

English Language Arts
Distance Learning Packet
Grade 8

STUDENT

Analyzing the Development of a Central Idea

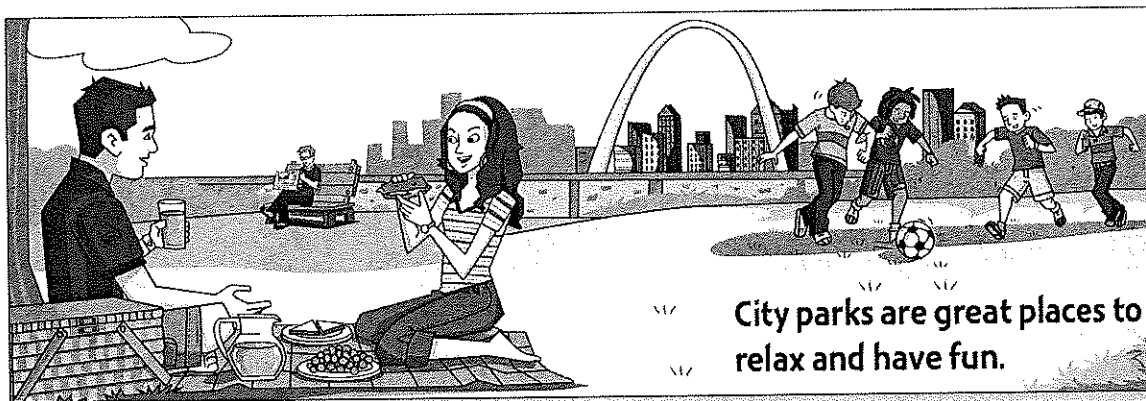
CCSS

RI.8.2: Determine a central idea of a text and analyze its development over the course of the text, including its relationship to supporting ideas....

Theme: *American Cities*

"Get to the point!" When people you're talking with tell you to "get to the point," they want you to state your **central idea** as clearly and precisely as you can. A central idea is more than just a topic. In the picture below, the topic is "city parks." But what is the artist communicating about city parks? The central idea is what the author has to say about the topic.

Study the picture and read the caption. What is the artist communicating about city parks?



City parks are great places to relax and have fun.

Circle details in the picture that support the central idea stated in the caption.

It's not enough to state a central idea and leave it at that. Authors must develop their central idea by giving you **supporting details**. Supporting details answer questions such as "How do you know?" or "Why is this so?"

Use the details you circled in the picture to help you fill in the chart below.

Central Idea		
City parks are great places to relax and have fun.		
Supporting Detail	Supporting Detail	Supporting Detail
A man is reading the newspaper.	People are having a picnic.	

When you read, think about the main point the author is trying to make. Look for details that support that point. Remember, though, that sometimes a central idea is implied rather than explicit or obvious.



Read the first two paragraphs of the historical account about the city of San Antonio.

Genre: Historical Account

San Antonio's Remarkable History *by Adam Scott*

San Antonio is currently the seventh-largest city in the United States, but not many know the remarkable history behind this modern-day metropolis. In 1691, a group of Spanish explorers happened upon a river and a Native American settlement in what is now the state of Texas. They named both "San Antonio" because it was June 13, the feast day of Saint Anthony. Soon, the river became home to a fort, a Catholic mission, and a community, all of which they called San Antonio de los Llanos.

For the next 100 years, San Antonio was mostly under Spanish control. In the early 1800s, the Spanish turned the old mission into a fort called the Alamo. Texans took control of the fort in 1835. Shortly after, General Santa Anna arrived with an army 2,000 strong. Fewer than 200 soldiers and volunteers gathered in the Alamo, but they held off the Mexican army for 13 days. On March 2, 1836, Texas declared its independence from Mexico, and on December 28, 1845, became a U.S. state.

(continued)

Explore how to answer these questions: *"What is the central idea? How does the author use details to develop the central idea?"*

The topic of the account is San Antonio. But what is the author saying about San Antonio? To help you figure out the central idea, circle important details about San Antonio in the account.

Based on the supporting details, what central idea is the author communicating about San Antonio?

What supporting details does the author use to develop this central idea?

Signal words such as *like, now, soon, and for the next 100 years* help you see how the supporting details are connected. So, how are the details connected, or related, to each other?



Continue reading about San Antonio. Use the Close Reading and the Hint to help you answer the question.

Close Reading

What is the central idea of the final paragraph?

Underline details that support that idea.

Remember that a single sentence might contain more than one detail.

(continued from page 4)

San Antonio prospered after the Civil War, and in 1877, the first railway reached the town. By 1900, five railways served San Antonio, then the largest city in Texas with 50,000 people.

Today, San Antonio thrives. It is home to five military bases, more than one million people, and Market Square, the largest Mexican marketplace outside of Mexico. San Antonio is a lively city with a rich and memorable history.

Hint

Which choice summarizes all of the ideas in the account?

Circle the correct answer.

Which sentence best states the central idea of the account?

- A After the Civil War, the city of San Antonio prospered.
- B San Antonio is famous because of the Alamo.
- C Market Square is a large Mexican marketplace in San Antonio.
- D San Antonio is a thriving city with a fascinating history.



Show Your Thinking

Look back at the answer you chose above. How is it supported by each paragraph in the account?

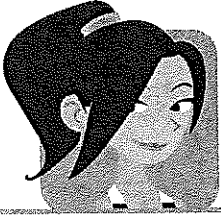


With a partner, discuss how the author develops the central idea of this account. Explain how the facts and details in each paragraph connect to each other and support the main idea.



Read this historical article, which describes New York at the time John A. Roebling was designing the Brooklyn Bridge. Use the Study Buddy and Close Reading to guide your reading.

Genre: Historical Article



The title tells me that this article will be about old New York. As I read, I'm going to look for details about what life was like in the city in 1869.

from "New York City, 1869"

by Marcia Amidon Lusted, Cobblestone

- 1 As John A. Roebling was designing his bridge, life in New York and Brooklyn was teetering between old and new. No bridges existed between the two cities. Travelers used one of the 13 ferry-boats that crossed the East River night and day. From the river, the spire of Trinity Church in New York was the tallest landmark to ships sailing in New York Harbor.
- 2 People mostly traveled by horses and carriages and on sailing ships, but the use of railroads and steamships was growing. Communication was by mail or telegraph. Just a few years earlier, however, a telegraph cable had been laid across the Atlantic Ocean. In less than a decade, Alexander Graham Bell would invent the telephone.
- 3 All over the world, new and amazing engineering feats were being accomplished: the Suez Canal in Egypt, the Mont Cenis Tunnel (the longest railroad tunnel) in France, and the Transcontinental Railroad across the United States.
- 4 The idea of a bridge across the East River first gained support from civic leaders in Brooklyn. In 1869, Brooklyn and New York were independent cities. Brooklyn was the third largest and fastest growing city in the country, and a major manufacturing center. Brooklyn residents saw the bridge as a way to expand commercially as it offered better access to New York's markets. New Yorkers, meanwhile, saw the bridge as a way to relieve overcrowding in their city. Thanks in part to how the Brooklyn Bridge created the first successful link between the two cities, an expanding metropolis emerged. By 1898, the modern city of New York—consisting of its five boroughs of Manhattan, the Bronx, Brooklyn, Queens, and Staten Island—was created.

Close Reading

Which sentence in the first paragraph captures the state of life in New York City in 1869? **Circle** the part of the sentence that describes the city.

Reread the last paragraph. Then restate in your own words why people in New York and Brooklyn supported the idea of the bridge.



Hints

Which choices contain only supporting details? Which contains an important idea that is developed later in the article?

Which choice connects to the idea of the growth of New York City?

What key ideas were developed in each of the first three paragraphs? How does the last paragraph bring those ideas together?

Use the Hints on this page to help you answer the questions.

- 1 Which sentence best states the central idea of the first paragraph?
 - A Life in New York was teetering between old and new.
 - B People once traveled mostly by horse, carriage, and ship.
 - C New engineering feats were being accomplished in the 1800s.
 - D People crossed the East River by ferry-boat, night and day.
- 2 Which detail best supports the idea that the Brooklyn Bridge helped create modern-day New York City?
 - A The bridge had the support of civic leaders in Brooklyn.
 - B The bridge helped ease overcrowding in New York.
 - C The Brooklyn Bridge successfully linked what had been two independent cities, Brooklyn and New York.
 - D John A. Roebling designed the Brooklyn Bridge to make travel easier between New York and Brooklyn.
- 3 Describe how the author connects the final paragraph to the paragraphs that came before it. Explain how all four paragraphs in the article work together to develop the central idea. Use at least two details from the text in your response.



Read the historical account. Then answer the questions that follow.

A Brief History of Chapel Hill

by Carlos Hernandez

1 The Town of Chapel Hill, North Carolina, is situated in the rolling hills of Orange County, extending into neighboring Durham County. People of all nationalities reside in this thriving community, which has managed to keep its small-town charm. Many of the residents are students or faculty at the University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill. It is not uncommon for a university town to be heavily populated in that way. What is less usual is the fact that the university was planned and chartered even before the town existed. In fact, the role of the town was to serve as a support system for the new university.

2 What was the region like before the university was created? In the late 1700s, local people could attend the New Hope Chapel, erected on the highest point of the hill. The church stood where two main roads crossed. There were no other imposing buildings before the nation's oldest public university was founded in 1793. Then the school's Board of Trustees selected the area around the chapel as the setting of the university. The school would need a town to serve it, and so the planning began.

3 In the same year that the university's cornerstone was laid, the auction of town lots took place. These parcels of land lay around the perimeter of the campus. There were thirty lots available to the public. The first residents moved into their homes in 1795. That meant the university and the small community that would become a busy town grew up together.

4 However, there was still no official town of Chapel Hill until its founding in 1819; it would not be chartered until 1851. The town finally got a mayor some twenty years later when the magistrate of police, H. B. Guthrie, assumed the duties associated with the position. There was still no elected mayor until 1895.

5 The university opened its doors in 1795 to a single student, Hinton James. By the end of his first term, another forty students were enrolled. Throughout the following century, the scope of the university's curriculum expanded. Students could now take courses in the classics and in the natural sciences. In 1831, the university established an astronomical observatory.

6 The Civil War forced the closing of many colleges throughout the South, but the university at Chapel Hill was able to continue holding classes. In 1875, the university started to expand and soon there were course offerings in a broader range of disciplines, including medical and pharmaceutical science. In 1932, the University of North Carolina was consolidated, or joined together, which meant the three campuses would now offer different kinds of programs.

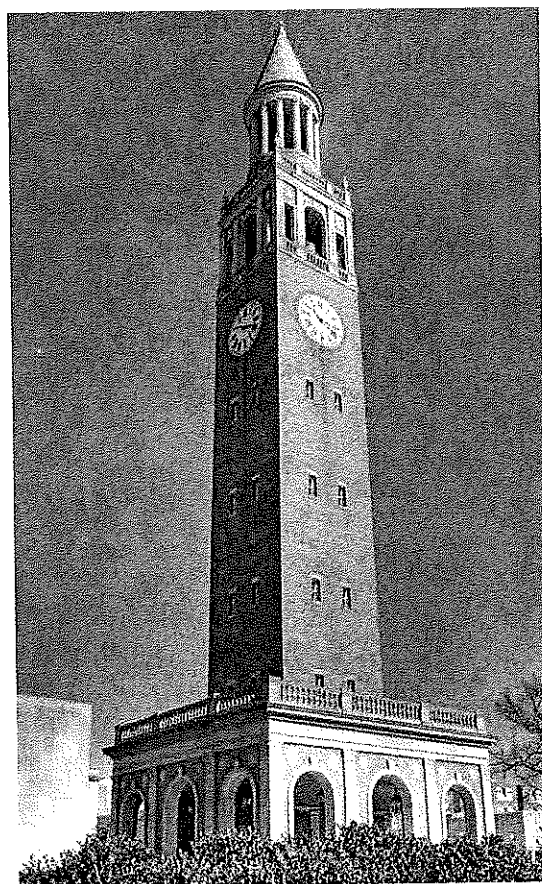
7 During this time, the town of Chapel Hill was also growing and developing. When its first mayor was elected, the town covered 820 acres, but now it is spread over approximately 21 square miles. Populated largely by the students and staff of the university, the town is also a bustling center of commerce. Because of its lovely setting and old-fashioned appeal, the town attracts quite a few people of retirement age: Chapel Hill is no longer a small village, but it has preserved a great deal of its original character.



8 However, times have changed; the United States is now a multicultural society. People from around the world come to study and work here, and our institutions evolve in response to this changing population. Today, approximately 15% of Chapel Hill undergraduates come from other countries while the university has become broader and more inclusive as it welcomes people of different cultural backgrounds.

9 Town planners are also adapting to today's challenges. With so many people employed by either the university or by the UNC Health Care System, the jobs outlook for the town is positive. However, some people say that the economy should be more balanced to bring different kinds of trades and industries to the city. There are other concerns, as well. Urban planners are considering how to build more affordable housing within the town. That way, there will be fewer commuters and more residents of the town itself.

10 Although the relationship is a close and profitable one, the Town of Chapel Hill is no longer merely an extension of the university. Town residents can enjoy the interesting educational and cultural programs the university offers, yet there is more to town life than that. There are many reasons to come to this community, including a love of natural beauty and a desire for a certain way of life. The small lots that once simply encircled the university campus have grown into a city with its own distinctive personality and appeal.



The Bell Tower at the University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill

1

Which statement **best** supports the central idea of how the university and town have impacted each other?

- A "These parcels of land lay around the perimeter of the campus."
- B "Then the school's Board of Trustees selected the area around the chapel as the setting of the university."
- C "That meant the university and the small community that would become a busy town grew up together."
- D "Throughout the following century, the scope of the university's curriculum expanded."

Answer Form

1 (A) (B) (C) (D)

2 (A) (B) (C) (D)

3 (A) (B) (C) (D)

**Number
Correct**

3



2 One reason Chapel Hill has developed into more than just a college town is its location. Which sentence from the passage **best** supports this analysis?

- A** "In the late 1700s, local people could attend the New Hope Chapel, erected on the highest point of the hill."
- B** "In 1831, the university established an astronomical observatory."
- C** "In 1932, the University of North Carolina was consolidated, or joined together, which meant the three campuses would now offer different kinds of programs."
- D** "Because of its lovely setting and old-fashioned appeal, the town attracts quite a few people of retirement age."

3 According to the account, "People of all nationalities reside in this thriving community." Which detail from the account **best** supports this idea?

- A** The town of Chapel Hill is a center of commerce.
- B** About 15% of Chapel Hill's undergraduates come from other countries.
- C** Town planners are adapting to modern challenges.
- D** The economy needs to be more balanced to encourage business growth.

4 Explain how the relationship between the town and the university of Chapel Hill changed over time. Use at least **two** details from the account to support your explanation.



Self Check

Go back and see what you can check off on the Self Check on page 1.

Lesson 2 Part 1: Introduction

Summarizing Informational Texts

CCSS

RI.8.2... provide an objective summary of the text.

Theme: *Our Living Language*

You've read a great article. How do you tell someone what it's about? You give a **summary**—a brief restatement, in your own words, of the most important ideas. The summary itself is **objective**, meaning you do not include your opinions, beliefs, or judgments.

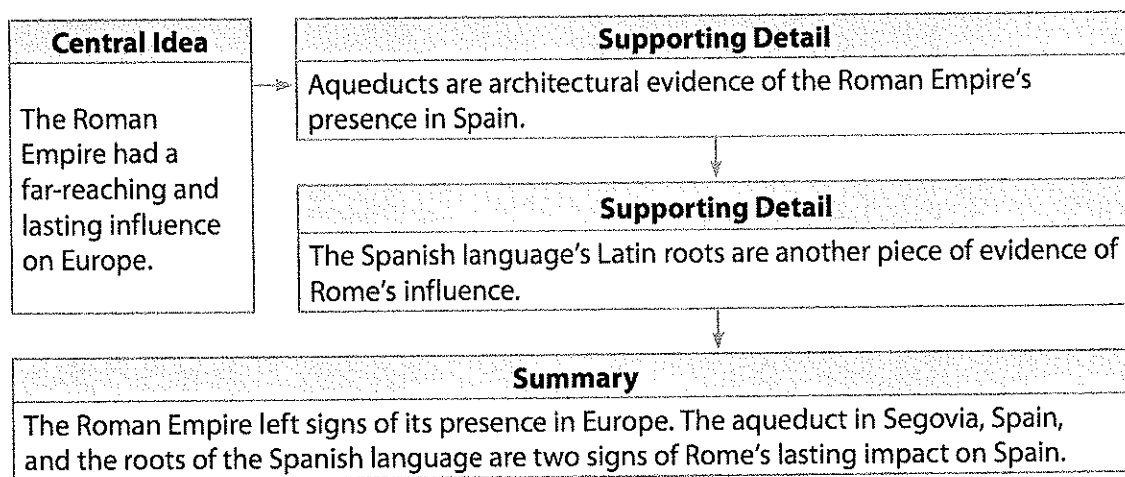
Read the passage below. As you do, think about what you would include in a summary of it.

