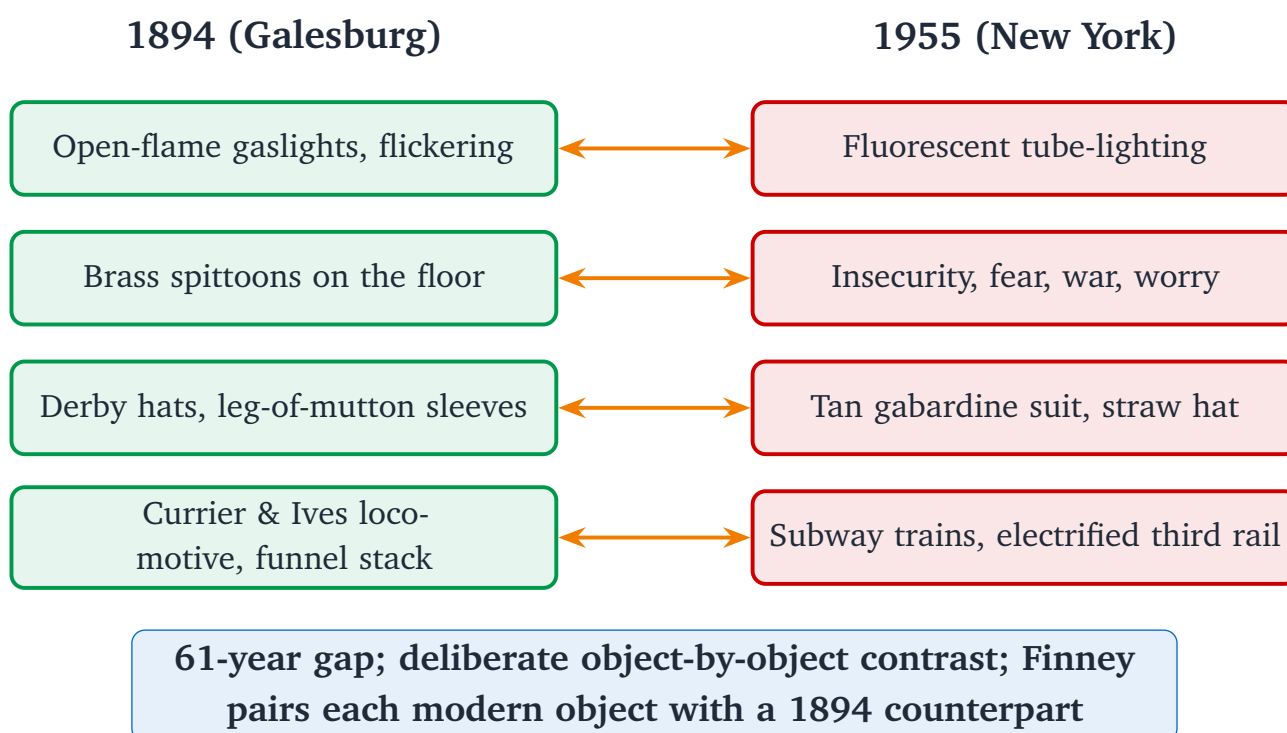
At the same stamp-and-coin store, Charley later learns that Sam had bought **eight hundred dollars’** worth of old-style currency – enough to set him up in the **hay, feed and grain business** he had always privately wished he could do. The closing twist is the chapter’s quietest joke:

Sam's old business? He was Charley's psychiatrist – the very man who had called the third level a wish fulfilment.

Plot Skeleton – the 5-Stop Hook

WORRY → **STATION** → **1894** → **CURRENCY** → **SAM**. Charley reports the modern **worry** (Sam's diagnosis); finds the third level at the **station**; sees **1894** on *The World* masthead and the destination boards; converts old-style **currency** at a steep premium; and finally receives **Sam's** first-day cover as the second eye-witness.

Diagram – The 1894 vs 1955 Contrast



Character Sketches

The story is built around three figures – Charley, Sam, and Louisa – with the third level itself functioning almost as a fourth character. Each carries a different stance towards reality, so questions on characters almost always become questions on the chapter's theme.

3.1 Charley – the Reluctant Modern

Charley is the first-person narrator and the protagonist of the story. He is a typical mid-century New Yorker: thirty-one years old, employed, married, anxious. He is not a science-fiction hero but a man with a hobby – stamp collecting – and a wish.

