

Revised Edition

Performance

Coach 
English Language Arts

4



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Analyze Texts Across Genres

1 GETTING THE IDEA

Authors may present information about a single topic in many different ways. Think about the topic of baseball. One author may write an informational text to give facts about the history of baseball. Another may write a realistic fiction story about a boy whose grandfather teaches him how to play the game.

Readers compare and contrast fiction and informational texts to see how they are similar and different.

Fiction or Nonfiction

Fiction is a made-up story, while **nonfiction** presents facts. Fiction includes fables, myths, and realistic fiction. Some nonfiction texts are newspaper articles, scientific articles, and biographies. Each of these types of texts has unique features that readers can recognize.

Even though fiction and nonfiction are different, they do have some things in common.

Fiction	Both	Nonfiction
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • tells a story • includes characters, settings, events, and other details that are completely or partly made up by the author • does not have to be true 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • may present information in the form of a story • are told from a certain point of view • can include scientific or historical facts 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • gives facts about a topic • may tell a true story • may be broken into sections separated by headings • may include graphic features such as diagrams, charts, and graphs

Some text types include elements of both fiction and nonfiction.

Historical fiction is usually set in a real time or place from the past. It may even include real people and events. What makes it fiction are the made-up characters, events, and details authors add to the historical facts.

Science fiction is often set in the future, in space, or on another planet. Like a scientific text, science fiction may include real-life details about science and technology. But it also tells a story through made-up characters, events, and details.

Literary nonfiction includes biographies and autobiographies. These texts tell true stories about real people. They give facts about people's lives. Writers use storytelling techniques such as vivid details, suspense, and conflict. Dialogue is sometimes used to make the stories more interesting.

Analyze Texts

When you read two related texts, pay close attention to the main ideas and details. Ask questions as you read. This will help you compare and contrast the texts later.

Fiction	Nonfiction
What is the theme , or main message, the author wants to share?	What is the main idea of the text?
Who are the characters? What is the setting? What are the key events?	What supporting details does the author include?

The main message or main idea of a text is not always directly stated. You may have to make inferences to figure it out. Once you know the main idea and details of each text, you can figure out what the texts have in common.

Read each passage below. One is fiction, and one is nonfiction. Pay attention to the settings, events, and people described. Circle any elements that are alike. Underline any elements that are different.

Tea in the Water

“John, come quickly,” I called to my brother. “We have to go see what is happening. A group of men with painted faces just snuck past, toward the harbor.”

“Finally, their words are turning into action, Richard. Let us go watch this rebellion.”

John and I walked quietly down to the water and joined the crowd of spectators. All of us on the shore looked on in amazement. We watched as the disguised men boarded the ships. We hooted and hollered as they lifted each crate and tossed it overboard. Wood cracked and tea splashed into the water. The scent of victory filled the air.

Boston Tea Party

In the years leading up to the revolution, American patriots were unhappy with their rulers. In May 1773, England created a Tea Act that helped the East India Company to sell more tea in America. The patriots did not agree with this law. They pushed merchants, or sellers, to refuse the tea.

In Boston, some people wanted to send tea back to England. When the governor didn't agree with this idea, people took action. On December 16, 1773, Sam Adams and a group of men boarded three tea boats. Many of them were dressed in disguise. They broke the tea chests and threw them overboard. The event became known as the Boston Tea Party. It was just one of many events that would spark a war.

Now let's **compare** and **contrast** the two passages.

"Tea in the Water"	Both	"Boston Tea Party"
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• fictional story• narrator is a made-up character• author makes up what it was probably like to watch the Tea Party	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• discuss the Boston Tea Party• include a real event from history• use details to describe the historic event	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• informational text• gives facts about why the Boston Tea Party happened• includes the name of a real person

Integrate Information

The two passages were on the same topic but presented the information differently. One presented a narrative about fictional characters. The other focused on facts. When you read more than one text on the same topic, you can combine information from the texts to form a better understanding of the topic.

- How can you use both texts to tell about the events of the Boston Tea Party?
- In what other ways might the topic be presented? For example, how might it be different if it were written from Sam Adams's point of view?

Language Spotlight • General Academic Vocabulary

Academic vocabulary consists of words that appear in many school subjects and even in daily language. You can use context clues to help you determine the meaning of academic vocabulary.

The words *examine* and *identify* are both academic vocabulary words. In reading, you may examine two texts and identify how they are alike and different. In art class, you may examine a sculpture and identify the material used to make it.

Now write a sentence using the words *examine* and *identify* in relation to each of the following subjects:

science: _____

social studies: _____

Read the passage.

