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NYS NEXT GENERATION ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS LEARNING STANDARDS

8R2 Determine one or more themes or central ideas and analyze their development over the course of a text; summarize a text. *(RI & RL)*

6–8RST2 Determine the central ideas or conclusions of a source; provide an accurate, objective summary of the source distinct from prior knowledge or opinions.

Introduction

Read, or have students read, the instructional text. Students should be able to tell the main idea of any passage they read. Encourage students to look for a topic sentence in shorter passages. In longer passages, students should be able to identify the main idea in two to three sentences. Recognizing the main idea is key to understanding the passage. Discuss the difference between main idea and theme.

Guided Practice

Guide students as they work together as a class, in pairs or groups, or individually. Offer assistance to students as needed.

Title: **White Buffalo Woman**

Genre: **Legend**

Lexile® Measure: **800L–900L**

VOCABULARY

To help with comprehension, review these vocabulary words with students before they read the passage. Write the words on the board and keep them displayed so students can refer to them when they read independently.

arduous, beckon, enshrouded, luminous, receded, rituals, sacred

LESSON
5

8R2, 6–8RST2

Main Idea and Summaries

Everything you read has a main idea or a **theme**—something that answers the basic question “What is it about?” Identifying that main idea, and the most important ideas that support it, is one of the most important reading skills. Once you know what you’re reading about, the details all seem to fall into place. If you’ve understood what you’ve read, you should be able to write a summary that briefly answers that key question, “What’s it about?”

VOCABULARY
 arduous
 darkrooms
 harbor
 luminous
 vain

Guided Practice
Read the passage. Then answer the questions.

White Buffalo Woman
a myth of the Plains Indians

Many American Indian peoples of the Great Plains relate different versions of this myth. This one comes from the Lakota, or Sioux.

- 1 In the days before the People had horses, it was an arduous task to find game. One summer when the seven bands were camped together, there was little food.
- 2 Two young braves of the Without-Bows band rose early one morning to hunt. They left camp before dawn, when only the yellow meadowlark was awake. As the day warmed, the insects stirred and chirruped, and the prairie dogs sought their burrows at the approach of Man, but the hunters found no real game. Then they climbed a small hill, from which they would be able to see across the prairie in all directions.
- 3 As they scanned the distance toward the horizon, they saw something luminous rise out of the shimmering heat and come toward them. It seemed to walk on two legs, not four. As it came near, they saw that it was a beautiful woman in shining white buckskin, wonderfully decorated with sacred designs in porcupine quills of all colors. She carried a medicine bundle on her back and a fan of fragrant sage leaves in her hand, and it seemed that her eyes were full of light and power.
- 4 Now, one of the young men was inflamed with desire for this woman. “I don’t know what her nation is, but I’m going to make her mine,” he said to his friend.
- 5 “You fool!” said the other. “Can’t you see she’s a spirit?”
- 6 The fool thought he had seen the woman beckon to him, however, and he walked toward her. As he reached out to embrace her, a white cloud enshrouded them both. When it lifted, the woman stood there

arduous
difficult

luminous
shining

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UNIT 2

Key Ideas and Details

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alone. At her feet was a pile of bones with snakes twisting horribly among them.

- 7 “See,” the woman said to the other young man, “I bear a message to your people from Tatanka, Oyate, the buffalo nation. Return to your chief, Standing Hollow Horn, and tell him what you have seen. Tell him to prepare a large tipi, big enough for all his people, and presently I will come to him.”
- 8 The young man raced back to his camp and told the chief what he had seen and what the woman had said. The chief ordered several tipis to be combined together into one large enough for the entire band. The people waited eagerly for the sacred woman to arrive. Scouts were posted to watch for her approach in each of the four directions.
- 9 After four days, one of the scouts saw something coming in a beautiful manner across the prairie. Then suddenly she was in the great tipi, walking around it from east to west in the manner of the sun. She paused before the chief and held out her medicine bundle to him with both hands.
- 10 “Behold this,” she said, “and always love and respect it. Only the spiritually pure may touch this bundle, for in it is the sacred pipe.”
- 11 She unrolled the bundle and took out the pipe and a small stone carved with seven circles and placed them on the ground.
- 12 “With this pipe you will walk on the earth, which is your mother and your grandmother. Every step you take upon the earth is sacred. The bowl of the pipe is of red stone; it is the earth. Carved on it is the buffalo calf; it is all that goes on four legs. The stem is of wood; it is all that grows on the earth. The twelve hanging feathers are from the eagle; it is all the flying creatures. All these are children of Mother Earth, as you are. This you will remember when you smoke this pipe. Treat the pipe and the earth in a sacred manner, and all will increase and prosper. The seven circles carved on the stone are the Seven Rituals in which you will learn to use the sacred pipe. These I will teach you when the time comes.”