- **Anxious and self-aware.** He repeats Sam's list of modern stresses – *insecurity, fear, war, worry and all the rest of it* – without resistance. He admits Sam's diagnosis (*waking-dream*

wish fulfilment) is partly true.

- **Imaginative but rational.** The third level is not a dream; he goes back with old-style currency, looking for a measurable thing. He is acting on his fantasy, not just having it.
- **Loyal to family memory.** He inherits his grandfather's stamp collection, went to school in Galesburg himself, and chooses it as the escape destination because the place is doubly familiar.
- **Romantic about the past.** The 1894 he wants is not a generic year; it is specifically the year before the wars, before the Great Depression, before the bomb.

How Charley changes – a 3-point arc

(i) **Anxiety** (modern stresses, hurried subway commute, Sam's diagnosis) → (ii) **Discovery** (the tunnels, the gas lamps, the newspaper dated June 1894, the destination boards) → (iii) **Vindication** (Sam's first-day cover, the letter from Galesburg).

3.2 Sam – the Psychiatrist Who Becomes the Believer

Sam is Charley's friend and psychiatrist. He is the chapter's most interesting character because he changes the most.

- **Sceptic at first.** He diagnoses the sighting as a wish fulfilment, gives Charley a clinical name for the phenomenon, and explains the modern stresses.
- **Hidden wish.** The letter reveals he too had a long-held private wish – the hay, feed and grain business. The professional sceptic was carrying the same dream as the patient.
- **Pioneer of escape.** He out-prepares the amateur – buys **eight hundred dollars'** worth of old-style currency (against Charley's three-hundred-dollar attempt that yielded less than two hundred old-style), and disappears without telling anyone.
- **Believer-evangelist.** His letter is not a report; it is an invitation. *"Come on back, Charley and Louisa. Keep looking till you find the third level!"*

3.3 Louisa – the Quiet Companion

Louisa is Charley's wife. The story gives her only a few lines, but those lines do a lot of work.

- She **worries** about Charley's sanity at first.
- Then **joins** him in the nightly search through Grand Central.
- By the end of the chapter she is **actively looking** for the third level alongside him.