The Halifax Explosion

Almost one hundred years after the Halifax Explosion, people still wonder how it could have happened. Many people believe that the tragic events of December 6, 1917, could have easily been prevented. No single event caused the devastation. No one person was to blame. But, if any one in a series of missteps and mistakes had been handled differently, the city might have been spared.

In 1917, the Canadian city of Halifax, Nova Scotia, was booming. The city's large harbor helped it to flourish, and ships carrying war supplies frequently docked at its shore. But the harbor was not always properly managed. Ferries, fishing boats, and military ships crowded the harbor. Minor crashes often occurred.

On December 5, a ship named *Mont-Blanc* had arrived near Halifax to join a convoy headed to the war in France. It was packed with a massive amount of explosives. Most ships carrying such cargo would normally fly a warning flag, but the *Mont-Blanc* did not. It would be traveling among enemy boats and did not want them to know what was on board. Although a pilot boarded the ship that night, it was too late for it to depart. So the ship stayed outside the harbor.

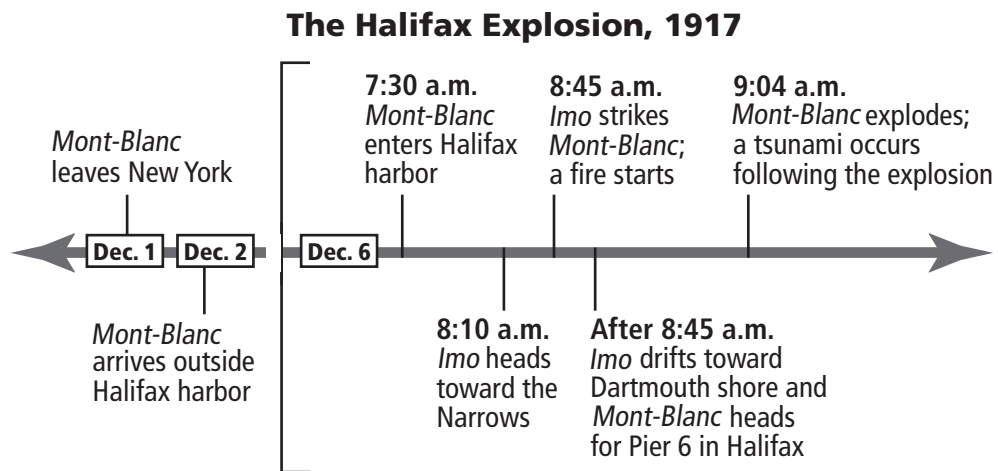
Another ship, the *Imo*, was across the harbor. It, too, was supposed to set off on December 5 but did not receive the coal it needed to leave on time. Already behind schedule, the *Imo* sped toward a small area of the harbor called the Narrows the next morning. Like drivers on a road, ship captains must follow certain rules. Traffic should keep to the right and stay below a certain speed. Drivers should clearly communicate where they are turning.

As the *Imo* approached, the *Mont-Blanc* was heading into the Narrows from the opposite direction. The *Mont-Blanc* whistled that it was staying on the right side and would continue on its path. But the *Imo* refused to get out of the way. Facing an impending crash, both ships reacted. The *Mont-Blanc* veered to the left and the *Imo* headed in reverse. Either one of these reactions could have stopped the crash, but the two combined spelled disaster. The ships could not avoid a collision.

At 8:45 a.m., the *Imo* struck the *Mont-Blanc* and hit parts of the ship carrying the dangerous explosives. Sparks flew, and soon a huge fire raged on board the *Mont-Blanc*. People gathered along the Halifax coast to watch the spectacular blaze. The fire department and its truck, the *Patricia*, arrived on the scene. But their efforts would be fruitless. Twenty minutes after the crash, a tremendous explosion burst through the boat and everything around it. A deafening roar filled the air. Glass shattered and houses crumbled. More fires spread through the city.

The impact of the explosion pushed the water around the *Mont-Blanc* out of the harbor. Then, when the water rushed back in, it created a huge wall of water known as a tsunami. Survivors had barely reacted to the explosion when this great wave of water rushed over them.

Both Halifax and Dartmouth, a city across the harbor, were greatly affected by the explosion and tsunami. Everywhere people looked, they saw devastation. More than 1,500 people were killed, and thousands more were injured. It was a day no one would soon forget. People all over the world learned from the disaster and changed their policies for harbor management. They hoped to prevent such a senseless tragedy from ever occurring again.



Answer the following questions.

1 This question has two parts. First, answer Part A. Then, answer Part B.

Part A

What type of text is this passage?

