

Grade 6 Complete Playlists for Reading: Informational Texts

This resource bundle aligns with all of the Common Core State Standards for Grade 6 Reading: Informational Texts. We have included ten of our playlists—content-rich tools that use trusted textual, audio, visual, and multimedia resources to supplement high-quality instruction in specific elements of the Common Core—to guide students through each of the relevant standards for the literature and informational text reading strands of English Language Arts.

Each playlist is designed for 30–45 minutes of instructional time and is followed by a rigorous self-check for students. Alternatively you could assign individual student playlists as homework or remedial/extension activities.

The Common Core State Standards for English Language Arts are not intended to be taught in sequential order, and neither are these playlists. Instead, you should feel free to dip in and out of these resources as your instructional needs dictate.

Standard Coverage Notes:

- Standard RI.6.2 is covered across two playlists: one focuses on objective summaries and the other focuses on how the central idea is conveyed through details.
- There is no playlist for RI.6.10. As your students work through the other standards, they will read and comprehend a range of literary nonfiction within the grade 6 text-complexity band.

The accompanying Student Editions include dozens of additional passages on which students can practice their reading skills, including the ability to identify key ideas and details, to analyze craft and structure, and to integrate knowledge and ideas presented in a variety of media and genres. Stepped-out examples and hyperlinks to videos, graphic organizers, and other activities further support instruction.

Thank you for trusting Wisewire to help your students become better readers and lifelong learners! Visit us online for even more resources and to access our free to use computer-based assessment platform.



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.



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.



Grade 6 Playlist: Tracing and Evaluating an Argument

Aligns with *CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RI.6.8*:

- Trace and evaluate the argument and specific claims in a text, distinguishing claims that are supported by reasons and evidence from claims that are not.

Welcome

Nancy is reading an article about the solar system in a science magazine. The article includes many facts that Nancy did not know before, such as, “The Sun is the largest object in the solar system. It contains over 99 percent of the entire solar system’s mass.” While Nancy already knew that the Sun was larger than any of the planets, she never would have thought it was *that* much larger. She also read in the article, “The Earth is the only planet that is capable of harboring life because it is the only planet whose atmosphere contains oxygen.” Nancy knew that animals need oxygen to breathe, so this statement definitely makes sense. And she read, “The solar system was formed when a massive molecular cloud collapsed billions of years ago.” Now, this is interesting, but it leaves Nancy wondering how scientists learned this. What evidence supports this claim?

As a reader, Nancy can evaluate, or think about, the argument in the article to determine the author’s claims and whether or not these claims are supported and accurate. Nancy can also judge the importance of evidence and reasons in supporting a claim. She can distinguish claims that are properly supported from those that are not.

Objectives

In this playlist, students will learn how to:

- trace and evaluate an argument and specific claims in a text.
- distinguish claims that are supported by reasons and evidence from claims that are not.

Review

Key Terms

- In an **argument**, an author states a position on a subject and explains why the reader should share that position. The author makes **claims**, or statements that he or she wants the reader to believe. An author’s claims must be:
 - **credible**, meaning that they can be easily believed and trusted.
 - free from **bias**, which is a point of view based entirely on opinion rather than on facts.
- Authors use **evidence** to support their claims so that readers are more likely to believe them. Evidence can take many forms: statistics, expert opinions, and quotes from documents and studies, for example.



- When reading an author’s argument, the reader first **traces** the argument to determine the claims the author makes and the evidence that supports those claims. Then, after the claims and evidence are determined, the reader **evaluates** the argument, determining whether or not it is strong enough to convince the reader to agree with the author’s position.

Exploring the Standard

A Closer Look: Tracing and Evaluating an Argument

An author can make many claims in a text, but most texts have one main argument that these claims support. These three steps show how to trace an argument:

1. Identify what is being argued.
2. Determine which claims support the argument.
3. Determine which evidence supports these claims.

Hint!

If a text is several paragraphs long, the author may include one claim in each paragraph. Readers should know that the sentences in a text that do not state the author’s argument or make claims usually provide support for the argument or claims.

A reader can evaluate an argument by looking carefully at the evidence that supports both the claims and the overall argument. The evidence that supports a claim or argument should come from a credible source that is not biased. The most credible sources are academic journals, university websites, and materials published by institutions such as hospitals, museums, and government agencies. Newspapers and news magazines are usually credible sources, but in some cases, articles can include bias. Blogs and other personal websites are not as reliable, for the most part, unless they are owned and written by people who are experts in the subjects they write about. In these cases, the information contained in blogs and personal websites is usually trustworthy. When writing a text, the author wants his or her own text to be credible also. Using evidence from sources that are not credible can hurt an author’s credibility and weaken his or her argument.

Watch!

This video further discusses claims, reasons, and evidence and how each is used in an argument:

- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3571UcZIFyc>

Read the following example, which is a newspaper editorial asking whether or not students should be allowed to bring their cell phones to class. While reading, follow the three steps: identify the argument, determine the author’s claims, and determine the evidence and reasons that support those claims. Are any claims not supported by evidence and reasons?