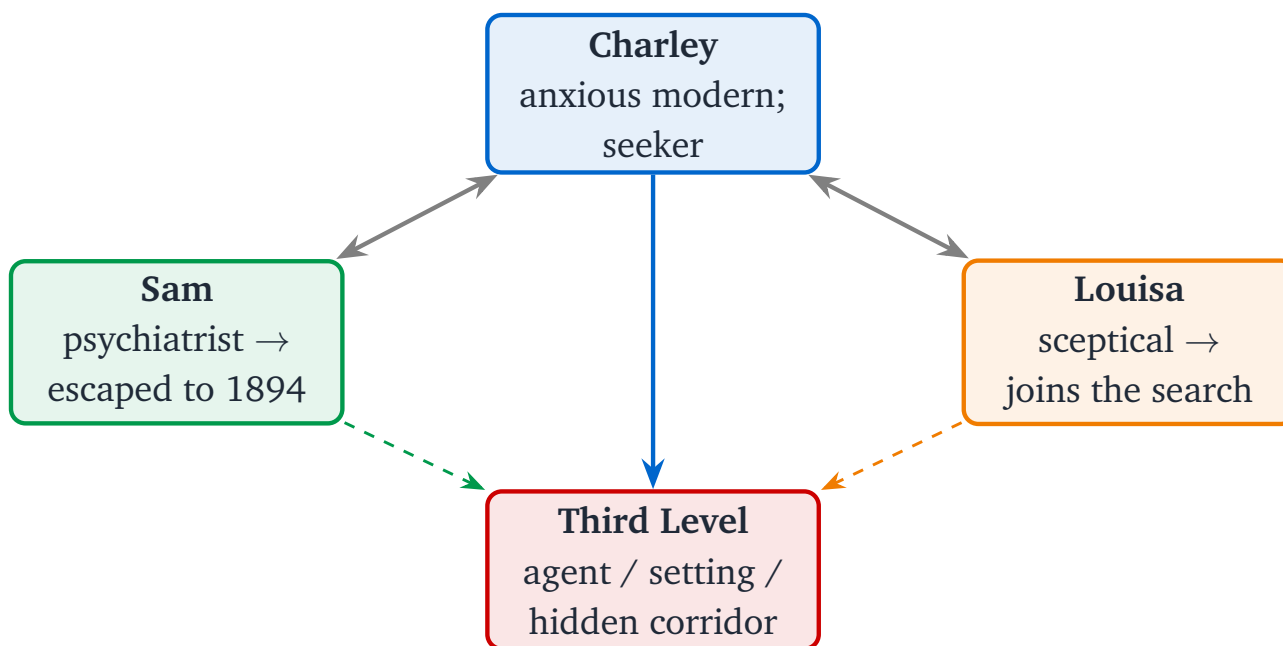
Why Louisa matters

Louisa is the chapter's quiet evidence that the wish to escape is not just Charley's. A wife who would normally protest at her husband's strange behaviour instead joins him. The story uses Louisa to argue that escape is a shared human wish, not an individual

psychiatric symptom.

3.4 Character Map – Three Stances on Reality

Three stances on the same reality



Why Finney gives the believer's role to the psychiatrist

The role reversal is the chapter's masterstroke. The character who is trained to diagnose escapism is the one who escapes. This is not a swipe at psychiatry; it is the chapter's evidence that the wish to step out of modern stress is not a clinical symptom of a few unstable people but a widely shared modern wish. Putting the diagnosis and the disappearance inside the same character is the most efficient way to make the argument.

Themes

The chapter packs five big ideas into a short story. The CBSE board paper, the sample papers, and the reference books all draw the Vistas 6-mark Long Answer from this set.

4.1 Escape from a World of Insecurity and Stress

The central theme of *The Third Level* is escape. Finney opens with Charley reporting Sam's diagnosis (insecurity, fear, war, worry, all the rest of it), lets Sam himself name the sighting a wish fulfilment, and then offers the third level as the answer to that wish. Every plot detail downstream – the currency conversion, the nightly search, the letter from Galesburg – argues the same point: the modern world produces a wish to step out of it.

How the story argues this theme

- Finney names the modern stresses explicitly in the opening paragraph.
- Sam, a trained psychiatrist, supplies the technical name – *wish fulfilment*.
- Charley physically prepares to leave (the currency conversion).
- Sam actually leaves and recruits Charley to follow.
- Louisa joins the search, so the escape becomes shared.

4.2 Fantasy versus Reality

The story keeps the reader poised between two readings. The psychiatric reading says the third level is a wish-shaped hallucination. The plot reading says the third level is real and Sam actually went there. Finney never decides between the two readings; he gives the reader Sam's letter as evidence, and lets the reader weigh it.

Common Misreading

Many students write that the story **proves** the third level exists because Sam's letter arrives. This is the single most repeated error in board scripts. The letter is **evidence**, not proof. Sam himself frames the change as "*I got to wishing that you were right. Then I got to believing you were right.*" – wishing comes first, evidence comes after. Read the chapter as keeping the question open, not as closing it.

4.3 Intersection of Time and Space

A station is already a place where time and space converge – you go to a station to be moved from one place to another at a particular time. Finney chooses Grand Central precisely because the symbolism is built in. The third level is a small extra branch of the station that opens not to a different platform but to a different year. The chapter uses this image to argue that time and space are not separate axes – they intersect.

4.4 Philately and the Past

Charley's grandfather's stamp collection is more than a hobby. It is the chapter's evidence box. The first-day cover Sam mails from Galesburg in 1894 is preserved in the collection by Charley's grandfather and reaches Charley three generations later. Stamps function in the chapter as carriers of date and place – the postmark is a small piece of historical truth.