The influence of the Roman Empire was the single most important force in early Europe. Without the unifying effect of the Empire, regional or tribal differences would have prevailed, and Europe would have remained a land of separate states, each avoiding contact with the others.

Instead, Rome and its culture pulled the different areas together. Spain, for example, was a stable and secure part of the Roman Empire, and Roman culture had a strong influence there. Aqueducts, such as this one in Segovia, Spain, are examples of the Empire's expansive reach. A less visible sign of Roman influence is Spain's language, which is firmly rooted in Latin, the language of the Romans.



Read the passage again, this time underlining the central idea and supporting details. Then read the chart below to see how to summarize informational text.



By summarizing a text's central ideas and supporting details, you can check your understanding of and remember the most important points.



Read the first two paragraphs of the essay about etymology, or the history of words.

Genre: Essay

Understand English Word Origins by Pilar Rivera

Some names of objects originate from the object's appearance. You know what a cloak is—a sleeveless garment worn draped over the shoulders. Now close your eyes and picture the shape of a cloak. *Cloak* comes from an Old French word, *cloque*, which means “bell.” So, the name of the object was a transference from the shape of the object.

Some word origins, or etymologies, are fascinating because they tell us what an object used to be. Think about what a ballot is—the list of candidates that we use when we vote to choose elected officials. Ballots are mostly electronic now, but for several centuries they were paper documents. How did people vote before paper was readily available? They dropped pebbles or small balls in one of two boxes or piles to choose leaders or to make community decisions. *Ballot* comes from the Italian word *pallotte*, which itself is a diminutive form of *palla*, meaning “ball.”

(continued)

Explore how to answer this question: “What information should be included in a summary of this portion of the essay?”

When creating a summary, identify the text's central idea, which may only be implied, and the important supporting details.

Reread the text and fill in the chart below with information that is used in the summary.

Central Idea	Supporting Detail
	Supporting Detail
	Summary

The history of words is fascinating. The origins of some words, like *cloak*, are based on their shape, while others relate to what an object once was. *Ballot*, which means *ball*, is a great example of this.

With a partner, discuss how you'd change the summary to improve the statement of the central idea and remove opinions.



Continue reading the essay about etymology. Use the Close Reading and the Hint to help you answer the question.

Close Reading

The author does not directly state the central idea in the text on page 12 or on this page. In the margin, **jot your ideas** about the implied central idea of this part of the text.

(continued from page 12)

Next, consider the varied origins of some English words related to money. The word *money* itself comes from *Moneta*, another name for the Roman goddess Juno, near whose temple in ancient Rome coins were made. The name of our paper money, *dollar*, originates from a place name. A widely-circulated German coin in the 1500s was called a Joachimstaler (yo-AHK-imz-tall-er). It was named after the town of Joachimstal, near the silver mine from which came the metal to make the coin. The coin's name shortened to "taler," which later become *dollar*, and the meaning broadened to refer to money in general.

Hint

Which choice restates the central idea and important details and does not include opinions or judgments?

Circle the correct answer.

Which of the following is the best summary of the text on this page?

- A The English word *dollar* originates from ancient Rome, and the English word *money* originates from a German coin.
- B Remarkably, ancient Rome was one of several sources of English money words. Another source was sixteenth-century Germany.
- C The origins of English money words are varied. Some words, like *money*, are from Rome, while others, like *dollar*, have German roots.
- D The origins of money-related words are interesting. For example, *money* comes from the name of the Roman goddess Juno.



Show Your Thinking

Why is the answer you chose the best summary of this part of the text?



With a partner, take turns objectively summarizing the entire essay about word origins. Use your own words and avoid making judgments or giving your personal opinions about the text.



Read the report. Use the Study Buddy and the Close Reading to guide your reading.

Genre: Report



The first sentence of this report seems very important. I'll underline it because I think it might be helpful in understanding the text's central idea. I'll read carefully to find other big ideas as well.

The Signs of Language *by Simón Darío*

- 1 In Nicaragua, deaf children made up a brand-new language—their very own sign language. Their story began the early 1980s, when 500 deaf children enrolled in Nicaragua's first school for the deaf. The children came from hearing families scattered throughout Managua, Nicaragua's capital, and they had no language at all—they spoke neither Spanish nor used sign language.
- 2 People usually learn their first language when they are approximately two years old. Deaf children in the United States often learn American Sign Language (ASL) because they learn ASL from their parents. In Nicaragua, however, no one “spoke” sign language until recently. Instead, these children communicated by using mimicas, or gestures. Deaf people use mimicas the same way hearing people might use pantomimes to mimic getting a drink or picking up the telephone.
- 3 Soon after the school opened, the children began to adopt very specific gestures to get across particular ideas. The new mimicas meant “Line up,” “Time for lunch,” and “Do you want to play?” for example. Before long, the teachers noticed that the children were communicating among themselves in an unusual way. These deaf schoolchildren were creating a new language, and the number and complexity of the signs were expanding with every passing day.
- 4 Over several years, the children developed rules on how to combine the signs. With new signs and rules for putting together sentences, the children made their mimicas into a new language. Today, Nicaraguan Sign Language is still developing and changing, as do all languages. Other Nicaraguan schools for deaf children are teaching it, and it is even becoming a written language. Soon, Nicaragua's deaf children will be able to explain to the world how they created a new language!

Close Reading

What are the most important ideas in paragraph 2? **Underline** facts and other details that help you understand those ideas.

Each paragraph has an implied central idea that helps develop the central idea of the entire text. **Circle** text in each paragraph that helps you understand its central idea.



Hints

Which choice restates an important idea and does not express an opinion or judgment?

Look back at the important facts you underlined. Which choice includes this information?

What is the central idea of the whole report? What important details help develop this idea?

Use the Hints on this page to help you answer the questions.

- 1 Which sentence would be best to include in a summary of this report?
 - A These students' amazing achievement has made life easier for deaf children all over the world.
 - B Nicaraguan Sign Language has rules for how it is used.
 - C Someone should have thought of a way to help these children communicate before the 1980s.
 - D Deaf children in Nicaragua have transformed a simple system of gestures into a complex new language.
- 2 Which of the following choices best summarizes paragraph 2?
 - A People usually learn their first language when they are children. For example, American deaf children learn to speak sign language. In Nicaragua, there was no language for children to learn.
 - B By the time their children are about two years old, parents in the U.S. have usually taught them how to speak or sign. Nicaraguan parents did not teach their deaf children any language at all.
 - C Children usually learn their first language from their parents around age two. Because no sign language existed in Nicaragua, deaf children communicated using gestures, or mimicas.
 - D It was a challenge for Nicaraguan children to communicate because their parents didn't teach them. They struggled and had to use simple gestures instead of a real language.

- 3 Summarize the report. Include its central idea and three supporting details.



Read the social studies article. Then answer the questions that follow.

from “Language Change”

by Nicole Mahoney, National Science Foundation online

1 In some ways, it is surprising that languages change. After all, they are passed down through the generations reliably enough for parents and children to communicate with each other. Yet linguists find that all languages change over time—albeit at different rates. For example, Japanese has changed relatively little over 1,000 years. English, on the other hand, evolved rapidly in just a few centuries. Many present-day speakers find Shakespeare’s sixteenth century texts difficult and Chaucer’s fourteenth century *The Canterbury Tales* nearly impossible to read.

FROM THE CANTERBURY TALES	TRANSLATION
WHAN that Aprille with his shoures soote The droghte of Marche hath perced to the roote, And bathed every veyne in swich licour, Of which vertu engendred is the flour. . . .	When April with its showers sweet Has pierced the drought of March to the root And bathed every vein with that liquid By whose power is produced the flower. . . .

Why They Change

2 Languages change for a variety of reasons. Large-scale shifts often occur in response to social, economic and political pressures. History records many examples of language change fueled by invasions, colonization and migration. Even without these kinds of influences, a language can change dramatically if enough users alter the way they speak it.

3 Frequently, the needs of speakers drive language change. New technologies, industries, products and experiences simply require new words. Plastic, cell phones and the Internet didn’t exist in Shakespeare’s time, for example. By using new and emerging terms, we all drive language change. But the unique way that individuals speak also fuels language change. That’s because no two individuals use a language in exactly the same way. The vocabulary and phrases people use depend on where they live, their age, education level, social status and other factors. Through our interactions, we pick up new words and sayings and integrate them into our speech. Teens and young adults for example, often use different words and phrases from their parents. Some of them spread through the population and slowly change the language.

4 No two individuals use a language in exactly the same way. The vocabulary and phrases people use are linked to where they live, their age, education level, social status and sometimes to their membership in a particular group or community.

Types of Change

5 Three main aspects of language change over time: vocabulary, sentence structure and pronunciations. Vocabulary can change quickly as new words are borrowed from other languages, or as words get combined or shortened. Some words are even created by mistake. As noted in the Linguistic Society of America’s publication *Is English Changing?*, *pea* is one such example. Up until about 400 years ago, *pease* referred to either a single



pea or many peas. At some point, people mistakenly assumed that the word *pease* was the plural form of pea, and a new word was born. While vocabulary can change quickly, sentence structure—the order of words in a sentence—changes more slowly. Yet it's clear that today's English speakers construct sentences very differently from Chaucer and Shakespeare's contemporaries (see [table] above). Changes in sound are somewhat harder to document, but at least as interesting. For example, during the so-called "Great Vowel Shift"¹ 500 years ago, English speakers modified their vowel pronunciation dramatically. This shift represents the biggest difference between the pronunciations of so called Middle and Modern English.

Agents of Change

6 Before a language can change, speakers must adopt new words, sentence structures and sounds, spread them through the community and transmit them to the next generation. According to many linguists—including David Lightfoot, NSF² assistant director for social, behavioral and economic sciences—children serve as agents for language change when, in the process of learning the language of previous generations, they internalize it differently and propagate a different variation of that language.

7 Linguists study language change by addressing questions such as these: Can we trace the evolutionary path of a language? How do language changes spread through communities? How do historical circumstances influence language change? What is the relationship between language learning and change?

Paths of Change

8 NSF researcher Anthony Kroch of the University of Pennsylvania is trying to understand how language change spreads through populations. With collaborator Beatrice Santorini, he is compiling an electronic collection of Modern English texts covering the time period from 1700 to 1914 (the beginning of World War I). The completed "corpus," as it is known, will complement three others created independently over the past decade by researchers from the University of Pennsylvania and the University of York, England. The existing works—which span 900 years of English history—contain more than 4.5 million words of text carefully tagged and annotated for linguistic features. The publicly available collection gives researchers a standardized, searchable document to track changes in the English language over time. It helps them explore language shifts in a historical context and examine the link between language learning and change.

¹ During the Great Vowel Shift of the fifteenth through the eighteenth centuries, English speakers gradually changed the way they pronounced vowels.

² National Science Foundation

Answer Form

1 (A) (B) (C) (D)

2 (A) (B) (C) (D)

3 (A) (B) (C) (D)

Number
Correct

3

1

Which sentence could be used in a summary of paragraph 5?

- A Studying how the sounds in a language change is just as interesting as studying how vocabulary changes.
- B Vocabulary changes when people borrow words from other languages, combine or shorten words, or make mistakes.
- C No two people actually use language in the exact same way.
- D Changes in sentence structure are difficult to document.



- 2** Which sentence should **not** be used in a summary of paragraphs 6 and 7?
- A** Linguists study language by asking how language changes spread.
 - B** Language changes must be adopted by a community and passed on to other generations.
 - C** Children change language by using it differently from previous generations.
 - D** Children are the best and most effective agents of language change.

- 3** Look at paragraph 8. What central idea do the sentences in this paragraph support?
- A** Researchers study language changes in different communities.
 - B** Researchers are compiling vast collections of texts that will help them explore shifts in language.
 - C** Researchers use language to understand English history.
 - D** Researchers have discovered a link between language learning and change.

- 4** Summarize the relationship between individual speakers and language change. Use at least **two** details from the text in your response.



Self Check

Go back and see what you can check off on the Self Check on page 1.

Lesson 3 Part 1: Introduction

Citing Evidence to Make Inferences

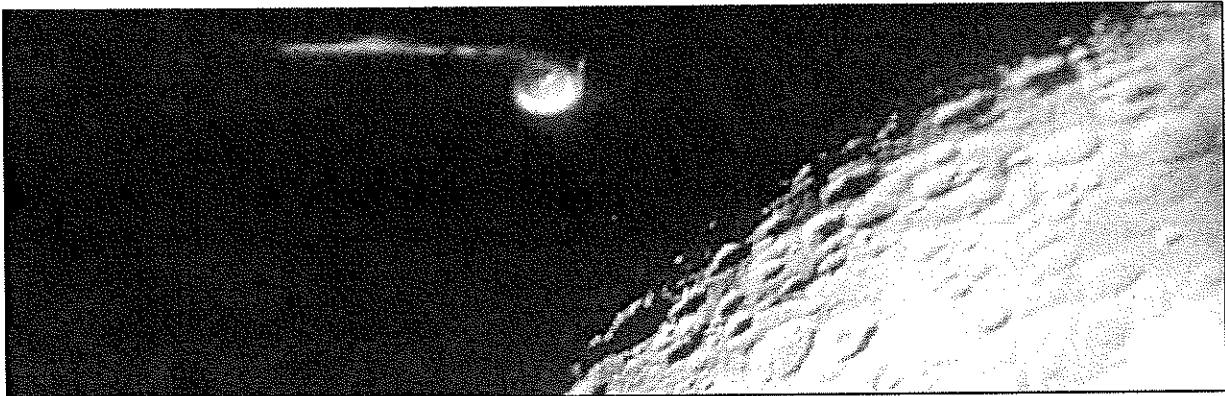
CCSS

RI.8.1: Cite the textual evidence that most strongly supports an analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text.

Theme: *Light Phenomena*

People who believe there's life on other planets use evidence, such as UFO sightings, to back up their claims. **Evidence** is information used to support an opinion or belief. Evidence can also be used to support an **inference**, or reasonable guess, that's based on new facts combined with what you already know.

Look at the picture below, which many people thought showed an alien spacecraft. What evidence in the image and the caption supports or disproves that idea?



While returning from the Moon to Earth on April 27, 1972, Apollo 16 astronauts captured an unidentified flying object (UFO) on film. The image, described as "a saucer-shaped object with a dome on top," was visible in the film for about 4 seconds. It has since been identified.

Complete the chart with evidence that helps you figure out whether or not the object was an alien spacecraft. Consider details in both the image and the caption.

Text/Photo Evidence	+	Background Knowledge	=	Inference
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The photo was taken in 1972. The object looks "saucer-shaped." Something else can be seen to the left of the "saucer." 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> People often misunderstand what they see in photos. No one has yet confirmed that alien life exists. 		<p>This "saucer-shaped object" is probably NOT an alien spacecraft. There is probably another explanation.</p>

Good readers combine evidence and their own knowledge to support inferences. Although this UFO was spotted in 1972, no proof of alien life has ever been discovered. Plus, the image to the left of the "saucer" has to be explained, too. As it turns out, NASA scientists have shown that the "UFO" was actually the floodlight and boom from the Apollo 16 spacecraft itself!



Read the first three paragraphs of a scientific account about auroras.

Genre: Scientific Account

What Are Auroras? *by Georgiana Tones*

Imagine a brilliant laser light show in the sky where ribbons of green, red, or violet dance across the atmosphere. While these fascinating lights might look like they come from machines, they are actually a natural phenomenon known as an aurora.