- A. historical fiction
- B. science fiction
- C. nonfiction article
- D. nonfiction biography

Part B

Which features of the text help you figure out the text type?

- A. The text gives facts about a real event from history.
- B. The author adds made-up characters and details to the events.
- C. The events of the text take place in the future.
- D. The author tells about one person's life.

Hint Think about the features of each text type. Which features are present in this passage? Does the author present only facts? Or are there characters and events that are made up?

2 What is the main idea of this passage?

- A. The Halifax Fire Department was not prepared to put out the fire on the *Mont-Blanc*.
- B. The Halifax Explosion was the result of a collision that could have been prevented.
- C. A tsunami was to blame for the worst devastation.
- D. Harbors are not properly managed.

Hint Why did the author write this passage? Think about the main point the author is trying to make.

- 3 The events of December 6, 1917, are out of order. Write numbers 1 through 6 in the boxes to put the events in the correct order.

- A tremendous explosion occurred.
- A huge wall of water, called a tsunami, was created.
- The *Mont-Blanc* and the *Imo* headed toward each other.
- The *Mont-Blanc* blew its whistle to say it was staying to the right.
- A fire started on the *Mont-Blanc*.
- The *Imo* and the *Mont-Blanc* crashed into each other.

Hint Think of how each event led to the next. This will help you place the events in the correct order.

- 4 What text structure does the author use? Why do you think he or she uses this structure?

Use details from the text to support your answer.

Write your answer on the lines below.

Hint Think about the main idea of the text. How does the structure help the author convey that main idea? How does the structure help the reader understand the events that occurred?

Use the Reading Guide to help you understand the passage.

In a Flash of Light

Reading Guide

Why does the author include the introduction at the start of this passage?

Look at some of the features the author includes. Which features help you understand what type of text it is?

Why is Olivia surprised by how people in the city are acting this morning?

Three years into World War I, Halifax, Nova Scotia, was a thriving city. Boats carrying supplies for the war moved into and out of the harbor, and factories and mills were bustling from all the business. Yet, on the morning of December 6, 1917, disaster would strike. As city residents looked on, two boats collided in the harbor and set off a chain of events that would lead to unbelievable devastation.

“Johnny, please hurry; we’re going to be late for school.”

I grabbed my little brother’s hand and dragged him toward the door. As the oldest in the family, it was my job to take my little brothers to school, but it was never an easy task. Alden was like a little pocket watch. You could spot him standing at the door and know that it was exactly 8:50 on the dot. Johnny, on the other hand, was a little dickens¹—or at least that’s what our mémé² called him. Aside from their identical features, you would never guess that the boys were twins.

We kissed Mama goodbye and then rushed out the door and down the street toward school. All around us, there was a flurry of activity as people pushed past us and ran toward the shore. *Why such a frenzy this morning?* I wondered. Sure, the war had the factories working overtime to handle all the demand, but that was nothing new.

“Look, Olivia!” Johnny pointed. “It’s *Patricia*; she’s heading to the shore, too!”

Patricia, the fire department’s new fire truck, had been the talk of the town for weeks. She was the first motorized truck the city ever had, and everyone in town, not just truck-loving little boys, was amazed by her.

¹ **dickens**: a playful nickname for a troublemaker

² **mémé**: grandma

Reading Guide

What do some people think caused the fire?
How does Olivia react to the fire?

Look for details the author uses to describe the explosion. How does the explosion affect the characters?

Think about why Olivia has a hard time finding her house. What does this situation show about the explosion?

We raced to follow her and then suddenly saw the reason for all the excitement. Black smoke filled the air around the harbor, and arms of red and orange flames reached toward the sky.

“The Germans are attacking!” someone yelled.

I pulled my brothers in and held them tightly against my chest.

“We should head back home; it’s obviously not safe here,” I said, trying to guide them back in the opposite direction. But despite my nudging, they both stood frozen, eyes wide in wonder.

“It’s not the Germans,” I heard a familiar voice say. It was my friend, Anne, from school. “Two boats crashed; I saw it from my kitchen window and came out here for a better look.”

“Whatever caused the fire doesn’t matter; we really should stay back to keep sa—”

My words were cut short as an eerie silence washed over everything. A burst of bright light flashed across the sky, and then the world turned dark.

I woke up yards away, dizzy and disoriented. Then I heard a soft whimper beside me and turned to see Alden.

“Are you okay, Alden?”

“Yes, Olivia, I’m fine; just a little stunned.”

I lifted him up, and we headed to where Johnny was sitting, scratching his head and looking puzzled.

“What just happened?” he asked. “Did something explode?”

