

Grade 6 Playlist: Provide an Objective Summary

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

A good objective summary identifies the important details of a text and weeds out the less important details. Knowing which details are key requires a comprehensive understanding the central idea of the text and how details are marshaled to support it. This playlist will use an excerpt about the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor in 1941 to practice writing an objective summary.

Objectives

In this playlist, students will learn how to:

- determine the central idea of a text and its important details in order to write a summary of the text.
- identify opinions and judgements in a summary.
- draft an objective summary.

Review

Key Term

- An **objective summary** does not include the opinions of the writer about the topic or the text.

Exploring the Standard

Knowing how to write a summary that is free of bias is an important skill to develop. When objectively summarizing a text, readers should keep in mind that a summary of a text includes the central idea and key details from the text that support the central idea. The summary leaves out any personal opinions.

Therefore, when writing a summary of a text, readers should do the following:

- Determine the central idea. Readers cannot figure out which details to include in a summary without first determining the central idea.
- Determine that the selected details clearly support the central idea. While looking at each detail, readers can ask: *Would the main idea be clear in a summary of a text if this detail is left out?*
- Make sure that the summary does not include a reader's opinions, such as personal thoughts regarding who is right and who is wrong.



A Closer Look: Determining the Central Idea and Important Details

The text relays information about Japan's 1941 attack on the U.S. Navy at Pearl Harbor, which succeeded in bringing the United States into World War II.

Read the following excerpt from "Foreword," from *Investigation of the Pearl Harbor Attack* by Alben W. Barkley, and consider what the central idea is and what the most important details are.

¹On Sunday morning, December 7, 1941, the United States and Japan were at peace. Japanese ambassadors were in Washington in conversation with our diplomatic officials looking to a general settlement of differences in the Pacific.

²At 7:55 a.m. (Hawaiian time) over 300 Japanese planes launched from 6 aircraft carriers attacked the island of Oahu and the American Pacific Fleet at Pearl Harbor in the Territory of Hawaii. Within a period of less than 2 hours our military and naval forces suffered a total of 3,435 casualties in personnel and the loss of or severe damage to: 188 planes of all types, 8 battleships, 3 light cruisers, and 4 miscellaneous vessels.

³The attack was well planned and skillfully executed. The Japanese raiders withdrew from the attack and were recovered by the carriers without the latter being detected, having suffered losses of less than 100 in personnel, 29 planes, and 5 midget submarines which had been dispatched from mother craft that coordinated their attack with that of the planes.

⁴One hour after Japanese air and naval forces had struck the Territory of Hawaii the emissaries of Japan delivered to the Secretary of State a reply to a recent American note, a reply containing no suggestion of attack by Japan upon the United States. With the benefit of information now available it is known that the Japanese military had planned for many weeks the unprovoked and ambitious act of December 7.

⁵The Pyrrhic victory of having executed the attack with surprise, cunning, and deceit belongs to the war lords of Japan whose dreams of conquest were buried in the ashes of Hiroshima and Nagasaki. History will properly place responsibility for Pearl Harbor upon the military clique dominating the people of Japan at the time. Indeed, this responsibility Premier Tojo himself has already assumed.

Reading through the text, readers can determine that its central idea is that Japan led an unplanned attack on Pearl Harbor. Here is a list of details of varying importance that help to support this idea:

- Japan and the U.S. were officially at peace moments before the attack.
- Japanese and U.S. diplomats were working on a settlement together.
- At 7:55 a.m., over 300 Japanese planes launched from six aircraft carriers attacked the American Pacific Fleet at Pearl Harbor.
- In less than two hours, the U.S. suffered 3,435 casualties, the loss of 188 planes of all types, eight battleships, three light cruisers, and four miscellaneous vessels.
- The attack was well planned and skillfully executed.