Auroras occur when highly charged electrons from solar wind interact with elements such as oxygen and nitrogen in the atmosphere. When the electrons strike the oxygen and nitrogen atoms, rays of light are formed. The color of these rays depends on which atoms collide and the altitude, or height, at which they meet. The rays often run parallel and take turns dimming and brightening in the night sky.

But where exactly do these light spectacles form? Like the needles of a compass, auroras are attracted to Earth's two magnetic ends: the geographic North and South Poles. The rays themselves follow the slanting direction of Earth's magnetic field.

(continued)

Explore how to answer this question: *"What inference can you make about why auroras fascinate people?"*

Think about the evidence the author provides about what auroras look like and where they appear.

Fill in the chart below with text evidence that helps you determine how auroras are similar to laser lights. Combine this text evidence with the provided background knowledge to form an inference.

Text Evidence	+	Background Knowledge	Inference
<ul style="list-style-type: none">Auroras look like green, red, or violet ribbons of light.Auroras only appear near the North and South Poles...		<ul style="list-style-type: none">People are always amazed by unusual natural events.	

With a partner, discuss which piece of text evidence most strongly supports your inference and why. How does this evidence help you understand the appeal of the auroras?



Continue reading about auroras. Use the Close Reading and the Hint to help you answer the question.

Close Reading

Where are auroras visible? **Underline** two sentences that provide textual evidence explaining where people can view auroras.

(continued from page 20)

Auroras occur along “auroral ovals,” which surround the magnetic poles. These ovals roughly correspond with the Arctic and Antarctic circles. Aurora borealis (the Northern Lights) are visible near Earth’s magnetic north pole from high northern latitudes in North America, Europe, and Asia. Aurora australis (the Southern Lights) are visible near Earth’s magnetic south pole, from high southern latitudes in Antarctica, South America, New Zealand, and Australia.

Auroras also occur on other planets with magnetic poles, including Saturn and Jupiter.

Hint

Think about which choice provides you with the coordinates where auroras are visible.

Circle the correct answer.

A student makes the following inference based on reading the text.

Auroras are not visible from the low latitudes around the equator.

Which choice is the strongest piece of evidence in support of this claim?

- A Auroras are seen from high latitudes near each magnetic pole.
- B The Aurora borealis is visible in North America and Europe.
- C The Aurora australis is visible in Antarctica and New Zealand.
- D Auroras form near the magnetic poles of other planets as well.



Show Your Thinking

Explain why the answer you chose is the strongest support for the claim about auroras’ visibility.

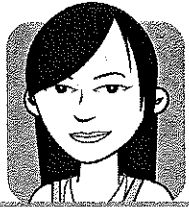


With a partner, look for additional evidence on the previous page that would support the above inference. Discuss its strength.



Read the newspaper article. Use the Study Buddy and the Close Reading to guide your reading.

Genre: Newspaper Article



As I read the first paragraph, I learn that the airline employees are upset because no one believes them. As I keep reading, I'll look for more information about what is causing their unhappiness.

Close Reading

Does the FAA think the UFO sighting is real?
Circle evidence that supports your inference.

What evidence can you find that shows the employees were not making up their story?
Underline these details and **put a star (*)** next to the strongest piece of evidence.

from “In the sky! A bird? A plane? A . . . UFO?” by Jon Hilkevitch, Chicago Tribune

January 1, 2007

- 1 It sounds like a tired joke—but a group of airline employees insist they are in earnest, and they are upset that neither their bosses nor the government will take them seriously.
- 2 A flying saucerlike object hovered low over O'Hare International Airport for several minutes before bolting through thick clouds with such intense energy that it left an eerie hole in overcast skies, said some [airline] employees who observed the phenomenon.
- 3 Was it an alien spaceship? A weather balloon lost in the airspace over the world's second-busiest airport? A top-secret military craft? Or simply a reflection from lights that played a trick on the eyes?
- 4 Officials at [the airline] professed no knowledge of the Nov. 7 event—which was reported to the airline by as many as a dozen of its own workers—when the *Tribune* started asking questions recently. But the Federal Aviation Administration said its air traffic control tower at O'Hare did receive a call from [an airline] supervisor asking if controllers had spotted a mysterious elliptical-shaped craft sitting motionless over Concourse C of the [airline] terminal.
- 5 No controllers saw the object, and a preliminary check of radar found nothing out of the ordinary, FAA spokeswoman Elizabeth Isham Cory said.
- 6 The FAA is not conducting a further investigation, Cory said. [...]
- 7 “Our theory on this is that it was a weather phenomenon,” she said. “That night was a perfect atmospheric condition in terms of low [cloud] ceiling and a lot of airport lights. When the lights shine up into the clouds, sometimes you can see funny things. That's our take on it.”



Hints

Based on what you know about what the witnesses think they saw, which fact from the text explains their frustration?

What position does the FAA take regarding the UFO and why?

What led witnesses to say they saw a UFO? What support is there for this claim?

Use the Hints on this page to help you answer the questions.

- 1 Which of the following best explains why the witnesses are upset?
 - A The UFO left "an eerie hole in the overcast skies" after flying through the clouds over O'Hare.
 - B No air traffic controllers saw the UFO and there is no record of anything out of the ordinary on radar.
 - C The airline denied having knowledge of the UFO and the FAA will not investigate the incident further.
 - D The FAA admits that its air traffic control tower received a call about "a mysterious elliptical-shaped craft."
- 2 Based on the article, which statement most strongly supports the FAA's position on the UFO sighting?
 - A A preliminary radar check found nothing out of the ordinary at the time of the alleged UFO appearance.
 - B Although at least twelve airline employees saw the object, no air traffic controllers did.
 - C Many people saw an elliptical-shaped craft hover over Concourse C and leave a hole in the clouds.
 - D When lights shine up into the clouds during certain weather conditions, optical illusions can occur.
- 3 What evidence supports the claim that a flying saucer flew over O'Hare International Airport? Evaluate which piece of evidence is strongest.



Read the article. Then answer the questions that follow.

The Mysterious Marfa Lights

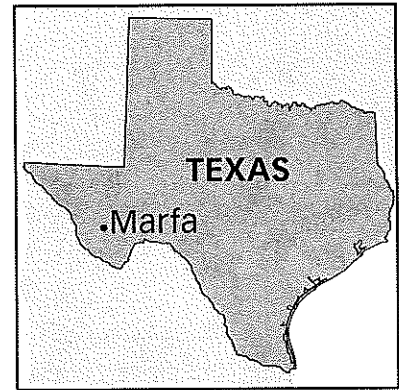
by Rachel Bernstein

1 Near the little town of Marfa in western Texas is one of the most incredible sights in the United States: the Marfa lights.

What Are the Marfa Lights?

2 The Marfa lights are spheres of light the size of soccer balls in bright colors of red, orange, green, blue, white, or yellow. They appear only 10 to 20 times each year, in all seasons and any kind of weather. Sightings occur between dusk and dawn, lasting from a few seconds to several hours. The Marfa lights seem to occur more frequently during the second half of the lunar cycle, between the full moon and the next new moon.

3 The balls of light may remain motionless as they pulse on an off with intensity varying from faint to almost blinding radiance. Then again, they can zigzag far up in the air and dart across the desert against prevailing winds. The ghostly lights can move singly, in pairs, or in groups; they can split apart and merge, or sometimes vanish and then reappear. Their movements are unpredictable, and nobody has quite determined what they are or where they come from.



Who Has Seen Them?

4 Robert Ellison reported seeing the Marfa lights in 1883 while driving cattle through Paisano Pass. In 1885, Texas settlers Joe and Sally Humphreys encountered the lights. More recently, Kyle Miller, a local business owner, reported his encounter with the lights:

Late one night, I was driving home from a business meeting. Route 90 was deserted, except for a few armadillos crossing the road. I was listening to an awesome country song when a single green ball flashed in the distance. Unfortunately, it lasted only a few seconds, but I remember thinking I'd seen a glowing basketball frozen in midair. It was so shocking that I nearly jumped out of my seat, and the hair stood on the back of my neck. I've heard about the ghost lights my whole life, but I had never seen them before.

These are just a few eyewitness reports. There are probably many people who have seen the lights but said nothing for fear of having their sanity doubted.

What Causes Them?

5 There are many theories about what causes the Marfa lights. In the past, superstitious locals thought they were the spirit of an Apache warrior. In 1883, a railroad engineer suggested they were kerosene lanterns at a nearby ranch. More recent proposals abound. Some investigators believe swamp gases cause them, while others believe they result from moonlight reflecting off the nearby Chinati Mountains. Still another hypothesis is that quartz crystals discharge static electricity when they warm in the daytime and cool at night.



6 Several studies have attempted to find the source of the Marfa lights. During World War II, pilots at Midland Army Air Field searched for a source from the air. In 1975, local pilot Fritz Kahl led one hundred observers on the “Marfa Ghost Light Hunt.” Neither investigation proved successful.

7 In May 2004, a group of university physics students conducted a new study using high-tech equipment. After four days, the students concluded that automobile headlights from a nearby highway caused the Marfa lights. They attributed the strange appearance and movement of these lights to what is called the Fata Morgana mirage.

8 The Fata Morgana mirage is a superior mirage, which is characterized by multiple distortions. With superior mirages, what you perceive to be higher in the sky is really lower to the ground. Light bends downwards when it hits a layer of cold air, making it appear as if what is below your sight line is actually straight ahead or above because you are seeing the inverted image of what is on the horizon projected above it. A Fata Morgana mirage can make distant objects appear to hover in the air.

9 Does this mean that the mystery of the Marfa lights has been solved? The answer is not quite that simple. In his 2010 book *Hunting Marfa Lights*, engineer James Bunnell describes sightings of the lights he and others have witnessed that couldn’t possibly have been caused by a superior mirage.

How Can You See Them?

10 With so many conflicting theories about the lights, people complain that there will never be a definitive answer about their origin. However, the local population has few complaints about the mysterious lights. The highway department has constructed an official viewing site near Marfa. And every Labor Day weekend, there is a Marfa Lights Festival held in celebration of the lights that includes a parade and other events. Marfa’s economy booms as hotels fill up quickly and tourists spend their money on food, entertainment, and souvenirs.

11 If you want to attempt to see the Marfa lights, spend time between Marfa and Paisano Pass, south of Route 90. The most advantageous viewing spot is near U.S. Highway 67 on Mitchell Flat.

Answer Form

1 (A) (B) (C) (D)

2 (A) (B) (C) (D)

3 (A) (B) (C) (D)

Number
Correct

3

1

Which sentence from the article **best** explains why the Marfa lights remain a mystery?

- A “They appear only 10 to 20 times each year, in all seasons and any kind of weather.”
- B “Sightings occur between dusk and dawn, lasting from a few seconds to several hours.”
- C “The Marfa lights seem to occur more frequently during the second half of the lunar cycle, between the full moon and the next new moon.”
- D “With so many conflicting theories about the lights, people complain that there will never be a definitive answer about their origin.”



- 2** Read these sentences from paragraph 4 of the article.

These are just a few eyewitness reports. There are probably many people who have seen the lights but said nothing for fear of having their sanity doubted.

Which statement explains why there are few eyewitness reports?

- A** Those who saw the lights and reported them were ignored.
- B** Kyle Miller was ill when he reported that he saw the lights.
- C** People who report strange phenomena are usually not believed.
- D** The Humphreys probably saw the lights again but said nothing.

- 3** Which detail from the article illustrates that not all of the Marfa lights are caused by headlights from a nearby highway?

- A** The balls of light remain motionless and pulse on and off, switching from faint to bright.
- B** Robert Ellison saw the Marfa lights in 1883 while driving cattle, before cars were invented.
- C** The lights are the size of soccer balls in bright colors of red, orange, green, blue, white, or yellow.
- D** There are too many conflicting theories, so there will never be a definitive answer about their origin.

- 4** Paragraph 10 states, "the local population has few complaints about the mysterious lights." Explain why you think this is true. Use **one** quote from the article to support your explanation.

**Self Check**

Go back and see what you can check off on the Self Check on page 1.

Citing Evidence to Support Inferences

CCSS

RL.8.1: Cite the textual evidence that most strongly supports an analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text.

Theme: Home and Family

Detectives solve mysteries by looking for clues, or evidence. Like a detective, you often have to use evidence to help you figure something out about characters or events in a story.

Text evidence is a piece of information from a text. This information can be used to support an inference that the reader makes. An **inference** is a logical guess based on details in the text and on what the reader already knows from his or her own experiences.

Look at the picture below of a family moving into their new home. What inference can you make about how the family members feel? What evidence helps you figure this out?



Draw arrows to details showing how the family feels about the move. Then complete the chart to see how to use the evidence to make an inference. Which evidence is the strongest?

Text/Visual Evidence	+	Background Knowledge	=	Inference
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The family members are helping each other carry boxes into the house. 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Moving requires a lot of work. People are often excited when they move somewhere new. 		<p>The entire family is happy to be moving into their new home.</p>

By combining text evidence with their own knowledge, readers can figure out ideas that are not stated directly. Remember, making an inference is like solving a mystery: You not only need to find clues, but you also need to piece them together in a way that makes sense.



Read the start of a poem about a girl and her mother dusting.

Genre: Lyric Poem

Dusting *by Julia Alvarez*

Each morning I wrote my name
on the dusty cabinet, then crossed
the dining table in script, scrawled
in capitals on the backs of chairs,
practicing signatures like scales
while Mother followed, squirting
linseed from a burping can
into a crumpled up flannel.

(continued)

Explore how to answer this question: *"What inference can you make about how the speaker feels about the everyday task of dusting?"*

Though the speaker does not directly state her feelings about dusting, you can use the clues, or evidence, in the poem to infer what she thinks of this chore and how that motivates her actions.

Look for text evidence that tells how the speaker feels. One piece of evidence is shown in the chart below. Write two more pieces of evidence and use this information to make an inference.

Text Evidence	Background Knowledge	Inference
<ul style="list-style-type: none">The speaker writes her name in the dust on the furniture._________________________	<ul style="list-style-type: none">People usually use rags or feather dusters when dusting.When people do something every day, they either enjoy it or are bored.	

With a partner, discuss which piece of evidence most strongly supports your inference and why.



Continue reading the poem about dusting. Use the Close Reading and the Hint to help you answer the question.

Close Reading

What can you infer about the speaker based on what she does each morning? Find and **underline** at least two pieces of evidence to support this inference.

(continued from page 54)

She erased my fingerprints
from the bookshelf and the rocker
polished mirrors on the desk
scribbled with my alphabets.
My name was swallowed in the towel
with which she jeweled the tabletops.
The grain surfaced in the oak
and the pine grew luminous.
But I refused with every mark
to be like her, anonymous.

Hint

Which choice best shows that the speaker wants to be important in the world?

Circle the correct answer.

Which sentence is the strongest piece of evidence that the speaker wants to make her mark on the world?

- A The speaker helps her mother dust every morning.
- B The speaker scribbles her name in the dust every day.
- C The speaker's name and fingerprints are erased each day.
- D The speaker states that she refuses to be "anonymous."



Show Your Thinking

Explain why the statement you chose is the strongest piece of evidence.



With a partner, discuss what you can infer about the speaker's relationship with her mother. What do their actions suggest about how well they understand each other? Use evidence for support.



Read this excerpt from a novel. Use the Study Buddy and the Close Reading to guide your reading.

Genre: Realistic Fiction



A Smart Cookie

by Sandra Cisneros, *The House on Mango Street*

As I read the first paragraph, I can infer that the mother has regrets about her life. I'll look for facts that support this inference as I read and will circle the strongest piece of evidence.

Close Reading

Is the mother still able to do all the things she loves? **Underline** at least two pieces of evidence to support your inference.

In spite of her bad choices, in what ways is the mother intelligent? **Draw a box** around any words and phrases that support this idea.

