



Recognize Central Idea and Features of Informational Texts

R 7.8(D)(i), **S** 7.8(D)(ii), **R** 7.9(A), **R** 7.5(F), **R** 7.6(D)

Understand the TEKS



Did You Know?

Strategy As you read, stop from time to time to summarize details.

The topic of an informational text is what the article is about. Usually, the author introduces the **thesis** at the beginning of the text. The thesis is the most important idea about the topic. Within the thesis is the **controlling idea**, or the direction the author is taking in writing about the topic. Look at the example below.

Topic: Fine Arts in Schools

Controlling idea: Fine arts in schools have a positive impact on students.

Thesis: Research shows that students who study fine arts usually perform better in other areas in school.

The author uses the controlling idea or thesis to further her purpose. The **author's purpose** is the reason for writing something. The author writes with a clear intent to persuade, inform, or entertain the reader.

The author makes his or her intent clear by using information to support the thesis. Text **evidence**, or information taken from other places such as facts, graphics, testimonies, anecdotes, or statistics, is used to build support of the thesis. **Informational reference** is evidence taken from the works or ideas of others. It requires the author to use a citation to give credit to the person or place where the information was originally found. Sometimes, you will find this within the text, immediately following the information noted or in a section at the end of an informational text titled "References."

Often at the start or end of an informational text, there will be a section titled "**Acknowledgments.**" The acknowledgments include a thank you to anyone who helped the author complete his or her work.

**★ Practice**

Read the selection below. Then answer the questions that follow it.

Hip, Hip for Zips

by Nancy Kangas

1 Day and night, all over the globe, zippers keep books from spilling out of backpacks, sofa cushions from bursting out of their covers, giant weather balloons from sputtering to the ground, and millions upon millions of people's pants from being indecent. But for thousands of years, people closed clothes and all their other flaps with buttons, snaps, and buckles and that was that. So how did a clumsy batch of crooked metal wires rise to such a prominent place in our lives (and on our pants)? Inventing the zipper wasn't easy: it took forty years of tinkering to make it stop jamming, shedding teeth or popping apart at exactly the wrong moment.

Dream on, Whitcomb

- 2 Machine salesman Whitcomb L. Judson was a man who had tasted the glory of inventing and was hungry for more. For reasons we can only guess, Judson turned his creative brain loose on the problem of buttoning all those tiny buttons on high-topped shoes people wore back in the late 1800s. What he came up with looked downright dangerous. Judson's "Clasp Locker or Unlocker for Shoes" was bulky, jam-prone, and doomed to fail, but he still received a patent for it in 1893.
- 3 Full of enthusiasm, Judson took his invention to the World's Columbian Exposition of 1901, where he proudly wore the new gadget in his own boots. Perhaps the fair-goers were distracted by the first electric Ferris wheel, which was also on exhibit. Perhaps they were perfectly happy with buttons. In any event, sales were low—twenty to be exact, sold to the U.S. Postal Service to hold mailbags shut. But Judson's invention impressed one very important person, his friend Colonel Lewis Walker, who remained fascinated by the fastener for years to come. In 1901, the Colonel hired Whitcomb to fix the fastener. Four years later Whitcomb came up with the "C-Curuty Placket Fastener" to close the openings (called plackets) in men's pants and women's skirts.
- 4 The C-Curuty wasn't actually very secure. Sometimes the hooks' sharp edges would tear the fabric of the garment; other times the hooks and eyes would pop apart and stay popped, at which point you had to cut the whole thing out. What's more, the C-Curuty cost thirty-five cents, which in those days was a lot. The story goes that when a salesman named Willie Wear tried to sell a second batch of C-Curuties to a store in Pennsylvania, the shopkeeper chased him out with a meat cleaver.

Go Gideon

- 5 Gideon Sundback came to the United States from Sweden to work for the power plant at Niagara Falls. So when the Colonel wrote to ask Gideon if he might like to use his talents to fix their fastener, Gideon wrote back, "I make dynamos [machines that generate electricity]. Who wants to fool with hooks and eyes?" But he changed his mind and soon came up with a "hookless fastener. . . ."
- 6 The Plako, as it was called, may have looked different from earlier zippers, but it had many of the same problems. The company's secretary had to run home one day because his Plako burst open and got stuck that way. For four long years, Gideon worked alone, the company always a breath away from bankruptcy.
- 7 Finally in December 1913, the true ancestor of the modern zipper was born. Nobody really knows where Gideon's new idea came from; he might have been a brilliant thinker, but he was a lousy notetaker. . . . He desperately needed to come up with a completely new concept. And he did: soup spoons. His new invention worked like two stacks of soup spoons, their handles pointing out. If the bowls of the spoons on one side were slipped in between the bowls on the other, the whole batch would form one snug but flexible spoon stack. Gideon didn't use spoons, of course; instead he put small metal "teeth" along each fabric strip. As in other fastener models, a Y-shaped slide splayed the teeth out at just the right angle to let them slip either together or apart. "The Hookless Hooker" (later simply called "Hookless No. 2") was at long last a fastener that fastened.

