

Grade 6 Playlist: Determine How the Central Idea Is Conveyed Through Details

Aligns with CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RI.6.2:

- Determine a central idea of a text and how it is conveyed through particular details; provide a summary of the text distinct from personal opinions or judgments.

Welcome

Clear informative texts are typically organized around one or more central ideas. These central ideas are then supported by details, facts, and evidence. This playlist will explain how to determine the central idea of the late British parliamentarian David Lloyd George's short speech describing what he believes to be the causes of British participation in World War I.

Objectives

In this playlist, students will learn how to:

- determine the central idea of a text.
- determine how a central idea is conveyed through particular details.

Background: The Origins of World War I

In August 1914, the major countries of Europe went to war. The immediate cause of the war was the assassination of the heir to the Austrian Empire's throne, Duke Franz Ferdinand, by Serbian nationalists. But the war had actually been simmering for decades. Germany, which emerged as a new and powerful nation in 1871, had disrupted the balance of power Britain had been maintaining for several decades. Also, in the same year, Germany had defeated France in a short war, making the French eager for revenge. Making matters worse, the new Germany had made a number of attempts to gain colonies and increase its influence in Europe and around the world in the decades before the war. This often brought Germany into near conflict with other countries like France, Spain, and especially Britain.

When the Austrian duke was killed, Europe was already anxious about increasing German power. Austria, who wanted to avenge the murder, made several harsh demands on Serbia. These demands were designed to force a fight. Germany used its strength to support Austria in this effort. But the small war Austria wanted with Serbia would prove impossible because the countries of Europe had spent decades creating military alliances with each other. These alliances instructed partner countries to declare war if the other were attacked. The invasion of Serbia by Austria, therefore, set off a chain reaction of war declarations around the continent. Most people at the time believed the war would be over in weeks or months. They were sadly mistaken; the war lasted until November 1918 and killed nearly a generation of young European men.

Watch!

For more background information on World War I, watch the following video:

- <https://www.opened.com/video/world-history-causes-of-world-war-i-youtube/425113>



Exploring the Standard

A Closer Look: Central Idea

Read “Causes of the Great War,” a speech by David Lloyd George. Then, look at how the central idea of the speech is determined.

¹It is a satisfaction for Britain in these terrible times that no share of the responsibility for these events rests on her.

²She is not the Jonah in this storm. The part taken by our country in this conflict, in its origin, and in its conduct, has been as honourable and chivalrous as any part ever taken in any country in any operation.

³We might imagine from declarations which were made by the Germans, aye! and even by a few people in this country, who are constantly referring to our German comrades, that this terrible war was wantonly and wickedly provoked by England—never Scotland—never Wales—and never Ireland.

⁴Wantonly provoked by England to increase her possessions, and to destroy the influence, the power, and the prosperity of a dangerous rival.

⁵There never was a more foolish travesty of the actual facts. It happened three years ago, or less, but there have been so many bewildering events crowded into those intervening years that some people might have forgotten, perhaps, some of the essential facts, and it is essential that we should now and again restate them, not merely to refute the calumniators of our native land, but in order to sustain the hearts of her people by the unswerving conviction that no part of the guilt of this terrible bloodshed rests on the conscience of their native land.

⁶What are the main facts? There were six countries which entered the war at the beginning. Britain was last, and not the first.

⁷Before she entered the war Britain made every effort to avoid it; begged, supplicated, and entreated that there should be no conflict.

⁸I was a member of the Cabinet at the time, and I remember the earnest endeavours we made to persuade Germany and Austria not to precipitate Europe into this welter of blood. We begged them to summon a European conference to consider.

⁹Had that conference met arguments against provoking such a catastrophe were so overwhelming that there would never have been a war. Germany knew that, so she rejected the conference, although Austria was prepared to accept it. She suddenly declared war, and yet we are the people who wantonly provoked this war, in order to attack Germany.

¹⁰We begged Germany not to attack Belgium, and produced a treaty, signed by the King of Prussia, as well as the King of England, pledging himself to protect Belgium against an invader, and we said, “If you invade Belgium we shall have no alternative but to defend it.”

¹¹The enemy invaded Belgium, and now they say, “Why, forsooth, you, England, provoked this war.”

¹²It is not quite the story of the wolf and the lamb. I will tell you why—because Germany expected to find a lamb and found a lion.