- 1 I could've been somebody, you know? my mother says and sighs. She has lived in this city her whole life. She can speak two languages. She can sing an opera. She knows how to fix a TV. But she doesn't know which subway train to take to get downtown. I hold her hand very tight while we wait for the right train to arrive.
- 2 She used to draw when she had time. Now she draws with a needle and thread, little knotted rosebuds, tulips made of silk thread. Someday she would like to go to the ballet. Someday she would like to see a play. She borrows opera records from the public library and sings with velvety lungs powerful as morning glories.
- 3 Today while cooking oatmeal she is Madame Butterfly until she sighs and points the wooden spoon at me. I could've been somebody, you know? Esperanza, you go to school. Study hard. That Madame Butterfly was a fool. She stirs the oatmeal. Look at my *comadres*. She means Izaura whose husband left and Yolanda whose husband is dead. Got to take care all your own, she says shaking her head.
- 4 Then out of nowhere:
- 5 Shame is a bad thing, you know. It keeps you down. You want to know why I quit school? Because I didn't have nice clothes. No clothes, but I had brains.
- 6 Yup, she says disgusted, stirring again. I was a smart cookie then.



Hints

Which choice explains what the mother wants for her daughter?

What is something the daughter can do, but the mother can't?

Explain why you think the mother refers to herself as a "smart cookie."

Use the Hints on this page to help you answer the questions.

- 1 Read the following inference about the mother in "Smart Cookie."

The mother doesn't want her daughter to turn out like she did.

Which piece of evidence best supports this inference?

- A The mother used to draw, but now draws with a needle and thread.
- B The mother tells her daughter to go to school and study hard.
- C The mother sings along to music from borrowed opera records.
- D The mother admits that she used to be ashamed of her clothes.

- 2 Which of the following sentences best supports the inference that the mother is trapped in her situation?

- A She dreams of going to the ballet and a play someday.
- B She sings while she cooks oatmeal for her daughter.
- C She doesn't know which train to take to get downtown.
- D She can speak two languages and knows how to fix a TV.

- 3 Explain why it's reasonable to think that the mother may really have been a "smart cookie." Support your inference with at least two pieces of evidence from the text.



Read the story. Then answer the questions that follow.

from *Maud Martha*

by Gwendolyn Brooks

Maud Martha is both the title and the heroine of Pulitzer-prize winning poet Gwendolyn Brooks' memorable work of fiction. The book is actually a novella composed of vignettes, or sketches, of Maud Martha, her family and friends, and the marriage she enters into as a young woman. Maud grows up in the Chicago of the 1940s. In the story you are about to read, Maud's family awaits the return of the family patriarch, who has gone to town to apply for a loan so that the family will not have to give up their home.

1 What had been wanted was this always, this always to last, the talking softly on this porch, with the snake plant in the jardiniere in the southwest corner, and the obstinate slip from Aunt Eppie's magnificent fern at the left of the friendly door. Mama, Maud Martha, and Helen rocked slowly in their rocking chairs, and looked at the late afternoon light on the lawn and at the emphatic iron of the fence and at the poplar tree. These things might soon be theirs no longer. Those shafts and pools of light, the tree, the graceful iron, might soon be viewed possessively by different eyes.

2 Papa was to have gone that noon, during his lunch hour, to the office of the Home Owners' Loan. If he had not succeeded in getting another extension, they would be leaving this house in which they had lived for more than fourteen years. There was little hope. The Home Owner's Loan was hard. They sat, making their plans.

3 "We'll be moving into a nice flat somewhere," said Mama. "Somewhere on South Park, or Michigan, or in Washington Park Court." Those flats, as the girls and Mama knew well, were burdens on wages twice the size of Papa's. This was not mentioned now.

4 "They're much prettier than this old house," said Helen. "I have friends I'd just as soon not bring here. And I have other friends that wouldn't come down this far for anything, unless they were in a taxi."

5 Yesterday, Maud Martha would have attacked her. Tomorrow she might. Today she said nothing. She merely gazed at a little hopping robin in the tree, her tree, and tried to keep the fronts of her eyes dry.

6 "Well, I do know," said Mama, turning her hands over and over, "that I've been getting tireder and tireder of doing that firing. From October to April, there's firing to be done."

7 "But lately we've been helping, Harry and I," said Maud Martha. "And sometimes in March and April, and in October, and even in November, we could build a little fire in the fireplace. Sometimes, the weather was just right for that."

8 She knew from the way they looked at her, that this had been a mistake. They did not want to cry.

9 But she felt that the little line of white, sometimes ridged with smoked purple, and all that cream-shot saffron would never drift across any western sky except that in back of this house. The rain would drum with as sweet a dullness nowhere but here. The birds on South Park were mechanical birds, no better than the poor caught canaries in those "rich" women's sun parlors.

10 "It's just going to kill Papa!" burst out Maud Martha. "He loves this house! He lives for this house!"



- 11 "He lives for us," said Helen. "It's us he loves. He wouldn't want the house, except for us."
- 12 "And he'll have us," added Mama, "wherever."
- 13 "You know," Helen said, "If you want to know the truth, this is a relief. If this hadn't come up, we would have gone on, just dragged on, hanging out here forever."
- 14 "It might," allowed Mama, "be an act of God. God may just have reached down and picked up the reins."
- 15 "Yes," Maud Martha cracked in, "that's what you always say—that God knows best."
- 16 Her mother looked at her quickly, decided the statement was not suspect, looked away.
- 17 Helen saw Papa coming. "There's Papa," said Helen.
- 18 They could not tell a thing from the way Papa was walking. It was that same dear, little staccato walk, one shoulder down, then the other, then repeat, and repeat. They watched his progress. He passed the Kennedys'; he passed the vacant lot; he passed Mrs. Blakemore's. They wanted to hurl themselves over the fence, into the street, and shake the truth out of his collar. He opened the gate and still his stride told them nothing.
- 19 "Hello," he said.
- 20 Mama got up and followed him through the front door. The girls knew better than to go in too.
- 21 Presently, Mama's head emerged. Her eyes were lamps turned on.
- 22 "It's all right," she exclaimed. "He got it. It's all over. Everything is all right."
- 23 The door slammed shut. Mama's footsteps hurried away.
- 24 "I think," said Helen, "I think I'll give a party. I haven't given a party since I was eleven. I'd like some of my friends to just casually see that we're homeowners."

1

Read these sentences from the story.

These things might be theirs no longer. Those shafts and pools of light, the tree, the graceful iron, might soon be viewed possessively by different eyes.

How do these details support the idea that the family wants to keep their home?

- A** They show that the family regrets that others will enjoy these things instead of them.
- B** They create a gloomy atmosphere that expresses the family's sadness.
- C** They give the impression that the garden is too lovely for anyone to own.
- D** They warn that other people have tried unsuccessfully to purchase the home.

Answer Form

1 (A) (B) (C) (D)

2 (A) (B) (C) (D)

3 (A) (B) (C) (D)

**Number
Correct****3**



2 When Mama talks about moving into a nice apartment somewhere, she is really just trying to make Helen and Maud Martha feel better about moving. Which sentence from the passage **best** supports this assertion?

- A** "These things might soon be theirs no longer."
- B** "'Somewhere on South Park, or Michigan, or in Washington Park Court.'"
- C** "Those flats, as the girls and Mama knew well, were burdens on wages twice the size of Papa's."
- D** "'And I have other friends that wouldn't come down this far for anything, unless they were in a taxi.'"

3 Maud Martha does not believe at all that moving might be a good thing, as Helen and Mama suggest. Which sentence from the passage **best** supports this inference?

- A** "'We'll be moving into a nice flat somewhere,' said Mama."
- B** "'I have friends I'd just as soon not bring here.'"
- C** "She merely gazed at a little hopping robin in the tree, her tree, and tried to keep the fronts of her eyes dry."
- D** "She knew from the way they looked at her, that this had been a mistake."

4 Explain what you can infer about what the house represents to the characters in this story. Use at least **two** pieces of direct evidence from the story to support your answer.

**Self Check**

Go back and see what you can check off on the Self Check on page 51.

Lesson 8 Part 1: Introduction

Determining Theme

CCSS

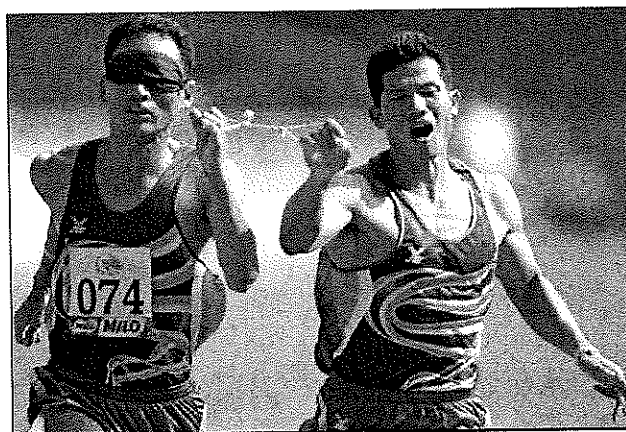
RL.8.2: Determine a theme or central idea of a text and analyze its development over the course of the text, including its relationship to the characters, setting, and plot. . .

Theme: Teamwork

You may read fiction for pleasure or entertainment. But did you know that most stories also provide lessons about life? These lessons are expressed through the **themes**, or messages, at the heart of what the author writes. Even your childhood stories have themes. For example, the story "Pinocchio" may have taught you the important lesson about honesty.

To identify a theme, connect ideas conveyed through the story's setting, plot, and characters.

Study the image and caption below. Think about the message being conveyed.



A blind runner and his guide approach the finish line during a paralympic event in Malaysia.

Now, suppose the people in the picture are characters in a story. Consider what they are doing. Circle any details in the picture and caption that suggest a message or life lesson.

Read the chart below to see how analyzing details can help you determine a theme.

Character Details	Setting Details	Action Details	Theme
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> one sighted runner, acting as a guide one blind runner who wants to be in a race 	a track and field event for people with disabilities	the two runners are approaching the finish line	No matter what obstacles they face, people can accomplish amazing things through teamwork.

Whether you read for pleasure, entertainment, or a school assignment, you can learn valuable lessons from stories. Thinking carefully about a story's characters, setting, and plot—and how they work together—will help you figure out, or infer, the story's theme.



Read the beginning of a story about a boy named Holden and his grandfather.

Genre: Realistic Fiction

Holden and Pops by Evan Gerlachen

"When you're at your grandfather's after school, be sure to do something other than sit by yourself playing video games, Holden."

"I know, Mom, but what else is there to do?" whined Holden, washing cereal bowls.

"Have you ever tried to show him one of your games? At least you'd be doing something together," Mom suggested.

"Oh, Pops wouldn't be interested," Holden shrugged as they headed out to the car. "Plus he'd never catch on—you know how he is about big, scary technology."

As Holden got out of the car, Mom tried once more. "You know, Pops might surprise you. Keep your options open. You might even ask him about 'big, scary technology' some time." Holden puzzled over her words on the way into school.

(continued)

Explore how to answer this question: "What do the details in this part of the story suggest about how people sometimes judge others?"

In most stories, authors do not state a theme directly. To figure out an author's message, you need to look for key details and see how they develop over the course of the text.

Identify key details about each character's attitudes and opinions. Then complete the chart below.

Character	Comments About Pops	Attitude Toward Pops
Holden	Says Pops wouldn't be interested in games and thinks technology is scary	
Mom	Suggests that Pops might be interested in video games and know something about technology	Seems to feel Pops is more interesting than Holden thinks

With a partner, read aloud and act out the story's beginning paragraphs. Then take turns explaining a theme, or lesson, that the author may be starting to develop in this part of the story.



Close Reading

On page 70, Holden doesn't want to spend time with Pops. On this page, **circle** words that tell how Holden's feelings change. Noticing how a character changes can help you understand a story's theme.

Hint

Which choice helps explain why Holden's attitude toward Pops changes?

Continue reading about Holden and Pops. Use the Close Reading and the Hint to help you answer the question.

(continued from page 70)

That afternoon, Holden sat hunkered over his video game controller making vintage airplanes swoop across the screen.

"Whatcha doin', Son?" Pops asked.

"Just a game," Holden answered distractedly. Then, remembering Mom's advice, he made himself ask, "Wanna see?"

Pops settled next to Holden and immediately exclaimed, "Say, is that plane a Tomahawk? You know, she can go up to 20,000 feet to evade that enemy fighter."

Holden pivoted to gape in shock. Pops shrugged and said, "Didn't I ever tell you about the Tomahawk I flew in '41?"

Circle the correct answer.

Which statement best expresses the theme of the story?

- A** Strong family bonds can develop only through shared interests.
- B** People from different generations have little in common.
- C** Children should always listen to advice from their parents.
- D** Assuming things about people may stop us from really knowing them.



Show Your Thinking

Look at the answer that you chose. Explain how specific text details helped you choose that answer.



With a partner, list and discuss additional life lessons that this story teaches. Use text details about characters, setting, and plot to support your discussion.



Read the story. Use the Study Buddy and the Close Reading to guide your reading.

Genre: Realistic Fiction



Being aware of a character's feelings and how they change may help me figure out the theme of this story. So I'm going to underline words at the beginning and end of the story that reveal Angie's feelings.

Close Reading

Like many characters, Angie changes from the beginning to the end of the story. **Circle** text at the end of the story that reveals how she is different.

Look at the text you've underlined and circled. **Draw an X** next to the point in the story where it's clear that Angie has changed.

One Word of Advice by Charles Mills

- 1 Angie was worn out preparing for the school career fair, which was her brainchild and her responsibility. She'd spent hours researching companies, contacting executives, and making sure the school had the technological capability to handle state-of-the-art presentations. With three days to go, she whisked into the media center and greeted her friend with, "Karim, I've been multitasking like crazy, and I still can't imagine how I'll get everything done."
- 2 Karim leaned over and said, "Delegate. Plenty of friends have offered their help, and you need to take them up on it."
- 3 Angie winced and clutched her clipboard more tightly. Deep down she was certain she was the only person who could get everything right. But Karim grabbed Angie's clipboard from her and flipped through the pages. "So. What seems most overwhelming to you?"
- 4 Angie groaned and sighed. Then she responded, "I'm not really sure how to evaluate the server's capabilities or the sound system's amplitude, and I don't know when I'm going to put together the introductory video."
- 5 Karim nodded, pulled a few pages out of the stack, and penciled names on each one. Then he handed them to Angie, and said, "I know people. Now delegate."
- 6 On the day of the fair, Angie looked as if she were having the time of her life when Karim saw her.
- 7 "Oh, Karim, did you see Danny's introductory video? Wasn't it fantastic? I could never have come up with that myself," she gushed. Angie realized that she needed to give credit where credit was due.
- 8 "From now on, call me Angie the Delegator; the best thing I ever did was hand that clipboard to you!"



Hints

Which sentence matches the author's description of Angie's actions and attitudes?

Which sentence describes Angie's attitude at the end of the story?

Which details best support the important theme of the story?

Use the Hints on this page to help you answer the questions.

- 1 At the beginning of the story, what is Angie's attitude?
 - A She is frustrated by the lack of help she gets from her friends.
 - B She trusts only Karim for reliable help and advice.
 - C She thinks she's the only one competent to organize the event.
 - D She is glad to be part of a team working on a project.
- 2 Which of the following sentences best describes an important theme about responsibility as described in "One Word of Advice"?
 - A A strong leader bravely faces all challenges.
 - B Good leaders trust others to do good work.
 - C Seeking help is the last resort of a real leader.
 - D People would rather give advice than lend a hand.
- 3 Select two pieces of evidence from "One Word of Advice" that support the correct answer to question 2. Check the boxes of your two choices.
 - ☐ "which was her brain child and her responsibility"
 - ☐ "'I've been multitasking like crazy'"
 - ☐ "the only person who could get everything right"
 - ☐ "'I could never have come up with that myself'"
 - ☐ "'how to evaluate the server's capability or the sound system's amplitude'"
 - ☐ "'the best thing I ever did was hand that clipboard to you'"



Read the story. Then answer the questions that follow.

from “The Canoe Breaker”

by Margaret Bemister

1 Once in a certain tribe there was a young man who had no name. For it was the law in that tribe that every youth had to do some deed that would give to him his name. This young man had tried in many ways to do something that would make the chief tell him that he was a great warrior. Several times he had tried to kill a bear, but had failed. He had gone forth in battle, hoping to kill some powerful enemy, but no one had fallen under his tomahawk. He had gone on long hunting trips, hoping to bring home the skin of some wild animal, but had always returned empty-handed. So his brave, young heart felt very sad, for the young men of the tribe laughed at him for not having won a name for himself.