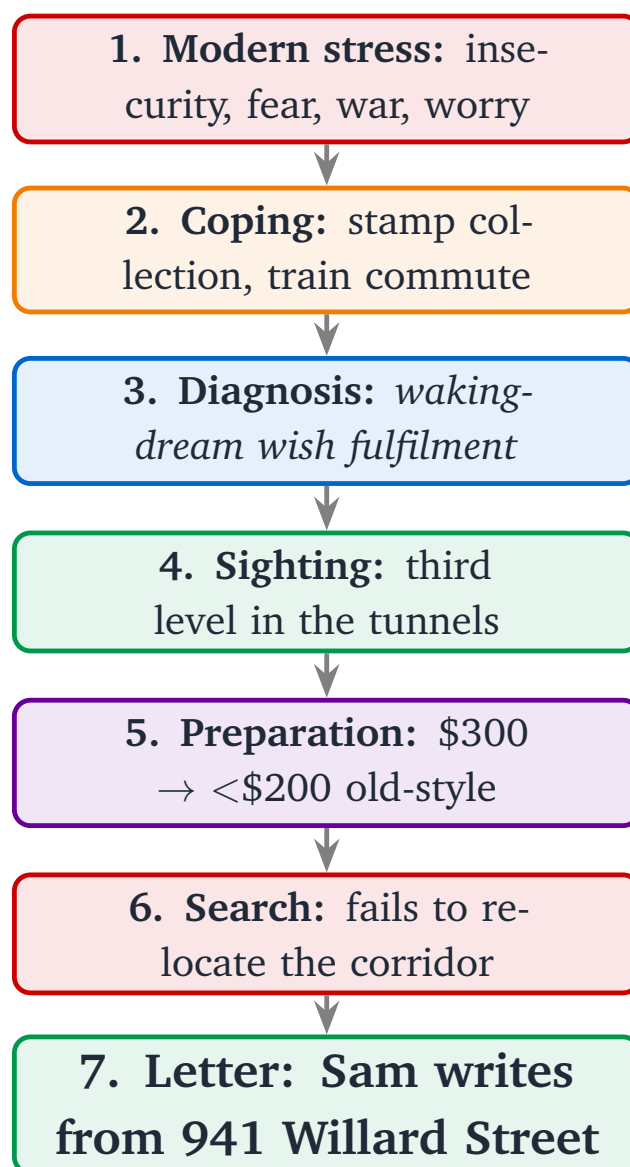
Philately answer hook

For questions on philately, the high-mark line is: "*A stamp is a postage-paid piece of a date and a place; the past is preserved through small acts of preservation, not big ones.*" Quote Charley's grandfather's collection as the chapter's example.

4.5 Futuristic Projection of an Apparent Illogicality

The chapter is the Vistas reader's first encounter with the genre of magical realism / urban fantasy. Finney does not present the third level as a science-fiction time machine; he presents it as a real-but-unlikely corridor at a real station. The illogicality is therefore not an error but a deliberate genre choice. The phrase “*a futuristic projection of an apparent illogicality*” from the Reading-with-Insight block is Finney's own self-description of the genre.

Diagram – Escape Psychology: From Worry to the Letter



The funnel narrows: from generic stress to one specific street address in Galesburg

4.6 Themes Web – How the Five Ideas Interlock

The five themes do not sit side by side; they hold each other up. **Escape** is the central thread; **fantasy versus reality** is its philosophical question; **time and space** is its physical image; **philately** is its evidence box; **apparent illogicality** is its genre marker.

