



Summarize, Paraphrase, and Synthesize

R/S Figure 19(E) Summarize, paraphrase, and synthesize texts in ways that maintain meaning and logical order within a text and across texts.

R Figure 19(F) Make connections (e.g., thematic links, author analysis) between and across multiple texts of various genres, and provide textual evidence.

Understand the TEKS

Summarize, paraphrase, and synthesize to help you understand a text.

To **summarize** is to retell the main ideas of a text in your own words. Summaries should be brief.

Your summary should:

- include only important ideas
- be free from opinions or judgments about the text
- be stated in your own words
- describe events in order
- cover the beginning, middle, and end of a text

To **paraphrase** is to restate an author's ideas. A paraphrase can include details in order to express the author's point. However, a paraphrase should not use the author's words.

To **synthesize** is to make connections to better understand the big picture. As you read, think about how the text relates to:

- other texts
- your life
- the world

Apply these ideas to both fictional and informational texts. You can summarize fiction to make sure that you understand the plot. You can paraphrase ideas in an essay to better understand the author's point of view. You can synthesize a text by relating it to other texts, or to what you already know. By summarizing, paraphrasing, and synthesizing, you will check your understanding of the author's meaning.



Did You Know?

Comprehension As you finish reading each paragraph, try to summarize it in one sentence.



★ Practice

Read the selections below. Then answer the questions that follow them.

Excerpt from *Indian Boyhood* (1)

by Ohiyesa (Charles A. Eastman)

- 1 After I left my cradle, I almost walked away from it, [my grandmother] told me. She then began calling my attention to natural objects. Whenever I heard the song of a bird, she would tell me what bird it came from, something after this fashion:
- 2 "Hakadah, listen to Shechoka (the robin) calling his mate. He says he has just found something good to eat." Or "Listen to Oopehanska (the thrush); he is singing for his little wife. He will sing his best." When in the evening the whippoorwill started his song with vim, no further than a stone's throw from our tent in the woods, she would say to me:
- 3 "Hush! It may be an Ojibway scout!"
- 4 Again, when I waked at midnight, she would say:
- 5 "Do not cry! Hinakaga (the owl) is watching you from the tree-top."
- 6 I usually covered up my head, for I had perfect faith in my grandmother's admonitions, and she had given me a dreadful idea of this bird. It was one of her legends that a little boy was once standing just outside of the teepee (tent), crying vigorously for his mother, when Hinakaga swooped down in the darkness and carried the poor little fellow up into the trees. It was well known that the hoot of the owl was commonly imitated by Indian¹ scouts when on the war-path. There had been dreadful massacres immediately following this call. Therefore it was deemed wise to impress the sound early upon the mind of the child.
- 7 Indian children were trained so that they hardly ever cried much in the night. This was very expedient and necessary in their exposed life. In my infancy it was my grandmother's custom to put me to sleep, as she said, with the birds, and to waken me with them, until it became a habit. She did this with an object in view. An Indian must always rise early. In the first place, as a hunter, he finds his game best at daybreak. Secondly, other tribes, when on the war-path, usually make their attack very early in the morning. Even when our people are moving about leisurely, we like to rise before daybreak, in order to travel when the air is cool, and unobserved, perchance, by our enemies.
- 8 . . . My babyhood was full of interest and the beginnings of life's realities. The spirit of daring was already whispered into my ears. The value of the eagle feather as worn by the warrior had caught my eye. One day, when I was left alone, at scarcely two years of age, I took my uncle's war bonnet and plucked out all its eagle feathers to decorate my dog and myself. So soon the life that was about me had made its impress, and already I desired intensely to comply with all of its demands.

¹Native American

Excerpt from *Indian Boyhood* (2)

by Ohiyesa (Charles A. Eastman)

1 As a motherless child, I always regarded my good grandmother as the wisest of guides and the best of protectors. It was not long before I began to realize her superiority to most of her contemporaries. This idea was not gained entirely from my own observation, but also from a knowledge of the high regard in which she was held by other women. Aside from her native talent and ingenuity, she was endowed with a truly wonderful memory. No other midwife in her day and tribe could compete with her in skill and judgment. Her observations in practice were all preserved in her mind for reference, as systematically as if they had been written upon the pages of a note-book.