2 One summer day, the tribe left their camp on the lake shore and went back among the hills on a hunting trip. After they had gone some distance, the young man left the others and wandered off by himself, hoping that this time he would kill some animal, and so be no longer scorned by his companions. He tramped for many hours through the forest and over the hills, without catching sight of anything. At length, he climbed one hill which was higher than the others, and from here he could see the small creek which flowed through the hills down to the lake. As he was looking at it, he thought he saw some dark objects along the shore of the creek. They seemed about the size of canoes. He scanned the hills anxiously, and at length could see a band of Indians making their way along the trail made by the hunters in the morning.

3 At once the young man knew there was great danger ahead, for these Indians, the Shuswaps, were the enemies of his tribe and now were following their trail, and when they found them, they would kill them. Quickly the young man made his way down the hill, and through the forest to the spot where the hunters had camped for their evening meal. Running up to them, he cried, “Return at once to your lodges. Our enemies are now on our trail. They are in the forest on the other side of this hill. I shall return and delay them while you reach your lodges in safety.”

4 Then, without waiting for a reply, he turned and ran back in the direction from which he had come. By short cuts through the hills, he made his way to the creek and found, as he expected, that the Indians had left their canoes tied at its mouth. Seizing his tomahawk, he began to break the canoes, and soon had a hole made in all of them except one. Leaving the creek, he mounted the hill and from there could see the Shuswaps. He began to wave his arms and call wildly to attract their chief. At last they noticed him and began to make their way towards him. The young man was delighted, for now he knew that his tribe could escape in safety, while their enemies were returning towards the creek. Soon the Shuswaps neared the top of the hill, and he knew he must think of some plan to delay them here. Suddenly he dropped to the ground and lay there as though insensible. With a run the Shuswaps gained the summit and surrounded him. He lay face downwards with his arms stretched out. They turned him over on his back and peered into his face. Not a muscle moved; not even his eyelids quivered. Then the chief bent over him and felt his heart. “He [is not dead], he said, “but the Great Spirit has called his spirit to go on a long journey. . . . Let us place his body under the pine-trees, there to await the return of the spirit.”



5 The Indians lifted the body of the young man, carried it to a clump of pine-trees and laid it down. Then they walked some yards away and held a council.

6 As soon as they were a safe distance away, the young man jumped up. He ran down the hill, and reaching the canoes, jumped into the unbroken one and began to paddle down the creek.

7 The Shuswaps turned and saw him. With fierce cries, they began to race down the hillside, and when they arrived at the spot where they had left their canoes, and saw what had happened, they filled the air with their angry yells. The young man was now out on the lake in the canoe, and they were unable to follow him, as all the other canoes were wrecked. They ran angrily along the lake shore, thinking he would land on their side, but instead, he made his way across the lake to the other side.

8 When the young man reached the shore, he again seized his tomahawk, and this time broke the canoe with which he had saved his life. The defeated Shuswaps, standing on the shore, saw him do this, and again they filled the air with their angry yells. There was nothing for them to do but to return to their camp, while the young man made his way along the lake shore to the village of his tribe. When he reached there, he found that he was no longer a man without a name. His brave deed had won for him the name of Kasamoldin—the canoe breaker—and ever afterwards in his tribe, and to others, he was known by this name.

Answer Form

Answer the questions. Mark your answers to questions 1–3 on the Answer Form to the right.

1 (A) (B) (C) (D)

2 (A) (B) (C) (D)

3 (A) (B) (C) (D)

**Number
Correct**

3**1**

A central theme of this story is that great deeds arise from seeing how to best use our unique strengths and abilities. Which sentence from the story **best** illustrates this theme?

- A** "He had gone forth in battle, hoping to kill some powerful enemy, but no one had fallen under his tomahawk."
- B** "Seizing his tomahawk, he began to break the canoes, and soon had a hole made in all of them except one."
- C** "The Indians lifted the body of the young man, carried it to a clump of pine-trees and laid it down."
- D** "There was nothing for them to do but to return to their camp, while the young man made his way along the lake shore to the village of his tribe."



2 In what way does the plot contribute to the theme?

- A** The young man must decide on a name that reveals his special skills.
- B** The chief of the Shuswaps appreciates the young man for what he is.
- C** The young man doesn't give up until he proves he is a great warrior.
- D** The young man finally achieves success in a nontraditional way.

3 Which of the young man's character traits **best** helps to convey the theme?

- A** the courage he shows in a dangerous situation
- B** his physical strength in breaking the canoes
- C** his determination to earn a name for himself
- D** his fear when confronted by the Shuswaps

4 Explain how the author develops the theme over the course of "The Canoe Breaker." In your answer, include at least **two** details from different parts of the story.

**Self Check**

Go back and see what you can check off on the Self Check on page 51.

Lesson 13 Part 1: Introduction

Determining Point of View

CCSS

RI.8.6: Determine an author's point of view or purpose in a text. . . .

Theme: *Great Deeds and Minds*

An **author's purpose** is the main reason he or she creates a piece of writing. This reason may be to inform, persuade, entertain, or reflect. An author may write with a particular audience in mind, hoping to affect people's feelings on a subject. Analyzing the author's tone, language, and content choices can help readers infer what the author's purpose is. Those same clues can also reveal the **author's point of view**—what the author thinks, feels, or believes.

Read the following excerpt from the essay "Civil Disobedience" by Henry David Thoreau, first published in 1849. What do you think Thoreau's purpose was for writing this piece?

Is a democracy the last improvement possible in government? Is it not possible to take a step further towards recognizing and organizing the rights of man? There will never be a really free and enlightened State until the State comes to recognize the individual as a higher and independent power, from which all its own power and authority are derived, and treats him accordingly.

Read the excerpt again. This time, underline phrases that contain the key points the author is making. Then read the chart below to see how the ideas Thoreau expresses can help you figure out his point of view about the importance of the individual.

Topic	Textual Evidence	Idea Expressed	Author's Point of View
The nature of government	"take a step further toward recognizing and organizing the rights of man"	Our form of democracy can still be improved.	The individual is more important than the government, and our government must change to reflect that.
	"never be a really free and enlightened State"	True freedom is impossible under an oppressive government.	
	"recognize the individual as a higher and independent power"	People should be considered greater than government.	

Thoreau's point of view seems to be that the individual is more important than the government. His purpose, or reason for writing, is to persuade people that our form of government could still be improved. Determining an author's purpose and point of view will help you understand what feelings or ideas the author wants you to take away from the text.



Read the following editorial about Edith Wilson.

Genre: Editorial

The First Female President *by John Grey*

History remembers Edith Wilson as far more than just a first lady. In fact, she's been hailed as the "first female president of the United States." Though most of her contributions to the presidency took place "behind the scenes," they are a testament to this remarkable woman's strength and intelligence. They demonstrate that her unofficial title is well deserved.

As wife to President Woodrow Wilson, Edith bravely assumed nearly all of the president's routine daily activities when her husband suffered a debilitating stroke in October 1919. Rather than allow him to step down, she continued his presidency by acting in his place. She became the sole point of communication between Woodrow and his Cabinet. In fact, the American people believed their president only suffered from temporary exhaustion. Edith decided which issues to bring to her ailing husband's attention and which ones she could deal with herself. Edith Wilson met these extraordinary challenges head-on and proved herself an admirable leader.

Explore how to answer this question: *"What text evidence helps you infer the author's point of view about Edith Wilson?"*

To infer the author's point of view, look for and underline any evidence in the text that suggests what he thinks of Edith Wilson and how she took control after her husband's stroke.

Use the text evidence you found to complete the chart and determine the author's point of view.

Topic	Textual Evidence	Idea Expressed	Author's Point of View
Edith Wilson	"a testament to this remarkable woman's strength and intelligence"; "her unofficial title is well deserved"	The way Edith conducted herself was honorable and presidential.	

With a partner, discuss what you think the author's point of view is, as well as his purpose for writing. Use evidence from the text to support your answer.



Close Reading

How does this author feel about Edith Wilson?

Underline any details that convey his thoughts, feelings, or beliefs.

Hint

Which answer choice is consistent with the author's feelings about Edith Wilson?

Read the editorial about Edith Wilson below. Use the Close Reading and the Hint to help you answer the question.

Genre: Editorial

White House Deception *by Jose Gonzales*

History may remember Edith Wilson as the United States' first female president, but what it fails to mention is the elaborate deception she orchestrated. When her husband, President Wilson, suffered a serious stroke, Edith swooped in to "help." She purposefully misled Congress about the seriousness of his condition. Then she used the opportunity to exercise head-of-state powers, such as signing official orders and writing decrees in her own hand. History must not look favorably upon this hijacking of the government. To speak with the president's voice is, at best, dishonest.

Circle the correct answer.

Which sentence best expresses the author's point of view?

- A Edith Wilson did the right thing in exercising her husband's presidential powers.
- B Edith Wilson is rightly remembered as the first female president of the United States.
- C Edith Wilson deserves to be praised for serving her country.
- D Edith Wilson should not be honored by history for her deception.



Show Your Thinking

Explain what words and phrases you used to infer the author's point of view in the above text.



How do the two authors' points of view about Edith Wilson differ? With a partner, compare and contrast the two sides of the issue, using specific text evidence to support your inferences.



Read the essay about an important figure in the history of the United States. Use the Study Buddy and Close Reading to guide your reading.

Genre: Essay



Figuring out why an author wrote something can help me determine his or her point of view. While reading, I'll think about whether this essay is meant to inform, entertain, or persuade readers.

Close Reading

Circle any words or phrases that help you understand the author's opinion about Betsy Ross and her importance to the American people.

How does the author feel about the historians' claims? **Underline** any words or phrases that convey her thoughts, feelings, or beliefs.

American Flag Heroine by Sylvia Edmund

- 1 The tale of Betsy Ross sewing the first American flag is a cherished part of the lore of the American Revolution. According to both oral and written tradition, George Washington and members of the newly formed Continental Congress approached Ross with a rough sketch of a flag that would carry their armies into battle against the British. After some redesigning and a few contributions of her own, Ross sat in her rocking chair and sewed together the new American flag. It had alternating red and white stripes and 13 five-point stars for the original 13 colonies.
- 2 Recently, however, some modern flag historians have been trying to discredit this remarkable story. They would have us believe that it is nothing more than elaborate fiction. As "proof," they point to the fact that William Canby, Ross's grandson, didn't begin telling the story until 1870. They suggest he did this as a way of venerating his lineage. The time frame makes sense, however, when you realize that at the time, the country was gathering stories for the upcoming 1876 Centennial. The flag historians also maintain that they've found no evidence that a meeting between Ross and Washington took place, or that they were even acquainted. Worse, they claim that there is no evidence to suggest that Ross designed, contributed to, or was even involved in the creation of the first American flag. However, they have failed to provide any evidence to the contrary.
- 3 Anyone who loves what our country stands for should ignore these pointless attacks on an inspiring bit of our history. What's important is the weight this 200-year-old tale still carries. It's a tale Americans have told for generations. Betsy Ross was a female role model at a time when men fought the wars and received all the glory. The story of her contributions to the birth of our country should not be challenged or even questioned.



Hints

Which answer choice is consistent with the author's feelings about Betsy Ross?

Look back at the words and phrases you underlined.

Think about how the author's point of view about Betsy Ross might have inspired her to write this essay.

Use the Hints on this page to help you answer the questions.

- 1 Which sentence best expresses the author's point of view toward the story of Betsy Ross?
 - A Modern flag historians choose to ignore important facts about Betsy Ross's life.
 - B Betsy Ross was an inspirational woman and her story should not be questioned.
 - C It is a myth that the Continental Congress asked Betsy Ross to sew the first American flag.
 - D William Canby fabricated his grandmother's story in 1870 for the Centennial celebration.
- 2 What text evidence best supports your inference about the author's point of view?
 - A Flag historians believe that Ross and Washington never even met.
 - B Ross's grandson told her story in order to celebrate his heritage.
 - C Betsy Ross made many contributions to the design of the flag.
 - D Americans still love to tell the Betsy Ross story 200 years later.
- 3 Explain the author's purpose for writing this essay. Cite two details from the text to support your response.



Read the speech. Then answer the questions that follow.

from “The Hypocrisy of American Slavery, July 4, 1852”

by Frederick Douglass

As a former American slave, Frederick Douglass became an extremely influential African American leader and abolitionist during the 1800s. In 1852, he was asked by the citizens of Rochester, New York, to deliver a Fourth of July speech as part of the city’s Independence Day festivities. The following is an excerpt from Douglass’s famous oration. In it, he questions America’s celebration of freedom in light of the prevalence of slavery.

1 Would you have me argue that man is entitled to liberty? That he is the rightful owner of his own body? You have already declared it. Must I argue the wrongfulness of slavery? Is that a question for republicans?¹ Is it to be settled by the rules of logic and argumentation, as a matter beset with great difficulty, involving a doubtful application of the principle of justice, hard to understand? How should I look today in the presence of Americans, dividing and subdividing a discourse, to show that men have a natural right to freedom, speaking of it relatively and positively, negatively and affirmatively? To do so would be to make myself ridiculous, and to offer an insult to your understanding. There is not a man beneath the canopy of heaven who does not know that slavery is wrong for him.



2 What! Am I to argue that it is wrong to make men brutes, to rob them of their liberty, to work them without wages, to keep them ignorant of their relations to their fellow men, to beat them with sticks, to flay their flesh with the lash, to load their limbs with irons, to hunt them with dogs, to sell them at auction, to sunder their families, to knock out their teeth, to burn their flesh, to starve them into obedience and submission to their masters? Must I argue that a system thus marked with blood and stained with pollution is wrong? No—I will not. I have better employment for my time and strength than such arguments would imply.

3 What, then, remains to be argued? Is it that slavery is not divine; that God did not establish it; that our doctors of divinity are mistaken? There is blasphemy in the thought. That which is inhuman cannot be divine. Who can reason on such a proposition? They that can, may—I cannot. The time for such argument is past.

4 At a time like this, scorching irony, not convincing argument, is needed. Oh! had I the ability, and could I reach the nation’s ear, I would today pour out a fiery stream of biting ridicule, blasting reproach, withering sarcasm, and stern rebuke. For it is not light that is needed, but fire; it is not the gentle shower, but thunder. We need the storm, the whirlwind, and the earthquake. The feeling of the nation must be quickened; the conscience of the nation must be roused; the propriety of the nation must be startled; the hypocrisy of the nation must be exposed; and its crimes against God and man must be denounced.

¹ republicans: elected representatives



5 What to the American slave is your Fourth of July? I answer, a day that reveals to him more than all other days of the year, the gross injustice and cruelty to which he is the constant victim. To him your celebration is a sham; your boasted liberty an unholy license; your national greatness, swelling vanity. Your sounds of rejoicing are empty and heartless; your shouts of liberty and equality, hollow mock; your prayers and hymns, your sermons and thanksgivings, with all your religious parade and solemnity, are to him mere bombast, fraud, deception, impiety, and hypocrisy—a thin veil to cover up crimes which would disgrace a nation of savages. There is not a nation of the earth guilty of practices more shocking and bloody than are the people of these United States at this very hour.

6 Go search where you will, roam through all the monarchies and despotisms of the Old World, travel through South America, search out every abuse and when you have found the last, lay your facts by the side of the everyday practices of this nation, and you will say with me that, for revolting barbarity and shameless hypocrisy, America reigns without a rival.

Answer Form

1 (A) (B) (C) (D)

2 (A) (B) (C) (D)

3 (A) (B) (C) (D)

4 (A) (B) (C) (D)

**Number
Correct****4****1**

Douglass believes Americans should be ashamed to celebrate the Fourth of July as long as they allow slavery to exist. Which sentence from the speech **best** supports this statement?

- A** "Would you have me argue that man is entitled to liberty?"
- B** "I have better employment for my time and strength than such arguments would imply."
- C** "To him your celebration is a sham; your boasted liberty an unholy license; your national greatness, swelling vanity."
- D** "Go search where you will, roam through all the monarchies and despotisms of the Old World, travel through South America, search out every abuse."

2

This speech was written to persuade

- A** enslaved African Americans
- B** free American citizens
- C** elected government officials
- D** monarchs of the Old World

**3**

What does Douglass hope to accomplish in "The Hypocrisy of American Slavery"?