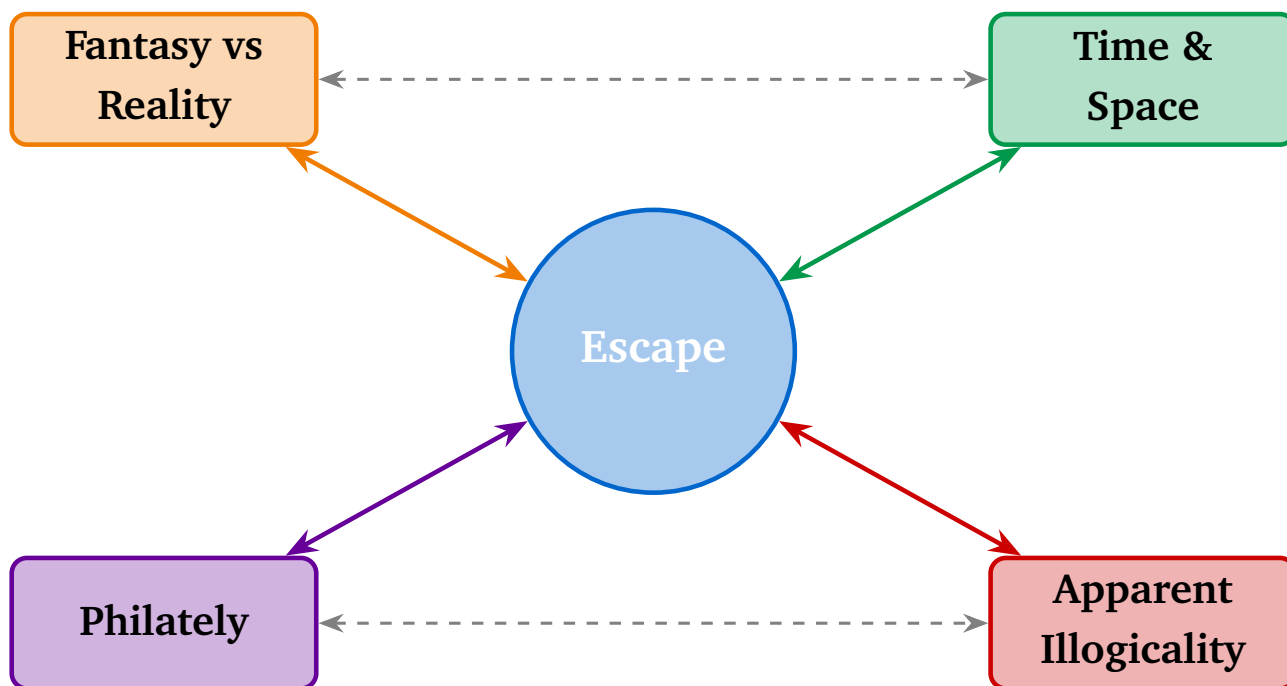


Diagram – The Genre Map: Where The Third Level Sits

“a futuristic projection of an apparent illogicality” – Finney’s own genre label



Literary Devices and Narrative Technique

The Third Level is told in a deceptively plain style, but Finney uses a small set of techniques to lock the chapter together. Naming these devices is worth easy marks in the objective and

short-answer sections.

5.1 First-Person Narration

Charley narrates the chapter himself. This is crucial: the reader hears the third level described by someone who has seen it, not by an outside observer. The narrative voice is what keeps the chapter on the believer side of the question even when the psychiatrist diagnoses a hallucination.

5.2 Foreshadowing through Hobbies

The opening paragraph mentions Charley's stamp collecting and Sam's stamp collecting almost in passing. By the end of the chapter, stamp collecting has become the central evidence box. Finney plants the hobby in the opening as a foreshadowing of the closing first-day cover.

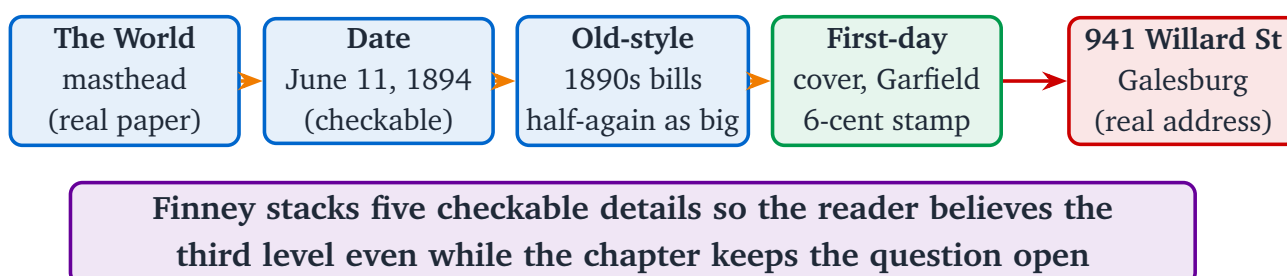
5.3 Concrete Detail as Reality Marker

Finney's third level is convincing because of the small details – open-flame gas lamps instead of fluorescent, a green eyeshade on the booth clerk, brass spittoons on the floor, a derby hat and handlebar mustache on the gentleman with the gold pocket watch, leg-of-mutton sleeves on the woman at the train gate, a Currier & Ives locomotive on the tracks, a real newspaper title (*The World*) with a real lead story on President Cleveland, a real date (June 11, 1894), a six-cent dull-brown Garfield stamp on the first-day cover, and a real address (941 Willard Street, Galesburg, Illinois). The reader trusts the third level because the details are checkable.

5.4 The Open Ending

The chapter does not say whether Charley ever finds the third level again. The reader is left with Sam's letter, the first-day cover, and Charley and Louisa still searching. Finney's open ending is deliberate: the wish to escape is not resolved, because in life it is not resolved either.