The Zipper Is Named

- 8 But the company had a serious problem: they needed customers. The Colonel had hoped to sell Hooklesses to pants makers, but the orders that trickled in were for an odd assortment of items—one for sailors' money belts, another for Locktite Tobacco Pouches, and one from the rubber company, B.F. Goodrich, for a small batch of samples.
- 9 The year was 1923 and B.F. Goodrich was testing fasteners in their galoshes, hoping to replace the clumsy buckles and make a sleeker, meaner boot. When they tested the Hookless No. 2, they were pleased with the result, and so the company ordered more fasteners for their galoshes, which they called the Mystik boot. When salesmen complained that people weren't looking for mystique in a boot, Goodrich's president thought up the name Zipper—little did he know he was adding a word to the English language.
- 10 The Zipper Boot was a runaway success; soon the company was working three shifts a day to handle the orders for millions and millions of zippers—and not just for boots. Everything from girdles to sleeping bags and musical-instrument covers sported the most modern of fasteners. A whole line of children's "self-help clothing" boosted zipper sales by boasting that zippers let kids dress themselves. By 1937, the world was out-and-out zipper-happy. *Esquire* magazine wrote



that the zipper beat buttons in pants. Zippers, they said, would prevent “the possibility of unintentional and embarrassing disarray. . . .”

Zippering into the Future

- 11 But did the zipper rest? No way. Zippers got zippier. A double-ended zipper came along to make it easier to undo jackets at the top and bottom. Nylon zippers thrilled skiers because they didn’t freeze in the cold. In 1950, the invention of the “toothless” plastic zipper changed the plastic bag forever. Today there are glow-in-the-dark zippers and neon zippers, quick-release zippers for firefighters’ uniforms, and waterproof zippers for scuba divers’ suits. Engineers at YKK, the country’s largest zipper manufacturer, developed a zipper that you can start with only one hand, which makes it easier for children and people with disabilities to operate. Zippers have even been to outer space (hitching a ride on an astronaut’s suit).
- 12 But will some new fastener like Velcro come along and steal the show? “Zippers will be around for a long, long time,” says Terry McCullough, an engineer at YKK. “Nothing else is as easy to use that has the strength of a zipper.”

- 1** What is the controlling idea of this selection?
- A** The life of the creator of the zipper
 - B** The ways people use zippers today
 - C** The difference between zippers and other fasteners
 - D** The invention of the zipper
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- 2** Which supporting evidence belongs in a summary of paragraphs 2 through 4?
- A** The C-Curity was expensive and did not work properly.
 - B** Judson's C-Curity shows that he was not a very good inventor.
 - C** A salesman named Willie Wear sold C-Curities in Pennsylvania.
 - D** One shopkeeper refused to buy a second batch of C-Curities.
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- 3** Which sentence is the thesis of the selection?
- A** *Day and night, all over the globe, zippers keep books from spilling out of backpacks, sofa cushions from bursting out of their covers, giant weather balloons from sputtering to the ground, and millions upon millions of people's pants from being indecent.* (paragraph 1)
 - B** *Inventing the zipper wasn't easy: it took forty years of tinkering to make it stop jamming, shedding teeth or popping apart at exactly the wrong moment.* (paragraph 1)
 - C** *But for thousands of years, people closed clothes and all their other flaps with buttons, snaps, and buckles, and that was that.* (paragraph 1)
 - D** *Machine salesman Whitcomb L. Judson was a man who had tasted the glory of inventing and was hungry for more.* (paragraph 2)
- 4** What is the author's message in paragraph 10?
- A** After the Zipper Boot was introduced, the zipper became very popular.
 - B** The company received orders to add zippers to girdles and sleeping bags.
 - C** *Esquire* magazine promoted the zipper to its readers.
 - D** Zippers allowed children to dress themselves more easily.
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- 5** What is the message of paragraph 11?
- A** Now there is a zipper that can be pulled from the top or the bottom.
 - B** Zippers have been adapted for many different people and products.
 - C** There are special zippers made for astronaut suits.
 - D** YKK is the country's largest manufacturer of zippers.
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- 6** How does the author support the central idea of paragraph 8?
- A** Statistics
 - B** Expert opinions
 - C** Quotes
 - D** Examples



- 7 Which of these would be an appropriate way to conclude the selection?
- A In the past, people used buttons, snaps and buckles to keep things together, but now they use zippers.
 - B Many inventors tried to replace buttons, snaps, and buckles with something else, but none of their creations were successful.
 - C The development of today's zipper took time and went through many stages to land where it is now and where it will likely remain crucial for years to come.
 - D The zipper is one of the most important inventions of all time and will become more efficient soon.
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- 8 If this selection were to have references, where could they be located? Select **TWO** correct answers.
- A At the end of the selection
 - B Prior to "Hip, Hip for Zips"
 - C Immediately following the information
 - D Prior to *by Nancy Kangas*
 - E After each paragraph
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- 9 Which is an appropriate acknowledgment for the selection?
- A I would like to express my gratitude to my supervisor, Maria Santos, who guided me throughout this project. I would also like to thank my family for their unconditional loving support.
 - B *by Nancy Kangas*
 - C For more information, go to <https://www.ykkfastening.com/products/zipper/>
 - D The Zipper Is Named

10 **Part A**

What is the author's purpose of paragraph 12?

- A To show that now there is a zipper that can be pulled from the top or the bottom
- B To share that YKK produces the best zippers in the country
- C To show that zippers will continue to be used in the future
- D To share that zippers will be replaced in the future

Part B

Which statement from paragraph 12 best supports the correct answer in Part A?

- A *But will some new fastener like Velcro come along and steal the show?*
- B *"Zippers will be around for a long, long time."*
- C *"Nothing else is as easy to use that has the strength of a zipper."*
- D *"Zippers will be around for a long, long time," says Terry McCullough, an engineer at YKK.*