- A** He wants to convince his audience that it is wrong to celebrate independence while denying freedom to slaves.
- B** He would like to give his audience information about the terrible practices of South American and Old World nations.
- C** He intends to provoke his listeners by accusing them of immorality and their nation of inhumane crimes.
- D** He wishes to reflect on the historical significance of the United States declaring its independence and its principles of equality.

4

Which sentence from the speech **best** supports the inference that Douglass does not need to argue against slavery because it is clearly immoral?

- A** "At a time like this, scorching irony, not convincing argument, is needed."
- B** "There is not a man beneath the canopy of heaven who does not know that slavery is wrong for him."
- C** "I have better employment for my time and strength than such arguments would imply."
- D** "There is not a nation of the earth guilty of practices more shocking and bloody than are the people of these United States at this very hour."

5

Describe how you determined the author's purpose for "The Hypocrisy of American Slavery." Cite at least **two** pieces of textual evidence that led to this inference.

**Self Check**

Go back and see what you can check off on the Self Check on page 93.

Lesson 20

Analyzing Conflicting Information

CCSS

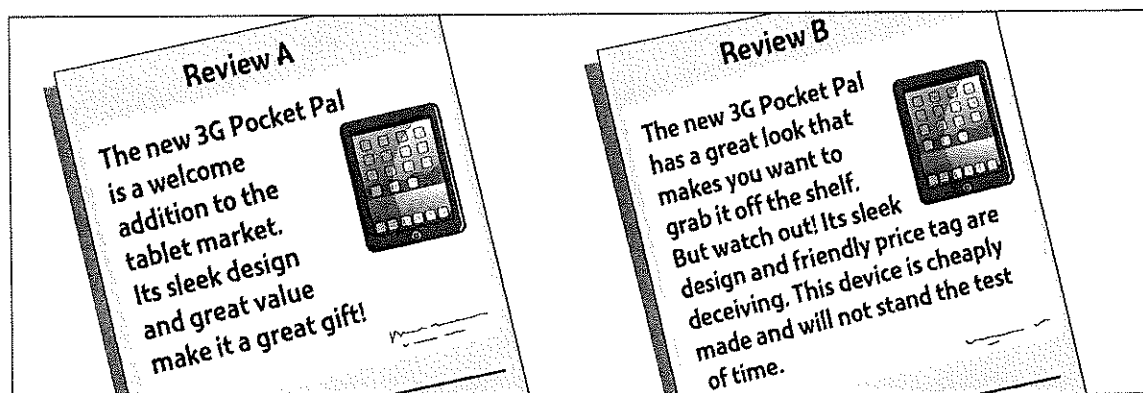
RI.8.9: Analyze a case in which two or more texts provide conflicting information on the same topic and identify where the texts disagree on matters of fact or interpretation.

Theme: Innovations: Benefits and Consequences

Do you ever read movie reviews? One critic may love a movie and give it a glowing review, while other critics give a long list of reasons explaining how awful the movie is. After you've read the reviews, you may even wonder if the critics saw the same movie!

People often draw different, **conflicting**, conclusions based on the same evidence. Authors are no exception to this. Two authors may disagree about the same facts or offer different **interpretations**, or explanations, of what they observe. As a reader, you need to compare texts on the same topic carefully to understand how and why authors' interpretations may differ.

Read the two product reviews below. Circle details that show that the product reviews are about the same topic. Underline details that show conflicting information.



Read the chart below. Note the conflicting information about the same topic.

Ideas in Both Reviews	Review A	Review B
<ul style="list-style-type: none">The Pocket Pal has a sleek, attractive design.It is inexpensive.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">The Pocket Pal is a welcome addition to the tablet market.It would make a great gift.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">The Pocket Pal is not well made or durable.

Articles that present conflicting information are valuable because they let readers get a broader understanding of a topic. Analyzing how two authors present the same information will help ensure that you get a more balanced picture of the subject you are learning about.



Read the following scientific account about genetically modified foods.

Genre: Scientific Account

Are You Eating GM Food? *by Richard Boylan*

Genetically modified (GM) foods have been slowly entering our diets since the mid-1990s. These are foods that have been altered in laboratories for many beneficial purposes: to thrive in cold conditions, to resist pests and diseases, or to achieve faster growth. Other foods are modified to make them more nutritionally rich. For example, certain types of rice have been engineered so that they provide more of the nutrients needed in countries where rice is the main part of the daily diet.

Although there may be certain benefits of GM foods, we are not entirely sure of the side effects. Some may cause allergic reactions, for example, or increase cholesterol. Unfortunately, there are currently no labeling rules for modified foods, so consumers have no way of knowing which GM foods they may place in their shopping carts as they stroll through store aisles.

The makers of GM foods claim these foods don't differ significantly from natural varieties. They also say they do not want warning labels on their products. However, there are too many unknowns and potential dangers surrounding these foods. More GM research needs to be shared with consumers—they have a right to know exactly what is in the foods they purchase!

Explore how to answer this question: *"How does the author interpret facts about genetically modified foods?"*

The author feels that GM foods may be dangerous and they need to be labeled clearly so that consumers know what they are buying.

Fill in one or more points of interpretation from this account in the second column of the chart below. Complete the third column of the chart after reading the account on the next page.

Ideas in Both Accounts	Are You Eating GM Food?	GM Crops are Superfoods
<ul style="list-style-type: none">Genetically modified foods have been altered to be more resistant to pests and diseases.Genetically modified foods have benefits.		



Read the scientific account. Use the Close Reading and the Hint to help you answer the question. Then complete the chart on the previous page.

Genre: Scientific Account

Close Reading

Underline details in this account that are different from those in "Are You Eating GM Food?" **Circle** details in this account that are the same as those in the first account.

GM Crops are Superfoods *by Sharla Silva*

With the world's population projected to reach 9.3 billion by 2050, what is everyone going to eat? Genetically modified (GM) superfoods may be part of the answer. These are plants that have been modified to be more resistant to pests, cold, diseases, and drought. The benefits of these genetically modified superfoods are endless, and they could be vital to supporting our growing world.

Some people are concerned about eating foods with altered DNA, fearing that there may be unknown side effects. However, GM foods do not differ significantly from natural foods, and there is no reason for not moving forward with their development.

Hint

Reread the concluding paragraphs of each account and think about each author's message.

Circle the correct answer below.

Which statement best explains how the two authors disagree?

- A** Boylan thinks that GM foods may cause allergies and should be labeled, but Silva sees only the benefits of these foods.
- B** Silva believes that GM foods are superfoods, but Boylan thinks GM foods can only cause harm.
- C** Boylan believes that GM foods may have some important benefits, but Silva believes that the benefits of GM foods are not significant.
- D** Silva thinks the unknown dangers of GM foods are a major concern, but Boylan feels that GM foods are safe.



Show Your Thinking

Summarize the conflicting information in the two accounts.

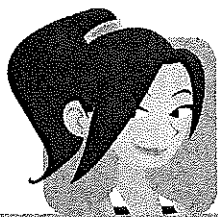


With a partner, list facts from each account. Then discuss which account is more convincing.



Read the two scientific accounts about King Tutankhamen. Use the Study Buddies and the Close Readings to guide your reading of the texts.

Genre: Scientific Account



Based on the title of the account, I know that the author is going to try to prove something. As I read, I am going to look for points the author makes to support his case.

Close Reading

Underline the sentence at the beginning of the account that states the author's view of King Tut's death.

Circle facts in the account that show how technology has been used to help solve Tut's death.

A Case for Ancient Murder *by Juan Moya*

October 7, 2002

- 1 Since the 1922 discovery of the tomb of the pharaoh Tutankhamen, better known as King Tut, people have been fascinated by the young ruler, who was just 19 when he died. His tomb and some of its contents suggest that his death was sudden and unexpected. But was it illness, accident . . . or murder? If we look at the evidence, it becomes fairly obvious that the boy king met with foul play.
- 2 Tut's mummy was damaged during its removal from the coffin and casings, and the first expert to examine it in 1925 found no obvious cause of death. However, when the body was X-rayed in 1968, a key piece of evidence was discovered: a piece of bone floating inside Tut's skull. Experts believed it could be evidence of a fatal blow to the back of the young pharaoh's head.
- 3 There were certainly people close to Tut who would have benefited from having the king out of the way. Greg Cooper, a former FBI profiler and police chief, and Mike King, head of a police crime-analysis unit, have focused on a few key suspects: Tut's chief treasurer, his military commander, his wife, and his prime minister.
- 4 Through the use of forensic science, and by studying historical records and evidence from the tomb, Cooper and King were able to rule out all suspects except Tut's prime minister, Ay. Cooper and King concluded that Ay had the most to gain from Tutankhamen's death since Ay went on to rule as pharaoh.
- 5 Whether or not it was Ay who killed Tut is still being debated, but we can be fairly certain that the young pharaoh was indeed murdered. Further investigations and technological advances will soon prove that the young pharaoh did not succumb to a tragic illness or an unfortunate accident. And even after over 3,000 years, the truth deserves to be known.



Genre: Scientific Account

Tut Mystery Finally Solved? *by Ann Ching*

February 16, 2010



Based on the title, I can tell that this account also is about King Tut's mysterious death. I will look for clues that explain this author's interpretation of facts.

Close Reading

Look back at the sentence you underlined in the previous account. Then **underline** phrases that show the interpretation of Tut's death in this account.

Circle facts in this account that show how technology has been used to help solve Tut's death. How do these facts differ from the previous account's facts?

- 1 Ever since scientists discovered a bone fragment in King Tut's skull, there has been speculation that the boy king was murdered. But other, more reliable evidence suggests that he was simply a frail young man who had a severe form of malaria, and suffered a leg fracture, all of which likely combined to cause his death.
- 2 First of all, Tut most likely had genetic disorders. Researchers have examined the DNA of Tut and several other famous Egyptian mummies. The tests show that Tut's father was the controversial pharaoh Akhenaten. They also confirmed that Akhenaten married his sister, a practice common in the royal family because they believed it preserved their divine status. This pairing was the likely cause of Tut's genetic issues.
- 3 There is also evidence that Tut suffered from a disorder that weakened areas of the bone. Detailed CT scans of Tut's mummy revealed that he had a cleft palate. The scans also revealed an abnormally curved spine and a toe malformation that would have caused pain and swelling. This sheds new light on the 100 or so canes found in Tut's tomb—he probably needed them to walk.
- 4 DNA tests on the mummy have also shown that disease may have been a third factor contributing to Tut's demise. The tests revealed signs of a parasite that causes a severe form of malaria. This indicates that Tut suffered from this terrible disease.
- 5 Put together, the evidence paints a clear picture of a young man weakened by genetic disorders and disease. So, despite the more intriguing idea that Tut was murdered, it's much more likely that he was just a very sick boy who died of natural causes. Science and technology will confirm this sad tale and finally solve this fascinating mystery.



Hints

Which key fact appears in both accounts but means something different in each?

Look closely at the text you underlined in each account. What information is in both accounts but is interpreted differently?

What facts did you circle in each account?

Use the Hints on this page to help you answer the questions.

- 1 Which fact about Tutankhamen do the two accounts agree on, but interpret differently?
 - A He broke his leg not long before he died.
 - B He died when he was only 19 years old.
 - C He had damage to the back of his skull.
 - D His tomb was discovered in Egypt in 1922.
- 2 Which statement best summarizes how Moya's and Ching's ideas conflict?
 - A They disagree on who gained from Tut's death.
 - B They disagree on the timing of Tut's death.
 - C They disagree on the best experts to consult about Tut's death.
 - D They disagree on the cause of Tut's death.
- 3 Explain how technological innovations have led to discoveries about King Tut's death. Describe how technology led the authors to draw conflicting conclusions about King Tut's death. Use details from each account in your response.



Read these passages about technology and the human brain. Then answer the questions.

Your Brain on Technology

by Annabelle Jordan

December 3, 2010

1 How many things do you do at once when you are in front of a computer? Do you think of yourself as a multitasker? As computer and Internet use grows, allowing us access anywhere to multiple sources of information and entertainment, so too do concerns about its impact on our lives. Technology isn't just changing the way we do things; studies show that it's changing our brains. But for better or for worse?

2 There is no doubt that Internet-connected devices give us access to more information than ever before. If you want to know the news of the day, check what your friends are doing, watch a music video or a movie, or look for a great deal on a product, it's all instantly available. While the Internet is a powerful tool, allowing us to quickly access all sorts of useful facts, keeping up with all of the available information can also be distracting and overwhelming. Academic and professional achievement still requires the ability to focus for extended periods on complex tasks. However, some research shows that the distractions of the modern world are impairing this ability.

3 Have you ever been working on something and thought, "I'll just quickly check if I have any messages"? How long did it take you to get back to your original task? People who multitask, or do more than one thing at a time, often feel they are being more productive by doing so, but studies show that is not the case. Researchers have found that heavy multitaskers actually take longer to switch between tasks, are not as good as non-multitaskers at ignoring distracting information, and actually feel more stress. Despite this, people are multitasking more. Studies indicate that computer users at work change windows or switch to other programs such as email almost 37 times every hour. That's more than once every two minutes.

4 All this multitasking seems to be actually changing our brains. When users juggle information, it provides stimulation that triggers the release of dopamine, a chemical that activates the pleasure centers in the brain. In other words, their brains reward them for switching between activities. Evidence shows that doing this on a regular basis retrains the brain to prefer switching activities. This can cause problems in situations in which people need to focus on one thing for more than a few minutes, such as working on longer tasks or in social situations. Heavy technology users report getting distracted even when they don't want to be, such as when spending time with their families. Without the constant release of dopamine, they feel bored.

5 Dopamine is also the brain chemical associated with addiction, leading to the worry that excessive technology use may cause dysfunctional behavior similar to other addictions. And given the effects on adult brains, experts worry that this will be even more pronounced in the still-developing brains of children and teenagers. The lives of countless young people are intertwined with technology; many youths send hundreds of text messages a day, not to mention the time spent on social networking, video games, or browsing the Internet. Students admit that their use of technology takes time away and distracts them from schoolwork. How can you not check your phone if a text comes in while you're doing homework? And then you have to reply, right?



6 The loss of focus during a task isn't the only way technology impairs learning. One study tracked how well 12- to 14-year-old boys remembered vocabulary words after two different activities. They either watched TV or played video games for two hours between studying the words and going to sleep. The results showed that playing video games both reduced the quality of sleep and significantly reduced their ability to remember the vocabulary words the next day. Researchers believe the intense stimulation of a video game after learning may have kept the brain from remembering the words. Evidence indicates that the brain needs a time of lower activity to process information. If we are always online, our brains are not getting that downtime.

7 Technology isn't all bad, of course. Research also shows that the brains of people who use the Internet find information more efficiently, and video games can improve the brain's ability to process images. Technology is here to stay, so it's not a question of should we use it, but of how we manage it. We can only do that effectively if we understand how it affects us, especially our brains. As with many things, finding a balance may be the key to maximizing the potential of our brains on technology.

from “The New Literacy”

by Clive Thompson, Wired Magazine

August 24, 2009

1 As the school year begins, be ready to hear pundits fretting once again about how kids today can't write—and technology is to blame. An age of illiteracy is at hand, right?

2 Andrea Lunsford isn't so sure. Lunsford is a professor of writing and rhetoric at Stanford University, where she has organized a mammoth project called the Stanford Study of Writing to scrutinize college students' prose. From 2001 to 2006, she collected 14,672 student writing samples—everything from in-class assignments, formal essays, and journal entries to emails, blog posts, and chat sessions. Her conclusions are stirring.

3 “I think we're in the midst of a literacy revolution the likes of which we haven't seen since Greek civilization,” she says. For Lunsford, technology isn't killing our ability to write. It's reviving it—and pushing our literacy in bold new directions.

4 The first thing she found is that young people today write far more than any generation before them. That's because so much socializing takes place online, and it almost always involves text. Of all the writing that the Stanford students did, a stunning 38 percent of it took place out of the classroom—life writing, as Lunsford calls it. Those [online] updates and lists of 25 things about yourself add up.

5 It's almost hard to remember how big a paradigm¹ shift this is. Before the Internet came along, most Americans never wrote anything, ever, that wasn't a school assignment. Unless they got a job that required producing text (like in law, advertising, or media), they'd leave school and virtually never construct a paragraph again.