2 I distinctly recall one occasion when she took me with her into the woods in search of certain medicinal roots.

3 “. . . Why did you not dig those plants that we saw in the woods, of the same kind that you are digging now?”

4 “For the same reason that we do not like the berries we find in the shadow of deep woods as well as the ones which grow in sunny places. The latter have more sweetness and flavor. Those herbs which have medicinal virtues should be sought in a place that is neither too wet nor too dry, and where they have a generous amount of sunshine to maintain their vigor.

5 “Some day Ohiyesa will be old enough to know the secrets of medicine; then I will tell him all. But if you should grow up to be a bad man, I must withhold these treasures from you and give them to your brother, for a medicine man must be a good and wise man. I hope Ohiyesa will be a great medicine man when he grows up. To be a great warrior is a noble ambition; but to be a mighty medicine man is a nobler!”

6 She said these things so thoughtfully . . . that I cannot but feel and remember them even to this day.

7 Our native women gathered all the wild rice, roots, berries and fruits which formed an important part of our food. . . Grandmother understood these matters perfectly, and it became a kind of instinct with her to know just where to look for each edible variety and at what season of the year. This sort of labor gave the Indian women every opportunity to observe and study Nature after their fashion; and in this [Grandmother] was more acute than most of the men. The abilities of her boys were not all inherited from their father; indeed, the stronger family traits came obviously from her. She was a leader among the native women, and they came to her, not only for medical aid, but for advice in all their affairs.



Use Excerpt from *Indian Boyhood* (1) to answer questions 1–4.

- 1** Which of the following is the best summary of Excerpt from *Indian Boyhood* (1)?
- A** The narrator’s grandmother teaches him about bird songs. She puts him to sleep early so that he can get into the habit of waking at dawn. The narrator realizes that his “babyhood was fully of interest and the beginnings of life’s realities.”
- B** From a very young age, the narrator was interested in natural objects, such as birds and feathers. His grandmother cared for him and taught him about bird songs and the customs of their people. He realizes that these early memories influenced the person that he would become.
- C** The grandmother teaches the narrator about the calls of robins, thrushes, whippoorwills, and owls. She warns of the importance of recognizing the sounds of nature. For example, the call of Hinakaga (the owl) might actually be scouts on the war-path.
- D** The narrator recalls the customs of his people. For example, they go to bed early in the evening so they can wake early in the morning. Mornings are quiet and the temperatures are cool. Early mornings are also considered the best time for hunting.

- 2** If you were writing a summary of excerpt 1, which of the following details would you include?
- F** The names that grandmother calls the different types of birds
- G** The narrator’s opinion about owls
- H** The reasons why the narrator’s people wake up early in the morning
- J** The lessons the narrator’s grandmother taught him

- 3** Read the following sentence from paragraph 6 of Excerpt from *Indian Boyhood* (1).

I usually covered up my head, for I had perfect faith in my grandmother’s admonitions, and she had given me a dreadful idea of this bird.

Which of the following is the best paraphrase of this sentence?

- A** He protected his head because he heeded his grandmother’s warnings, and she had made him afraid of the bird.
- B** He often covered his head, for he had faith in his grandmother’s cautions. She had caused him to think dreadful thoughts about the bird.
- C** His grandmother was very wise, and she taught him to cover his head when calling birds.
- D** He covered his head whenever his grandmother told him to, because he was afraid of birds.
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- 4** Which evidence from excerpt 1 supports the idea that many others (besides the narrator and his grandmother) learned about bird calls?
- F** *Whenever I heard the song of a bird, she would tell me what bird it came from . . .*
- G** *It was one of her legends that a little boy was once standing just outside of the teepee (tent), crying vigorously for his mother, when Hinakaga swooped down in the darkness and carried the poor little fellow up into the trees.*
- H** *It was well known that the hoot of the owl was commonly imitated by Indian scouts when on the war-path.*
- J** *In my infancy it was my grandmother’s custom to put me to sleep, as she said, with the birds, and to waken me with them, until it became a habit.*

Use Excerpt from *Indian Boyhood* (2) to answer questions 5–8.