A pipe said to be the one given by White Buffalo Woman is kept by a Lakota Sioux family in Looking Horse, South Dakota.

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UNIT 2

Key Ideas and Details

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- 13 The woman then turned to the chief and said, "In me there are four ages. This pipe will carry you to the end. I am going now, but I will look on your people in every age, and at the end I will return."
- 14 The people were silent and filled with awe as the woman walked slowly around the lodge again from east to west. Then, silently, she left the lodge. However, after she had gone a short distance, she turned and faced the people and sat down on the prairie. When she rose again, she had become a red and brown buffalo calf. The people watched, amazed, as the calf receded from them and then, looking at them, lay down and rolled over. When she rose a second time, she was a white buffalo. She walked on until she was only a bright speck against the earth and sky. Then she rolled over again, and when she rose she was a black buffalo.
- 15 The buffalo bowed to each of the four directions and walked away, disappearing over the hill.

Which sentence best states the theme of the myth?

- A The buffalo is the source of food and sustenance.
- B Listen well to teachers who bring new ways of living.
- C Observe your people's customs even if they don't make sense.
- D Treat sacred things with respect, and the earth will sustain you.**

This is probably the most important myth of the Lakota people: a goddess-figure represented by a buffalo, the main source of food, shelter, and clothing on the Great Plains, brings the people a ritual object representing the earth, and a promise to sustain them if they keep its rites in a sacred manner. Many religious traditions have such "covenant stories" and sacred objects, like the pipe, that stand for the connection between humans and the spirit world.

Analyze how the first two paragraphs establish the theme.

The first two paragraphs show how poorly and desperately the people lived before White Buffalo Woman came to them.

The people have no sacred pipe or rituals. They are hungry. The spirit-woman promises them prosperity if they live in a sacred manner. Here is a sample answer:

The first two paragraphs show how poorly and desperately the people lived before White Buffalo Woman came to them.

How is the theme developed by the two braves' encounter with White Buffalo Woman?

One man is attached to his senses and emotions, which is probably what the snakes represent, and dies. The other man approaches the woman in a spiritual way and treats her with the respect due her, and lives to inform his people of her coming.

One man sees her as an ordinary woman; the other recognizes her as a messenger from the world of the spirit.

Determine which of these sentences expresses the main idea of paragraph 3.

- A As they scanned the distance toward the horizon, they saw something luminous rise out of the shimmering heat and came toward them.
- B It seemed to walk on two legs, not four.
- C As it came near, they saw that it was a beautiful woman in shining white buckskin, wonderfully decorated with sacred designs in porcupine quills of all colors.
- D She carried a medicine bundle on her back and a fan of fragrant sage leaves in her hand, and it seemed that her eyes were full of light and power.**

In many paragraphs, there's a single sentence that expresses the main idea of the paragraph. It's called the topic sentence. This paragraph is about the approach of White Buffalo Woman and how the two young men perceive her. The important thing that happens in the paragraph is that you recognize that the woman is a spirit.

Analyze how the scene in the great tipi clarifies the main idea of the myth.

In the tipi, White Buffalo Woman explains that the pipe is sacred, and that each part of it represents some aspect of the earth. Treating the pipe with respect and treating the earth with respect amount to the same thing.

It is when White Buffalo Woman reveals the sacred pipe to the people that you find out what the myth is about.