¹ **paradigm:** an example or framework



6 But is this explosion of prose good, on a technical level? Yes. Lunsford's team found that the students were remarkably adept at what rhetoricians call *kairos*—assessing their audience and adapting their tone and technique to best get their point across. The modern world of online writing, particularly in chat and on discussion threads, is conversational and public, which makes it closer to the Greek tradition of argument than the asynchronous² letter and essay writing of 50 years ago.

7 The fact that students today almost always write for an audience (something virtually no one in my generation did) gives them a different sense of what constitutes good writing. In interviews, they defined good prose as something that had an effect on the world. For them, writing is about persuading and organizing and debating, even if it's over something as quotidian³ as what movie to go see. The Stanford students were almost always less enthusiastic about their in-class writing because it had no audience but the professor: It didn't serve any purpose other than to get them a grade. As for those texting short-forms and smileys defiling *serious* academic writing? Another myth. When Lunsford examined the work of first-year students, she didn't find a single example of texting speak in an academic paper.

8 Of course, good teaching is always going to be crucial, as is the mastering of formal academic prose. But it's also becoming clear that online media are pushing literacy into cool directions. The brevity of texting and status updating teaches young people to deploy haiku-like concision. At the same time, the proliferation⁴ of new forms of online pop-cultural exegesis⁵—from sprawling TV-show recaps to 15,000-word videogame walkthroughs—has given them a chance to write enormously long and complex pieces of prose, often while working collaboratively with others.

9 We think of writing as either good or bad. What today's young people know is that knowing who you're writing for and why you're writing might be the most crucial factor of all.

² **asynchronous**: occurring at a different time

³ **quotidian**: everyday, ordinary

⁴ **proliferation**: an increase

⁵ **exegesis**: an explanation or interpretation

Answer Form

1 (A) (B) (C) (D)

2 (A) (B) (C) (D)

3 (A) (B) (C) (D)

Number
Correct

3

1

Which **best** describes Jordan's interpretation of the uses of technology?

- A Students shouldn't text while doing their homework.
- B We must learn to manage the harmful effects of technology.
- C We must find a way to stop using technology so much.
- D We should stop using technology that is damaging our brains.



2 Which fact do the two passages agree on, but interpret differently?

- A** Technology is responsible for young people today writing more than any generation before them.
- B** Computer users change windows or switch programs more than once every two minutes.
- C** Technology affects young people because they spend so much time engaging with it.
- D** Video games can improve the brain's ability to process images.

3 Reread this sentence from Thompson's passage.

Lunsford's team found that the students were remarkably adept at . . . adapting their tone and technique to best get their point across.

Which of the following from Jordan's passage conflicts **most** with this?

- A** "All this multitasking seems to be actually changing our brains."
- B** "Researchers have found that heavy multitaskers actually take longer to switch between tasks, are not as good at ignoring distracting information, and actually feel more stress."
- C** "The lives of countless young people are intertwined with technology; many youths send hundreds of text messages a day."
- D** "Students admit that their use of technology takes time away and distracts them from schoolwork."

4 Explain how the facts the authors choose shape their conflicting interpretations of the effect of technology. Use at least **one** detail from each text in your response.

**Self Check**

Go back and see what you can check off on the Self Check on page 187.

Lesson 21

Analyzing Elements of Modern Fiction

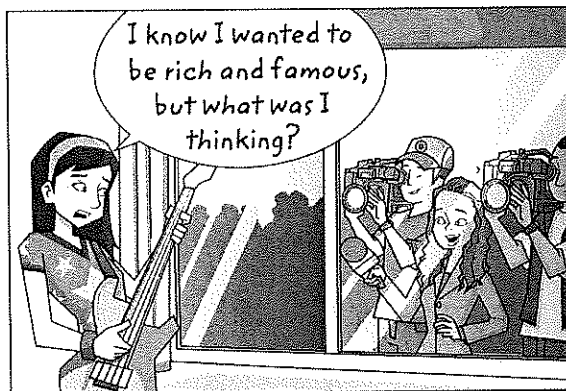
CCSS

RI.8.9: Analyze how a modern work of fiction draws on themes, patterns of events, or character types from myths, traditional stories, or religious works such as the Bible, including describing how the material is rendered new.

Theme: *From Myth to Modern Fiction*

Have you ever read a story and felt that you've heard it before? This might be because authors of fiction often draw on other works for inspiration—including old myths and tales. As a result, modern stories might feature a familiar **pattern of events**, or plot, and **character types**, such as a hero or villain. They might also have a familiar **theme**, or main message. Some themes, such as "true love conquers all," appear in everything from Shakespeare's romances to the movies we watch today. By reinventing classic story lines, authors rework beloved tales in ways modern readers can relate to.

Look at the cartoon below. The left image shows the ancient Greek story of King Midas, who wished that everything he touched turned to gold. The right image shows a modern retelling of this tale. Make notes in the margins about what is similar in both versions.



Read the chart below. Notice the elements that are the same and different in each version.

Element	Traditional Tale	Modern Tale
Theme	Be careful what you wish for.	Be careful what you wish for.
Pattern of events	Granted wish, turns daughter to gold, regrets wish	Granted wish to be famous, has no privacy, regrets wish
Character types	Regretful hero whose greed causes him to lose what he loves most	Regretful heroine whose greed ends up making her life worse

By comparing a modern story to an earlier, traditional version, readers can recognize how certain themes, character types, and events have withstood the test of time. Analyzing the ways in which a modern story updates a legendary one will let you uncover additional layers of meaning and appreciate the new spin authors put on well-known tales.



Read the following legend about the Chinese heroine Hua Mulan.

Genre: Legend

Mulan's Ballad *retold by Josephine Godfrey*

Long ago in ancient China, vicious barbarians invaded the land, causing the emperor to demand that every family provide a soldier to protect the country's borders. Though the emperor was old and frail, he put on his own armor and prepared for battle himself, for he had no son to offer—only a daughter.

Just as the emperor picked up his sword, however, a masked warrior challenged him. "If I defeat you, you must allow me to fight in your place." The challenger swiftly won, and when he removed his mask, the emperor learned that his opponent was actually a *she*—his own daughter, Hua Mulan. Because women were not allowed in the army, Mulan cut off all her hair and dressed in men's clothing to disguise herself.

The war with the barbarians lasted for 12 years. During this time, Mulan rose to the rank of general. Only after the fighting was over did she reveal herself to be the emperor's daughter. Mulan's boldness made her one of China's greatest warriors.

Explore how to answer these questions: "Based on text evidence, what kind of character is Mulan? What theme is suggested by her actions?"

Because the main message is not directly stated, you need to figure out the message of the story. What lesson did you take away from this tale? Key details that describe important events and character traits will help you identify the theme, as well as what type of character Mulan is.

Underline details in the text related to theme, patterns of events, and character types. Then fill in the column for "Mulan's Ballad" below. Complete the last column after reading the story on page 221.

Element	"Mulan's Ballad"	"Helmeted Hero"
Theme		
Pattern of events		
Character types		

With a partner, take turns using text evidence to discuss possible themes for "Mulan's Ballad."



Close Reading

What aspects of the Mulan tale has the author drawn on? **Underline** details about theme, story events, and character types in the text. Then complete the “Helmeted Hero” column in the chart on page 220.

Hint

How is the message suggested in “Helmeted Hero” similar to the message in the story of Mulan? Think about what the characters accomplish and how they accomplish it.

Read the following story, which is set in modern times. Use the Close Reading and the Hint to help you answer the question.

Genre: Realistic Fiction

Helmeted Hero *by Travis Spencer*

Eric sighed as Tony Rogers limped off the field. The Badgers were down by three points with seconds left, and now they were down a man as well. Despite losing his best player, Eric refused to admit defeat to the Barbarians, so he called the last play. The center snapped the ball, and as Eric fell back to pass, he saw an open receiver on the field wearing Tony’s uniform, complete with “Rogers” and “38” on the back. With no time to think, Eric threw the ball and watched the guy take off—to the 30-yard line, the 20, the 10 . . . touchdown!

Hollering with joy, Eric rushed toward his team’s newest hero. But as he grew closer, Eric gasped. The player confirmed his suspicions by removing his helmet to reveal the grinning face of Tony’s sister, Julia.

Circle the correct answer.

How does the author convey the same theme found in the Mulan story?

- A The author creates a parallel between Eric’s football team and the barbarians that invaded China to illustrate the dangers of battle.
- B The author re-imagines Mulan as Eric, a male football player who must win his game even though the odds are against him.
- C The author makes Julia into the Mulan character to show that pretending to be someone else can have terrible consequences.
- D The author features a female character who, like Mulan, overturns expectations about girls by proving her abilities.



Show Your Thinking

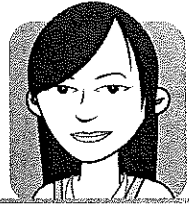
Explain which parallels between the two texts helped you choose your answer.

With a partner, discuss the ways in which “Helmeted Hero” updates the Mulan tale for a modern audience. Is the modern version easier to relate to? Why? Use text details to support your discussion.



Read the two stories that follow. Use the Study Buddies and Close Readings to guide your reading.

Genre: Myth



As I read this myth, I'll think about what kind of character types Theseus, Ariadne, and the Minotaur are. You should underline any details that help show their characteristics.

Close Reading

Some stories have more than one theme. What messages are in this myth? **Circle** two details that help you figure out the themes of "The Labyrinth."

What are the main plot points in this myth? **Put a star (*)** next to the sentences that tell the most important events.

The Labyrinth *by Emily Fowles*

- 1 Long ago in ancient Greece, the great King Minos of Crete built a giant maze called a labyrinth. Inside this complex pathway, he imprisoned a ferocious Minotaur—a creature with the body of a man and the head of a bull. As revenge for his son's death in Athens, every year Minos made the king of Athens choose seven Athenian men and seven women to be locked in the labyrinth and sacrificed to the horrific Minotaur.
- 2 During the third year, a brave warrior named Theseus, son of the king of Athens, volunteered to be among the men chosen to face the Minotaur. He wished to defeat the creature and end his kingdom's sacrifices, no matter the risk to himself. When Theseus arrived in Crete, he told King Minos of his intention to kill the Minotaur, but Minos didn't believe Theseus would succeed.
- 3 What the king did not know, however, was that his daughter Ariadne had fallen in love with the Athenian hero. Unable to bear the thought of losing him to the endless maze, Ariadne provided Theseus with a ball of string. She then instructed him to unwind it as he journeyed through the labyrinth so that he could find his way back to her. Heeding Ariadne's advice, Theseus ventured into the labyrinth alone, leaving a trail of string behind him.
- 4 The maze was a sprawling puzzle, and Theseus struggled to find his way through its twists and turns. Whenever he advanced down the wrong path, he used the string to help him retrace his steps. The sound of the Minotaur's roaring in the distance frightened him, but he kept the image of Ariadne in his mind and steeled his resolve. At last, Theseus entered the heart of the labyrinth, where the Minotaur was waiting for him.
- 5 Man and beast engaged in a long, fierce battle until Theseus finally swung his sword one last time and slew the Minotaur, ending his people's terror once and for all. Then, using the string as a guide, Theseus made his way back through the labyrinth's dark, twisting depths to Ariadne's welcoming arms.



Genre: Realistic Fiction

Of Monsters and Mazes *by Lina Lang*



I know that this story is a modern version of the Theseus myth. As I read, I'll underline any characters that are similar to those in the Greek myth.

Close Reading

Think about the themes you identified in the previous story. **Circle** any details in this story that suggest similar messages.

Are any events in this story the same as or similar to those in "The Labyrinth"? **Draw a box** around two such events.

- 1 Wow. Thea stared at the maze of hallways with wide eyes as a congested flow of students passed by her on each side. She had never before set foot in a school this huge, but her family's move across the state had left her with no choice. Her dad had landed an amazing job opportunity, so she had agreed to sacrifice all her old friends and everything she loved for the good of her family. Even though Thea knew she was doing the right thing, however, it didn't stop her from feeling frightened and overwhelmed.
- 2 Thea glanced down at the school map she held in her hands. Her boyfriend Aaron had emailed it to her last night. He had said that he found it online and hoped it would make her journey to this confusing new place a little easier. Thea sighed. All she wanted was to spend time with Aaron right now, but he was hundreds of miles away, and she was stuck in a labyrinth of orange lockers. And now she had less than five minutes to find her way to her first-period Biology class, where the dreaded Mrs. Minerva awaited her. The student aide in the front office had given Thea a warning about the teacher when she had picked up her class schedule—the word *monster* had been mentioned.
- 3 Thea navigated through the endless hallways, using the map to guide her. Each one looked the same—rows of lockers and doors that were carbon copies of each other. Even with the map, she found herself making wrong turns and having to retrace her steps. The bell rang and Thea groaned, anticipating the battle that would inevitably occur when she walked into class late.
- 4 When she reached room 201, Thea gathered her courage and prepared to face the teacher's wrath. But as she opened the door, a smiling face greeted her. "You must be Thea!" Mrs. Minerva said. "I'm so glad you didn't get totally lost—this school is a maze!" In shock, Thea sat down at an empty desk. *Some monster*, she thought, realizing the aide had just been messing with the "new kid." Thea couldn't wait for the day to end so she could tell Aaron about her epic "battle" and how she heroically conquered her fear. But first she'd have to use that map to find the exit!



Hints

Which answer choice best represents the similarities between the two stories?

Look back at the details you circled in the two texts. What message is common to both stories?

Keep in mind that events and characters can be parallel even though they have differences. How is the basic plot line of the two stories the same?

Use the Hints on this page to help you answer the questions.

- 1 What aspects of the Theseus and the Minotaur myth has the author of "Of Monsters and Mazes" drawn from to tell Thea's story?
 - A She puts Thea in a situation in which she must use a ball of string to help her escape.
 - B She implies that Thea's father and King Minos have similar motives.
 - C She updates Theseus as Thea, Ariadne as Aaron, the Minotaur as Mrs. Minerva, and the labyrinth as the new school.
 - D She portrays Ariadne as Aaron and has Aaron defy his father in order to help Thea find her way through the labyrinth.
- 2 What shared theme is suggested by Theseus's and Thea's situations?
 - A It is important to ask for help when you are in a difficult position.
 - B True courage involves facing your fears and making sacrifices.
 - C Disobeying your parents can get you into a lot of serious trouble.
 - D You should not always believe what you hear about someone.
- 3 Describe how the plot of "Of Monsters and Mazes" reinterprets the myth of Theseus and the Minotaur to tell a new story. Use two details from each story in your response.



Read the two stories. Then answer the questions that follow.

Oedipus and the Sphinx

adapted by Alice Denbrough

1 In the tales of ancient gods and goddesses, heroes and monsters, there was a wandering traveler by the name of Oedipus who journeyed aimlessly through the countryside in the hope of eluding his destiny. After a number of years traveling, he one day arrived at the exalted city of Thebes, whose gates were barred to prevent anyone from entering or leaving.

2 A horrific creature called the Sphinx guarded these gates. She had the body of a lion, wings of an eagle, and the head of a human woman. The Sphinx allowed no one passage through the gates . . . not without first answering a riddle. If the person could not give the correct answer, the Sphinx would devour him. For many years, the brave and the foolish stood before the Sphinx and demanded she pose her riddle. None had given the correct answer, and therefore none had survived the challenge. The city of Thebes continued to be isolated from the rest of the world.

3 Then came the day Oedipus stood before the Sphinx. "I request admittance into the city," he said.

4 "No one may enter Thebes," the Sphinx replied, "without first answering my riddle."

5 Oedipus was a well-traveled man who had seen a great many things in his days. He felt confident he could answer the Sphinx's riddle—and if not, he kept his hand resting on the hilt of his sword.

6 "Then ask," he said, "for I do not fear any test you might put before me."

7 The Sphinx had not eaten in many weeks, and so she rose to her full, fearsome height, eager to have her next meal. "What walks on four legs in the morning, two legs at noon, and three legs in the evening?"

8 This gave Oedipus pause, since he'd seen all manner of beasts, from the winged to the finned to the hoofed, but never had he seen a creature such as this. The Sphinx read the hesitation in the man's face and knew she had bested another.