5 Which of the following is the best summary of Excerpt from *Indian Boyhood* (2)?

- A** The narrator goes for a walk in the woods with his grandmother. She teaches him about medicinal plants. She tells him that wild plants are an important part of their food.
- B** The narrator and his grandmother search for medicinal roots. He asks her questions about why she chooses certain plants. She tells him that some day he “will be old enough to know the secrets of medicine.”
- C** The narrator’s grandmother tells him that she will share her knowledge of plants with him when he is older. However, if he is a bad man, she will share the secrets with his brother instead.
- D** The narrator is raised by his grandmother, who is a well-respected woman. She knows how to use different plants as medicine. She will share her wisdom with the narrator if he grows up to be a good man.

6 If you were writing a summary of excerpt 2, which detail would you include?

- F** The grandmother’s detailed memory
- G** The grandmother’s knowledge about plants
- H** The narrator’s questions to his grandmother
- J** The narrator’s feelings about the other men and women in the tribe

7 Read the following sentence from paragraph 7 of Excerpt from *Indian Boyhood* (2).

Those herbs which have medicinal virtues should be sought in a place that is neither too wet nor too dry, and where they have a generous amount of sunshine to maintain their vigor.

Which of the following is the best paraphrase of this sentence?

- A** Certain places in the woods produce the best medicine plants.
- B** Sunlight and water are the two most important factors to consider when gathering medicinal plants in the woods.
- C** Plants with medicinal virtues should be gathered from a place that is not too wet or dry, and that receives a lot of sunlight.
- D** The best herbs for medicine are those that are grown in perfect conditions of moisture and sunlight.

8 Which evidence from excerpt 2 supports the idea that the narrator admires his grandmother?

- F** *No other midwife in her day and tribe could compete with her in skill and judgment.*
- G** *I distinctly recall one occasion when she took me with her into the woods in search of certain medicinal roots.*
- H** *This sort of labor gave the Indian women every opportunity to observe and study Nature after their fashion . . .*
- J** *Our native women gathered all the wild rice, roots, berries and fruits which formed an important part of our food.*



Use Excerpt from *Indian Boyhood* (1) and Excerpt from *Indian Boyhood* (2) to answer questions 9–12.

- 9** Which of the following is the best summary of both passages (excerpts 1 and 2)?
- A** A woman raises her young grandson according to their Indian (Native American) traditions. She shares her knowledge of various plants and animals. This shapes his curiosity about the natural world.
 - B** A young boy's grandmother teaches him about different types of birds. She also warns him that some Indian scouts imitate the sounds of bird calls, and that he should be cautious when he hears them.
 - C** A young boy respects his grandmother because she is held in high regard by others in their tribe. She has native talent and ingenuity. She is also able to recall and share information very easily.
 - D** A young Indian (Native American) boy and his grandmother spend a lot of time together in the woods. They learn a lot from each other. The boy remembers her influence for the rest of his life.
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- 10** The information in both excerpts supports the idea that —
- F** wisdom and kindness are necessary to live in harmony with nature
 - G** it is important to learn as much as possible about the sounds of the forest
 - H** older people have valuable knowledge and wisdom
 - J** there are many benefits to waking up early in the morning
- 11** One way that both excerpts are similar is that they both —
- A** include warnings from nature
 - B** describe a curiosity about nature
 - C** discuss the dangers of nature
 - D** emphasize the beauty of nature
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- 12** One difference between excerpt 1 and excerpt 2 is that only excerpt 1 mentions —
- F** something that the narrator cares about
 - G** the grandmother's knowledge about the natural world
 - H** medicines that were used by the narrator's people
 - J** enemies of the narrator's people