Identify how the concluding part of the myth relates the theme to the setting.

The myth essentially explains in a symbolic way the Plains Indians' dependence on the buffalo. The spirit-woman reveals herself as a buffalo, changing form and color but always remaining a buffalo. This probably symbolizes that the prosperity she promises in exchange for the people's respect will come in the form of that animal.

At the end of the story, White Buffalo Woman changes form several times as she recedes and returns to the world of spirits.

How does paragraph 5 suggest why the Hindus and Maya people were the first to come up with the zero?

Unlike other cultures' numeration systems, the Hindu and Maya systems used place value. That's an important intermediate step in coming up with the idea of a symbol for an empty place.

This question asks you to distinguish what made the Hindu and Maya numeration systems different from the Egyptian or Roman.

Which of these is the least essential statement to include in a summary of the passage?

- A The Mayas' numeration system used 20 as a base.
- B Roman numerals were adequate for counting but not easy to calculate with.
- C The Arabs discovered how useful the Hindu numeration system was for trade.
- D Using symbols to represent numbers was an important step in human thought.

A summary should include only the main ideas and the most important details that support them. The passage is about the zero and why mathematics is more powerful with it than without it.

Test Yourself

Have students complete the Test Yourself section on their own. Students can complete it at home or during class.

Title: **the flattered lightning bug**

Genre: **Poetry**

VOCABULARY

harbor, urged, vain

Test Yourself

Read the poem. Then answer the questions.

the flattered lightning bug

by Don Marquis

Don Marquis, a New York newspaper columnist, created the characters of Archy the cockroach and Mehitabel the cat in 1916 and included them in more than 500 sketches. Archy has the soul of a poet (literally) and observes the world from an insect's point of view. He slips into Marquis's office at night to type his verse on the typewriter by jumping on the keys. Because he is not strong enough to press the shift key in those precomputer days, his poems are all in lowercase letters and have no apostrophes.

- 1 a lightning bug got
- 2 in here the other night a
- 3 regular hick from
- 4 the real country he was
- 5 awful proud of himself you
- 6 city insects may think
- 7 you are some punkins
- 8 but i don't see any
- 9 of you flashing in the dark
- 10 like we do in
- 11 the country all right go
- 12 to it says i mehitabel the
- 13 cat and that green
- 14 spider who lives in your locker
- 15 and two or three cockroach
- 16 friends of mine and a
- 17 friendly rat all gathered
- 18 around him and urged him on
- 19 and he lightened and
- 20 lightened and lightened you
- 21 don't see anything like this
- 22 in town often he says go to it
- 23 we told him it's a
- 24 real treat to us and
- 25 we nicknamed him Broadway
- 26 which pleased him
- 27 this is the life
- 28 he said all i
- 29 need is a harbor'
- 30 under me to be a



'harbor: body of water deep enough that a boat or ship can anchor there

Answer Rationales

1. The author’s theme in the poem is the vanity of man, although he uses insects and small animals to illustrate his point. The lines that best express his theme are “yet there are some men like that,” which refers to the vain lightning bug. Choice D is correct. (8R2)
2. Although Marquis uses talking animals in his poem, he is really making a statement about people’s vanity and willingness to be flattered. The lightning bug was showing off to the others, but in the end, the only thing his vanity got him was eaten by the cat. (8R2)

SKILL STRATEGY

Main Idea

See pages 14–15 of the teacher’s edition.

31 statue of liberty and
 32 he got so vain of
 33 himself i had to take
 34 him down a peg you ve
 35 made lightning for two hours
 36 little bug i told him
 37 but i don t hear
 38 any claps of thunder
 39 yet there are some men
 40 like that when he wore
 41 himself out meh label
 42 the cat ate him
 archy

1 Identify the lines in the poem that best express Marquis’s theme.

A i don t see any of you flashing in the dark like we do in the country
 B we nicknamed him broadway which pleased him
 C i don t hear any claps of thunder
 D yet there are some men like that

2 Explain your answer to question 1.

Marquis’s characters are like cartoon animals, but he’s really describing human vanity and willingness to be flattered.