9 But then, a thought came to Oedipus. "It is man. Man crawls on all fours as a baby (in the morning), walks on two legs during adulthood (at noon), and leans on a cane in his old age (in the evening)."

10 He had done it. He'd answered correctly, and the Sphinx was so enraged that someone had finally answered her riddle that she flung herself off the city walls and down into the sea, where she was never seen or heard from again.

11 The city gates of Thebes were opened once again, and the city's inhabitants hailed Oedipus as a hero for ridding them of the terrible monster that had kept them prisoners for so long.



from *The Grey King*

by Susan Cooper

The Grey King is part of Susan Cooper's *The Dark Is Rising* sequence of popular fantasy novels that are steeped in classic Welsh and Celtic mythology. This volume of the series tells the story of 12-year-old Will Stanton, who is sent to a farm in Wales to recuperate from a terrible illness but soon discovers that he is really an "Old One" of legend doing battle against modern-day dark forces.

In the following scene, Will and his new friend Bran have begun a quest to find a Golden Harp, whose music will help them defeat "The Dark." They find themselves in a dimly-lit chamber where three hooded figures pose riddles the boys must answer in order to prove themselves worthy of the harp.

1 The soft-voiced lord in the lightest robe, who had spoken first, swiftly stood. His cloak swirled round him like a blue mist; bright eyes glinted from the thin pale face glimmering in the hood.

2 "Answer the three riddles as the law demands, Old One, you and the White Crow your helper there, and the harp shall be yours. But if you answer wrong, the doors of rock shall close, and you be left [defenseless] on the cold mountain, and the harp shall be lost to the Light forever."

3 "We shall answer," Will said. . . .

4 The hall seemed darker, filled with dancing shadows from the flickering light of the fire. A sudden flash and crackle came from behind the boys, as a log fell and the flames leapt up; instinctively Will glanced back. When he turned forward again, the third figure, who had not spoken or moved until now, was standing tall and silent before his throne. His robe was a deep, deep blue, darkest of the three, and his hood was pulled so far forward that there was no hint of his face visible, but only shadow.

5 His voice was deep and resonant, like the voice of a cello, and it brought music into the hall.

6 "Will Stanton," it said, "what is the shore that fears the sea?"

7 Will started impulsively forward, his hands clenching into fists, for this voice caught into the deepest part of him. Surely, surely . . . but the face in the hood was hidden, and he was denied all ways of recognition. Any part of his senses that tried to reach out to the great thrones met a blank wall of refusal from the High Magic. Once more Will gave up, and put his mind to the riddle.

8 He said slowly, "The shore that fears the sea . . ."

9 Images wavered in and out of his mind: great crashing waves against a rocky coast . . . the green light in the ocean, the realm of Tethys, where strange creatures may live . . . a gentler sea then, washing in long slow waves an endless golden beach. The shore . . . the beach . . . the beach . . .

10 The image wavered and changed. It dissolved into a green dappled forest of gnarled ancient trees, their broad trunks smooth with a curious light grey bark. Their leaves danced above, new, soft bright with a delicate green that had in it all of springtime. The beginnings of triumph whispered in Will's mind.



11 “The shore,” he said. “The beach where the sea washes. But also it is a wood, of lovely fine grain, that is in the handle of a chisel and the legs of a chair, the head of a broom and the pad of a workhorse saddle. And I dare swear too that those two chests between your thrones are carved of it. The only places where it may not be used are beneath the open sky and upon the open sea, for this wood loses its virtue if soaked by water. The answer to your riddle, my lord, is the wood of the beech tree.”

12 The flames leaped up in the fire behind them, and suddenly the hall was brilliant. Joy and relief seemed to surge through the air. The first two blue-robed lords rose from their thrones to stand beside the third; like three towers they loomed hooded over the boys. Then the third lord flung back the hood of his deep blue robe, to reveal a fierce hawk-nosed head with deepset eyes and a shock of wild white hair. And the High Magic’s barrier against recognition fell away.

13 Will cried joyously, “Merriman!”

With this riddle and two others answered correctly, the hooded lord reveals his true identity to be Merriman Lyon, the first Old One and one of Will’s greatest allies. Merriman bequeaths the Golden Harp to Will and Bran, but their quest is still far from over.

Answer Form**1**

How are the story events in “Oedipus and the Sphinx” mirrored in the modern tale of *The Grey King*?

1 (A) (B) (C) (D)

2 (A) (B) (C) (D)

3 (A) (B) (C) (D)

**Number
Correct****3**

- A** Will and Bran will also be eaten by the Sphinx if they fail the challenge of the hooded figures.
- B** Both Oedipus and Will Stanton must rely on their sword training to defeat their enemies.
- C** The text implies that the hooded figures Will encounters are similar to the isolated residents of Thebes.
- D** The heroes in both stories must answer riddles correctly before continuing on their quests.

2

How is the character of Will Stanton an updated version of Oedipus?

- A** Will attempts to win the Golden Harp while Oedipus attempts to enter a guarded city.
- B** Will grows angry that his quest is delayed while Oedipus remains patient.
- C** Will and Oedipus are sons of great warriors who travel the lands looking for adventure.
- D** Will and Oedipus have faced winged, finned, and hooved beasts.



3 What shared theme is suggested by the outcomes of the two riddle challenges?

- A** You need strong allies in order to come out victorious.
- B** Cheating is acceptable if it's for a good reason.
- C** Thinking creatively can have great rewards.
- D** A true hero faces adversity for the sake of glory.

4 Citing at least **three** specific story events or character types from the text, write about how the excerpt from *The Grey King* could be considered a modern retelling of the Sphinx myth.

**Self Check**

Go back and see what you can check off on the Self Check on page 217.

Lesson 13

Lesson 13 Using Context Clues

2003
LEARNER: Use context clues to determine the meaning of unfamiliar words.

Sometimes as you read, you may come to a word or a phrase that you don't understand. Often, you can determine the meaning of an unfamiliar word from its context, the words and sentences around it.

- Different kinds of context clues help readers figure out the meanings of words.

Context Clue	Signal Words	Example
Definition	<i>is, or, which is, means</i>	The land pulls in opposite directions along a <u>fault</u> , which is a crack in the earth's crust.
Example	<i>for example, for instance, such as</i>	Geoscientists, such as geologists and paleontologists, <u>study earthquakes</u> .
Comparison	<i>like, similar, also, as well</i>	Like a large earthquake, smaller seismic events may also be destructive.
Contrast	<i>but, or yet, in spite of, however, whereas, although</i>	In spite of the chaos caused by an earthquake, order is eventually restored.

- A word's position and function in a sentence can also be a clue to its meaning. What is the meaning of *geomotrogomy* in this sentence?

Scientists measure the *geomotrogomy* of earthquakes.

Geomotrogomy isn't a real word! But if it were, you could figure out something about its meaning from its use in the sentence. Since it comes after the word *the*, you know that *geomotrogomy* is a noun. And because of its use in the sentence, you also know that it is probably an observable "thing"—something scientists can measure.

Exercise Underline the context clue that can help you figure out the meaning of each underlined word or phrase. Write the meaning on a separate piece of paper.

Hint:

A context clue is often in the same sentence as an unfamiliar word. The clue may also be in a sentence that comes before or after the sentence that includes the difficult word.

Before they strike land, tornadoes can often be detected by Doppler radar, an electronic system that measures wind speeds. A tornado begins when a wind system forms a huge vortex. This formation is similar to water swirling toward a drain. This condition may trigger multiple tornadoes, which may occur simultaneously or one after the other. Whereas many regions are fairly safe from tornadoes, others are susceptible to them. Communities in tornado-prone areas try to mitigate their risk. For instance, they establish public warning systems.

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Common Core Practice

For numbers 1–4, use context clues to answer the questions about each paragraph.

Answer Form

1 Ⓐ Ⓑ Ⓒ Ⓓ
2 Ⓐ Ⓑ Ⓒ Ⓓ
3 Ⓐ Ⓑ Ⓒ Ⓓ
4 Ⓐ Ⓑ Ⓒ Ⓓ

Number
Correct / 4

The wind velocity, or speed of motion, in a violent tornado can reach 300 miles per hour. The effects of such a storm can be catastrophic, killing people and destroying wildlife. Within as little as a few seconds, a tornado can devastate a town in its path.

- 1 What does the word *velocity* mean in the paragraph?

A position
B change in direction
C swiftness
D size of something

- 2 What does the word *catastrophic* mean in the paragraph?

A dynamic
B productive
C tragic
D plentiful

When weather forecasters predict a tornado, it is advisable for people threatened by the storm to find safe shelter. If the storm destroys property, emergency workers will do their best to accommodate storm victims. For example, they will set up shelters for those who lost homes.

- 3 What does the word *accommodate* mean?

A to provide with something needed
B to soothe and comfort
C to give necessary information
D to investigate in order to report on

- 4 What words from the paragraph helped you figure out the meaning of *accommodate*?

A "When weather forecasters predict a tornado"
B "people threatened by the storm"
C "emergency workers will do their best"
D "set up shelters for those who lost homes"

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Lesson 13: Using Context Clues

Guided Practice, page 265

Responses will vary. Sample answers:

- Doppler radar: an electronic system that measures wind speeds; definition same as clue
- vortex: formation is similar to water swirling toward a drain; a swirling formation
- simultaneously: or one after the other; at the same time—not one after the other
- susceptible: Whereas...fairly safe from tornadoes; vulnerable to—not safe from
- mitigate: For instance, they establish public warning systems; lessen

Common Core Practice, page 266

- C
- C
- A
- D

Lesson 13

Using Context Clues

CCSS

L.9.4.a: Use context (e.g., the overall meaning of a sentence or paragraph; a word's position or function in a sentence) as a clue to the meaning of a word or phrase.



Introduction

Sometimes as you read, you may come to a word or a phrase that you don't understand. Often, you can determine the meaning of an unfamiliar word from its context, the words and sentences around it.

- Different kinds of context clues help readers figure out the meanings of words.

Context Clue	Signal Words	Example
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- A word's position and function in a sentence can also be a clue to its meaning. What is the meaning of *geometrogomy* in this sentence?

Scientists measure the geometrogomy of earthquakes.

Geometrogomy isn't a real word! But if it were, you could figure out something about its meaning from its use in the sentence. Since it comes after the word *the*, you know that *geometrogomy* is a noun. And because of its use in the sentence, you also know that it is probably an observable "thing"—something scientists can measure.



Guided Practice

Underline the context clue that can help you figure out the meaning of each underlined word or phrase. Write the meaning on a separate piece of paper.

Hint

A context clue is often in the same sentence as an unfamiliar word. The clue may also be in a sentence that comes before or after the sentence that includes the difficult word.

Before they strike land, tornadoes can often be detected by Doppler radar, an electronic system that measures wind speeds. A tornado begins when a wind system forms a huge vortex. This formation is similar to water swirling toward a drain. This condition may trigger multiple tornadoes, which may occur simultaneously or one after the other. Whereas many regions are fairly safe from tornadoes, others are susceptible to them. Communities in tornado-prone areas try to mitigate their risk. For instance, they establish public warning systems.



For numbers 1–4, use context clues to answer the questions about each paragraph.

The wind velocity, or speed of motion, in a violent tornado can reach 300 miles per hour. The effects of such a storm can be catastrophic, killing people and destroying wildlife. Within as little as a few seconds, a tornado can devastate a town in its path.

- 1 What does the word velocity mean in the paragraph?
- A position
 - B change in direction
 - C swiftness
 - D size of something
- 2 What does the word catastrophic mean in the paragraph?
- A dynamic
 - B productive
 - C tragic
 - D plentiful

Answer Form

1 (A) (B) (C) (D)

2 (A) (B) (C) (D)

3 (A) (B) (C) (D)

4 (A) (B) (C) (D)

**Number
Correct** / 4

When weather forecasters predict a tornado, it is advisable for people threatened by the storm to find safe shelter. If the storm destroys property, emergency workers will do their best to accommodate storm victims. For example, they will set up shelters for those who lost homes.

- 3 What does the word accommodate mean?
- A to provide with something needed
 - B to soothe and comfort
 - C to give necessary information
 - D to investigate in order to report on
- 4 What words from the paragraph helped you figure out the meaning of accommodate?
- A "When weather forecasters predict a tornado"
 - B "people threatened by the storm"
 - C "emergency workers will do their best"
 - D "set up shelters for those who lost homes"

Lesson 19

Denotation and Connotation

CCSS

L.8.5.c: Distinguish among the connotations (associations) of words with similar denotations (definitions) (e.g., *bullheaded*, *willful*, *firm*, *persistent*, *resolute*).



Introduction

Words can have two kinds of meanings that convey very different ideas or images. A word's **denotation** is its basic meaning, or dictionary definition. A word's **connotation** is the feeling or impression that people associate with the word.

- A word can have a **positive**, **negative**, or **neutral** connotation. When you write, think about the connotations of the words you choose and the effect they will have on your readers.

Positive Connotation	Neutral Connotation	Negative Connotation
Several people <u>lingered</u> in the theater after auditions.	Several people <u>stayed</u> in the theater after auditions.	Several people <u>loitered</u> in the theater after auditions.
My aunt picked me up in her <u>compact</u> two-door car.	My aunt picked me up in her <u>small</u> two-door car.	My aunt picked me up in her <u>cramped</u> two-door car.

- To say that a car is **small** is a neutral statement about the car. A car that is **compact**, however, can fit everything you need into just a small space. This word has a positive connotation. A **cramped** car, on the other hand, conjures images of tightly squeezed passengers and belongings. The connotation is negative.



Guided Practice

Read each sentence. Each underlined word has a neutral or a positive connotation. Write a word that has a negative connotation to replace each underlined word.

Hint

Words that have the same, or a similar, denotation are synonyms. You can use a thesaurus to find the synonyms for each underlined word. Then choose and write the synonym that has a negative connotation.

- It was adventurous of me to try out for the role of villain.

- I'm quiet and shy, and the character is powerful.

- My best friend was surprised that I was so firm in my decision.

- I nervously held the script as I read my first lines. _____
- My right leg shook as I faced the hero. _____
- When offered the part, I deliberated for a while. _____
- But then I decided that I had spent too much time being shy.

- Sometimes, I wonder what kind of silliness I'll try next.



For numbers 1–3, which word has the same denotation as the underlined word but has a more negative connotation?

1 The director was unpredictable in his reactions to the actors and scenes.

- A** changeable
- B** volatile
- C** whimsical
- D** variable

2 The actors felt that the director's comments were sometimes clever.

- A** perceptive
- B** insightful
- C** keen
- D** shrewd

3 The director's feedback excited the actors.

- A** agitated
- B** inspired
- C** invigorated
- D** energized

Answer Form

1 (A) (B) (C) (D)

2 (A) (B) (C) (D)

3 (A) (B) (C) (D)

4 (A) (B) (C) (D)

5 (A) (B) (C) (D)

**Number
Correct** / **5**

For numbers 4 and 5, which word has the same denotation as the underlined word but has a more positive connotation?

4 The director's great arrogance made it difficult for him to compromise in his way of doing things.

- A** conceit
- B** smugness
- C** confidence
- D** haughtiness

5 At the end of the rehearsals, the actors admitted that this director brought out the best in them.

- A** declared
- B** confessed
- C** gossiped
- D** vented

Lesson 13

Using Context Clues

CCSS

L.8.4.a: Use context (e.g., the overall meaning of a sentence or paragraph; a word's position or function in a sentence) as a clue to the meaning of a word or phrase.



Introduction

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For numbers 1–4, use context clues to answer the questions about each paragraph.

Answer Form

1 (A) (B) (C) (D)

2 (A) (B) (C) (D)

3 (A) (B) (C) (D)

4 (A) (B) (C) (D)

**Number
Correct** / 4

The wind velocity, or speed of motion, in a violent tornado can reach 300 miles per hour. The effects of such a storm can be catastrophic, killing people and destroying wildlife. Within as little as a few seconds, a tornado can devastate a town in its path.

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- B** change in direction
- C** swiftness
- D** size of something

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- A** dynamic
- B** productive
- C** tragic
- D** plentiful

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- D** to investigate in order to report on

4 What words from the paragraph helped you figure out the meaning of accommodate?

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- B** "people threatened by the storm"
- C** "emergency workers will do their best"
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