Diagram – The Evidence Chain: Why the Reader Believes



Reading concrete detail as evidence

For Q5 prompts on the futuristic-projection-of-illogicality theme, the high-mark line is: *Finney's strategy is to stack checkable specifics (a real newspaper title, a real date, a real*

address) around one impossible claim (the third level). The reader believes the impossible because everything around it is verifiable. Quote at least three specifics in the answer.

Don't get the dollar numbers wrong

The most-repeated MCQ losses on this chapter are the dollar numbers. **Charley** drew *three hundred dollars* (nearly all his savings) and walked out of the coin shop with *less than two hundred* in old-style bills. **Sam** bought *eight hundred dollars'* worth of old-style currency. Get the direction right (\$300 down to under \$200 for Charley; \$800 worth bought by Sam) or the whole answer loses its quantitative anchor.

Memory Aid – the 5-Object Inventory

LAMP – BOOTH – HAT – LOCO – STAMP. Five inventory items the marker watches for in any Vistas Chapter 1 script:

- **LAMP:** open-flame gaslights (not fluorescent tubes) – the lighting marker for 1894.
- **BOOTH:** wooden information booth with a clerk in a green eyeshade and long black sleeve protectors.
- **HAT:** derby hat on the gentleman with the gold pocket watch; tan gabardine suit on Charley.
- **LOCO:** Currier & Ives locomotive with a funnel-shaped stack.
- **STAMP:** six-cent dull-brown stamp with a picture of **President Garfield**, on the first-day cover.

Lock in LAMP-BOOTH-HAT-LOCO-STAMP and the chapter's setting-and-symbol questions are answered.

Important Quotations and Their Significance

Top-mark quotation set for *The Third Level*

- **“The modern world is full of insecurity, fear, war, worry and all the rest of it . . . I just want to escape. Well, who doesn't?”** – Charley reporting Sam's diagnosis; the chapter's anxiety frame.
- **“A waking-dream wish fulfilment.”** – Sam's first diagnosis; the psychiatric anchor.
- **“My stamp collecting, for example; that's a temporary refuge from reality.”** – Sam's admission that he too escapes.
- **“That ain't money, mister.”** – the ticket clerk on Charley's modern bills; the moment the third level becomes physically real.
- **“I got to wishing that you were right. Then I got to believing you were right.”** – Sam's role reversal in the letter.

- “Come on back, Charley and Louisa. Keep looking till you find the third level! It’s worth it, believe me!” – the closing invitation.
- “A wonderful town still, with big old frame houses, huge lawns, and tremendous trees whose branches meet overhead and roof the streets.” – Charley’s nostalgic image of Galesburg.

Value Points and Indian Extensions

For value-based Long Answers, the high-mark response weaves the chapter’s universal wish to escape with Indian and contemporary parallels.

- **Modern stress.** The five-word list – insecurity, fear, war, worry, stress – is a 1950s diagnosis that has only deepened. A 2025 reader could add screen fatigue, climate anxiety and economic precarity.
- **Indian forms of escape.** Hill stations (Shimla, Manali, Munnar); pilgrimage and yatra; the recent revival of slow-living and farm-stay tourism; family weddings as scheduled retreats from work.
- **Conservation parallel.** The wish to step out of the present is also at the heart of conservation movements – Bishnoi tradition, the Chipko movement, sacred groves – which preserve patches of the past inside the modern landscape.
- **Constitutional support for memory.** Article 49 directs the state to protect monuments of national importance, which is the constitutional version of Charley’s grandfather’s stamp collection: preserve the past so it is available to the future.

Common Mistakes Students Make

The seven most-repeated errors in CBSE Vistas Chapter 1 scripts

1. Calling the third level a *time machine*. It is presented as a corridor, not a machine.
2. Confusing Galesburg, Illinois with a fictional location. It is a real American town.
3. Treating Sam’s letter as *proof* that the third level exists. It is evidence; the chapter keeps the question open.
4. Missing the dollar amounts in long answers – three hundred drawn by Charley (which buys less than two hundred in old-style bills at a premium), eight hundred bought by Sam. These are the markers’ favourite specifics.
5. Forgetting the first-day cover and the postmark; treating philately as a backdrop instead of the chapter’s evidence box.
6. Reading the psychiatrist’s diagnosis as Finney’s final position. The letter reopens the question.
7. Quoting only one or two lines; CBSE 6-mark Long Answers expect four to five text-

grounded anchors.