*vain: excessively proud

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LISTENING/SPEAKING ACTIVITY

Using the Internet and library resources, have students research more about Don Marquis, his characters, and his poetry. Have students present their findings to the class.

ELLS ACTIVITY

Invite students to create a sequel or alternate ending for the poem. Have students present their work to the class.

- The lightning bug is an outsider. He joins the group but, instead of getting to know the others, he immediately starts to brag and show off. Although the others flatter him for a time, they are really only making fun of him. In the end, they tire of him and his bragging, so the cat eats him. This illustrates how people often tire of a braggart. (8R2)
- The lightning bug is comparing himself and his light to the Statue of Liberty. He is showing his inflated viewpoint of himself and his own abilities. Obviously there is no real comparison to a lightning bug's light and the Statue of Liberty's torch. In the same way, people embellish their own accomplishments to the point of ridiculous. Often, doing so only makes them seem more ridiculous in other's eyes. (8R2)

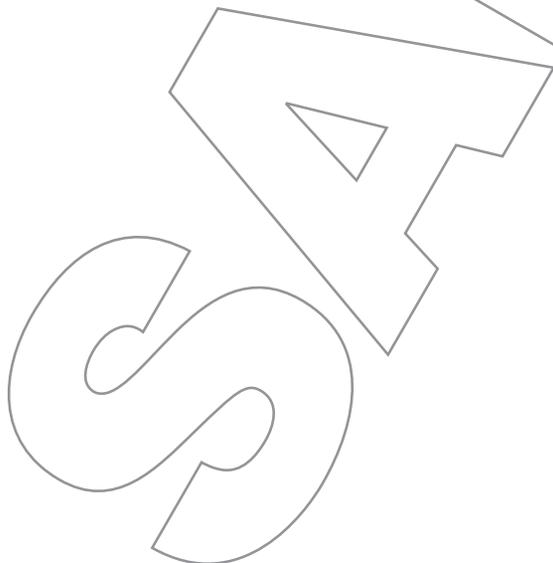
Title: **George Eastman's Camera**

Genre: **History/Social Studies**

Lexile® Measure: **800L–900L**

VOCABULARY

darkrooms, light sensitive, mass-producing, tripod

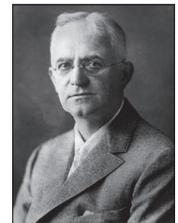


- Analyze how "archy" introduces and develops the theme through the character of the lightning bug and the way the other characters respond to him.
The lightning bug shows up in a New York office bragging about what he, a country bug, can do that no city bug can. The other characters let him show off and give him the nickname "Broadway," which he takes as a compliment though they are making fun of him. At the end you see what his vanity amounts to when the cat eats him.
- Explain what the lightning bug is saying in lines 27–31 and analyze how it supports the theme of the poem.
These lines are an example of the lightning bug's vanity. He's an insect, but he's comparing his light to the Statue of Liberty's torch. Archy is saying that people can puff up their small accomplishments to the point that everyone else can see how ridiculous the comparison is.

Read the passage. Then answer the questions.

George Eastman's Camera
by Luke Rutz

- The city of Rochester, New York, boasts a world-class museum. It's the George Eastman House International Museum of Photography and Film. It was the first museum in the world to honor picture taking as an art and a science. No person did more to advance the science of photography than the man who once called the museum home.
- George Eastman was born in Waterville, New York, in 1854. His father died when George was still a boy, so he had to leave school to go to work at age 14. He worked for an insurance company but never made more than five dollars per week. He studied accounting at home in the evening so he could get a job as a bank clerk. This job, too, paid little money. But by the time he was 24, Eastman had saved enough to plan a vacation in Santo Domingo. A friend suggested he bring a camera along to record the trip, so George bought one.