“It must have been one of the boats; it was probably carrying supplies for the war. Thank goodness we’re all safe, but we should go check on Mama.”

We started back toward our house, but I wasn’t sure where it was anymore. Huge chunks of metal were scattered everywhere, and piles of rubble marked where familiar homes and stores once stood. I realized then how lucky we were. Many people were hurt, and others walked around in a daze.

Reading Guide

Why do you suppose soldiers herded people uphill, away from the harbor?

Why does the author include the detail that occasionally a person shouted out a name?

How did Olivia and her brothers finally reunite with their mother?

Suddenly, people began shouting. I looked up to see a massive wave of water barreling up from the harbor. I pushed my brothers against an iron gate and told them to hang on. We clung to the gate and waited for the water to pass. Alden and Johnny began to cry. For the longest time, we held onto the gate, afraid to move. Then I saw soldiers herding people uphill, away from the harbor.

“Look,” I said, “The soldiers are sending people uphill. Maybe Mama or Papa will go there, too.”

We slowly made our way uphill. Occasionally, a person shouted out a name, and two family members were reunited. I kept listening for my name, but no one called “Olivia.” Then, I thought I heard my name. I looked around and heard it again. Alden and Johnny heard it, too, and we broke into a run. We ran to Mama, and she squeezed us in a tight embrace.

“I was so worried about you,” she said, wiping away a tear from her cheek.

Answer the following questions.

- 1 Why does the author include an introduction before the events of the story?
 - A. to tell about the goods made in the city’s factories
 - B. to introduce the character of Olivia’s grandmother
 - C. to show that Halifax is located in the eastern part of Canada
 - D. to give readers historical background information about the events

- 2 The following question has two parts. First, answer Part A. Then, answer Part B.

Part A

Read the sentence from the text and the directions that follow.

“Yes, Olivia, I’m fine; just a little stunned.”

What does the word stunned mean in this sentence?

- A. cheerful
- B. alert
- C. shocked
- D. bored

Part B

Which sentences from the text help you figure out the meaning? Choose **all** that apply.

- A. All around us, there was a flurry of activity as people pushed past us and ran toward the shore.
- B. I woke up yards away, dizzy and disoriented.
- C. I lifted him up, and we headed to where Johnny was sitting, scratching his head and looking puzzled.
- D. I looked up to see a massive wave of water barreling up from the harbor.
- E. We clung to the gate and waited for the water to pass.

Answer the following questions about both passages in this lesson.

- 3** Based on information from both passages, what is one conclusion about the events you might make?
- A.** Olivia and her family never returned to Halifax again.
 - B.** Some people who experienced the explosion and tsunami were confused by what happened.
 - C.** Fire departments stopped using motorized trucks to respond to fires.
 - D.** Residents of Halifax were curious about the fire on the *Mont-Blanc*.

- 4 Compare and contrast how each author presents information about the events surrounding the Halifax Explosion. How do the features of each text help you identify the type of text? How do they affect your understanding of the topic?

Write your answer on the lines below.

- 5 The following question has two parts. First, answer Part A. Then, answer Part B.

Part A

Read the paragraph from “The Halifax Explosion.” Then, answer the question that follows.

The fire department and its truck, the *Patricia*, arrived on the scene. But their efforts would be fruitless. Twenty minutes after the crash, a tremendous explosion burst through the boat and everything around it. A deafening roar filled the air. Glass shattered and houses crumbled. More fires spread through the city.

Which **two** sentences give details about the devastation of the explosion?

- A. The fire department and its truck, the *Patricia*, arrived on the scene.
- B. But their efforts would be fruitless.
- C. Twenty minutes after the crash, a tremendous explosion burst through the boat and everything around it.
- D. A deafening roar filled the air.
- E. Glass shattered and houses crumbled.
- F. More fires spread through the city.

Part B

Which **two** sentences from “In a Flash of Light” add to your understanding of the devastation that the explosion caused?

- A. *Why such a frenzy this morning?* I wondered.
- B. I pulled my brothers in and held them tightly against my chest.
- C. Huge chunks of metal were scattered everywhere, and piles of rubble marked where familiar homes and stores once stood.
- D. I realized then how lucky we were.
- E. Many people were hurt, and others walked around in a daze.
- F. I pushed my brothers against an iron gate and told them to hang on.

- 6 The two passages you read, “The Halifax Explosion” and “In a Flash of Light,” both gave information about the devastating boat crash and explosion that occurred on December 6, 1917. Using information from both texts, describe in your own words what took place on that tragic day. Include details about what people witnessed and how they responded to the events. Be sure to combine information from both passages to help you better understand and describe the event.

Write your response on the lines below.