CBSE Previous Year Question Mapping

Year-wise CBSE focus areas for *The Third Level*. The 6-mark Vistas Long Answer rotates predictably between escape, Sam's letter, philately, and the value-based modern-world question.

Year	Long Answer Focus	Marks
2025	Charley's third level as a medium of escape from modern stress (Q1)	6
2024	Inferences from Sam's letter (Q2) – role reversal and the first-day cover	6
2023	Philately as a way to keep the past alive (Q6)	6
2022	How modern people overcome insecurity, fear, worry and stress (Q3)	6
2021	Intersection of time and space at Grand Central (Q4)	5

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NCERT Reading with Insight – Question Map

The textbook closes with seven prompts. The table below maps each to the theme you should lean on and the one or two text-anchors the marker is hoping to see.

Q	Prompt (paraphrased)	Lean on
1	Third level as Charley's medium of escape? Why?	Escape; currency conversion
2	What do you infer from Sam's letter?	Role reversal; <i>wish-then-belief</i>
3	How do we overcome modern <i>insecurity, fear, war, worry</i> ?	Hobbies, travel, yoga, philately
4	Intersection of time and space in the story?	Station as time/space junction
5	Apparent illogicality as a futuristic projection – discuss.	Genre marker; magical realism
6	Philately keeps the past alive – discuss other ways.	Stamps, museums, archives, oral history
7	Compare with Narlikar's <i>Adventure</i> (Hornbill XI) – fantasy/reality interweaving.	Open ending; observer choice

Sample Answer – 6-Mark Long Answer on Q1

Q1. Was the third level a medium of escape for Charley? Why?

Answer. Yes, the third level is best read as a medium of escape for Charley. Finney opens the story by giving us Charley's reasons to want to escape: the modern world, as Sam puts it, is full of *insecurity, fear, war, worry and all the rest of it*. Sam even calls Charley's stamp collecting a *temporary refuge from reality*. Against that background, Charley finds himself descending through Grand Central Station and stumbling on a third level he has never seen before, a level that turns out to lead not to a different platform but to a different time – the calmer summer of 1894.

The third level opens onto Galesburg, Illinois – a wonderful town still, with big old frame houses, huge lawns, and tremendous trees whose branches roof the streets. The 1894 world is a deliberate contrast with 1950s New York: open-flame gaslights instead of fluorescent, brass spittoons on the floor, derby hats and leg-of-mutton sleeves, a Currier & Ives locomotive on the tracks. Charley draws *nearly all the savings* he and Louisa have – three hundred dollars – and walks out of a coin dealer's with less than two hundred dollars in old-style bills, having paid a steep premium. He is not just curious about the third level; he is *preparing* to leave. The currency conversion, more than anything else, marks his trip as an attempted escape. Sam, a trained psychiatrist, names the phenomenon a *waking-dream wish fulfilment* – a diagnosis that only makes sense if Charley does, in fact, wish to leave. The third level functions as Charley's medium of escape, whether or not it exists in physical fact.

Why this answer scores top marks

Position statement in line one; four text-grounded anchors (the stress list, the Galesburg details, the currency conversion, the psychiatrist's diagnosis); a closing sentence that re-states the position. This is the exact shape CBSE markers reward.

How Collegedunia's Notes Help You Score

- The five-word anchor (WORRY, STATION, 1894, CURRENCY, SAM) gives a fixed mental sequence to apply on any Vistas Chapter 1 prompt.
- Every theme is paired with the exact textual phrase (*insecurity, fear, war, worry and all the rest of it; waking-dream wish fulfilment; hay, feed and grain business; first-day cover; Seeing Nelly Home*) that triggers full mark recall.
- The character arcs of Charley and Sam are written as three-marker arcs – exactly the shape a 6-mark CBSE Vistas Long Answer expects.
- The five-symbol-and-fact set (Galesburg, gas lamps, brass pendulum clocks, *The World* newspaper, 941 Willard Street) is exam-portable; carry it as a one-pager into the final week.
- The seven Reading with Insight questions are mapped to themes so you know which theme to lean on for each prompt.

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