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- In those days, photographic images were made on large glass plates. Each one had to be coated with wet, light-sensitive chemicals just before the picture was taken. The camera Eastman bought was as big as a microwave oven. It had to be supported on a heavy tripod. It came with chemicals, a developing tent, and other heavy equipment.
- Eastman never made the trip. Instead, he became obsessed with photography. Surely, he thought, there had to be a better way to take pictures. He read about a new British process for coating plates with chemicals that remained light sensitive for days after they dried. George took it a step further. He invented a better dry-plate formula and a machine for mass-producing the plates. In 1880, he opened a factory and sold the plates he made to other photographers.
- But Eastman was already experimenting with even simpler ways of making photographic images. He wanted, as he put it, "to make the camera as convenient as the pencil." The problem was the heavy glass plates. His solution was to coat a roll of paper film with photographic chemicals. The film moved through the camera on rollers.
- Eastman thought that professional photographers would rush to buy his new film process. They didn't. They were comfortable with the old method. As Eastman continued to experiment with better and better ways to make film and film rollers, he realized he needed to do something new and different. He would sell the idea to the public. He would make a camera so simple that anyone could use it.
- Eastman introduced his first Kodak camera in 1888. The name "Kodak" didn't mean anything. (Eastman later explained that he had always liked the letter K.) His advertising slogan was "You push the button—we do the rest." The Kodak sold and sold. Photography became a popular hobby. With the Kodak, anyone could take "snapshot" photographs. Some people developed and printed them in their own darkrooms. But most chose to have the Eastman Kodak Company "do the rest."
- George Eastman became a very rich man. He built the Rochester mansion that now houses the museum. But he gave most of his money away. He gave a third of his company's stock holdings to his workers. He donated \$30 million to colleges and universities. He started a dental clinic for Rochester's children. He also established a theater, a symphony orchestra, and the Eastman School of Music.
- George Eastman died in 1932. His home became a museum 17 years later. The Eastman House museum displays rare old photographs and cameras. It is a center for restoring and preserving old movies. Younger visitors, however, regard film photography much as the first Kodak owners regarded glass-plate photography. With the modern digital camera and smartphone, the memory card has replaced the roll of film, and the "darkroom" is a computer and social media.

darkrooms
special rooms
for developing
photographs

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- 5. This passage does not discuss digital photography, except with a passing mention at the end. It does discuss changes in photography and the Eastman House Museum of Photography, but these ideas are only discussed in reference to how they relate to George Eastman and his life and accomplishments. The main idea of the passage is George Eastman and the work he did in photography. Choice C is correct. **(8R2)**
- 6. The author’s focus is on George Eastman and his work in developing a camera that could be used by anyone. The author develops this idea by giving background information on George Eastman’s life and then moving through the different developments he made in photography. Finally, he discusses the success of the Kodak camera and its effects on the field of photography. **(8R2)**
- 7. Summaries should include the most important points and the main idea of the passage. A good summary of this passage should include why Eastman started experimenting with photography, his development of the Kodak camera and why it was important, as well as the effect of his success on his life. **(8R2)**

5 What is this passage mainly about?

- A how photography has changed over the years
- B the Eastman House Museum of Photography
- C the life and work of George Eastman**
- D how digital photography works

6 How does the author develop the central idea of this passage?

The author's central idea is the life of George Eastman, specifically his achievement in creating a camera for the public. He develops this idea by telling how George became interested in photography and then moving through the various types of photograph development processes he created until he finally made one that was practical for everyday use.

7 Write a summary of the passage.

George Eastman invented the film camera that made photography simple. He spent his early years in low-paying jobs. After he bought his first camera, he realized that there had to be an easier way to take pictures, and he devoted himself to inventing one. The Kodak camera and the film process it used made him rich. He gave away a lot of his money to support health and education. Today, the home he built in Rochester, New York, is a museum of photography.

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SKILL STRATEGY

Main Idea

See pages 14–15 of the teacher’s edition.

LISTENING/SPEAKING ACTIVITY

As a class, discuss the importance of photography in recording history. Have students share their own experiences with photography and why they think so many people enjoy taking pictures.

ELLS ACTIVITY

Discuss the saying “A picture is worth a thousand words.” Have students share what they think this saying means and if they think it is true.