If you’ve ever read two articles about a movie star, you often come away with two totally different impressions. Even if two pieces of writing are about the same topic, they don’t always present the same ideas. This can be because each author has a different purpose for writing, a different point of view about the topic, or access to different information. For example, an author writing a **biography**, or a true account of a person’s life, will have a different perspective than the person writing his or her own **autobiography** that tells about the same events from personal experience.

Read the following historic accounts. The first describes the 1969 moon landing from the viewpoint of a woman who witnessed the event, and the second is part of a student’s history report. Compare and contrast the details chosen by the authors.

**I’ll never forget the day that Apollo 11 landed on the moon. It was July 20, 1969, and I had just turned 12. Although it took place late on a Sunday night our time, my parents let me stay up past my bedtime to join the millions of people watching Neil Armstrong take the first step on the moon’s surface. I still recall how my imagination raced. Would I be able to live on the moon one day? At that moment, anything seemed possible.**

**At 10:56 PM Eastern Daylight Time on Sunday, July 20, 1969, Neil Armstrong became the first person to set foot on the surface of the moon. Astronaut Buzz Aldrin followed Armstrong onto the lunar surface 20 minutes later. These historic events were broadcast from the moon’s surface and watched by perhaps the largest television audience ever—approximately half a billion people around the world.**

**Circle information that is the same or similar in both texts. Then underline details in each text that do not appear in the other.**

Both texts discuss the same event, but each author wrote for a different purpose. The first reflects on her personal experience, while the second writes to inform readers. When reading different texts on the same topic, think about factors that affect the writing. Compare and contrast the authors’ purposes, resources, and points of view to help you understand why each author chose to include certain details and leave out others.
Read the following short biography of Amelia Earhart. Then read and answer the question that follows.

Born to Fly by Ann Randall

Amelia Earhart didn't always dream of becoming an aviator. While she had seen airplanes growing up, it wasn’t until her early twenties that she realized she was born to fly. When Earhart was 20 years old, she and a friend attended a stunt-flying contest. Their fun ended, however, when one of the planes came zooming toward them. In spite of the danger, Earhart stood firm, displaying the same fearlessness that she would continue to show all her life. This encounter proved to be a sign of things to come: just a few years later, Earhart found herself flying inside an airplane.

On December 28, 1920, pilot Frank Hawks changed Earhart’s life by taking her on her first plane ride. It was then that she knew she was meant to be in the air. Earhart attended her first flying lesson just five days later, and by 1922, she was already setting records: She became the first woman to fly to an altitude of 14,000 feet. Over the next 15 years, Earhart would continue to make her mark on the record books time and time again, proving that flying was truly in her blood.

How does the author’s purpose influence the focus of the text and the details presented?

The author wants to focus on the early part of Earhart’s life to explain her passion for flying. Which facts has the author presented to show how Earhart’s experiences started her on the path to becoming a famous and fearless aviator?

On the lines below, explain the author’s purpose and how facts from the text support it.

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

With a partner, discuss the author’s point of view about Amelia Earhart and how these feelings are shown throughout the text. How might the author’s point of view toward Earhart have affected her choice of details and her presentation of events?
Read another biography of Amelia Earhart. Use the Close Reading and the Hint to complete the activity.

**Earhart on Equality**  
by Brian Vargas

As a famous female aviator, Amelia Earhart did much to advance equality for women. In 1928, she became the first woman to fly across the Atlantic, and she spent the rest of her life fearlessly flying farther, faster. Earhart was first to fly many long, dangerous routes, and she encouraged other women to fly. She championed women in the sciences as a guest professor at Purdue University. She said, “Women must try to do things as men have tried. When they fail, their failure must be but a challenge to others.”

**Hint**
Both biographies contain some of the same facts, but the authors use them differently. How does this help convey different messages about Amelia Earhart?

**Fill in the chart below based on the two biographies you read.**
Write facts that are different under the title of each biography. Write facts that are similar in the two biographies under Both.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>“Born to Fly”</th>
<th>Both</th>
<th>“Earhart on Equality”</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Show Your Thinking**
Using the chart above, compare and contrast the presentation of facts in the biographies.

With a partner, discuss why these two biographies about Earhart are different. Consider the authors’ purposes for writing, their points of view, and the information they chose.
As I read, I’ll think about how Helen Keller’s memory and emotions influence her writing. I’ll put an asterisk (*) next to text details that only she would know.

Close Reading

**Circle** words and phrases in the title and first two sentences that tell you who is writing this memoir and what she is describing.

**Underline** words and phrases in the selection that show Helen Keller’s thoughts and feelings about the event she describes. What do you think she wants the reader to understand?

from *The Story of My Life* by Helen Keller

1. My teacher had been with me several weeks before I understood that everything had a name. One day, while I was playing with my new doll, Miss Sullivan put my big rag doll into my lap also, spelled “d-o-l-l” and tried to make me understand that “d-o-l-l” applied to both. Earlier in the day we had had a tussle over the word “m-u-g.” Miss Sullivan had tried to impress it upon me that “m-u-g” is *mug* and that “w-a-t-e-r” is *water*, but I persisted in confounding the two.* In despair she had dropped the subject for the time, only to renew it at the first opportunity. I became impatient at her repeated attempts* and, seizing the new doll, I dashed it upon the floor. I felt my teacher sweep the fragments to one side of the hearth, and I had a sense of satisfaction that the cause of my discomfort was removed.* She brought me my hat, and I knew I was going out into the warm sunshine.*

2. We walked down the path to the well-house. Some one was drawing water and my teacher placed my hand under the spout. As the cool stream gushed over one hand she spelled into the other the word *water*, first slowly, then rapidly. I stood still, my whole attention fixed upon the motions of her fingers. Suddenly I felt a misty consciousness as of something forgotten—a thrill of returning thought; and somehow the mystery of language was revealed to me. I knew then that “w-a-t-e-r” meant the wonderful cool something that was flowing over my hand. That living word awakened my soul, gave it light, hope, joy, set it free!
Lesson 19

Part 4: Guided Practice

I wonder why the author wanted to write this biography of Helen Keller. I’m going to look for clues that help me understand her purpose as I read.

**Close Reading**

What event is described in Helen Keller’s memoir on page 190? **Box** the information about the same event in this biography.

**Underline** at least three important facts that the author of this biography includes that are not present in Helen Keller’s memoir. How does the inclusion of these facts help you understand that the author’s purpose for writing is different from Helen’s?

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**A Remarkable Life**  
*by Mary Wilkes*

1. For a year and a half after Helen Keller’s birth on June 27, 1880, she was a healthy, bright child. She started to talk at six months old and walked at one. However, all of that changed when, in February of 1882, she came down with a high fever. Although she survived, her family soon discovered that the illness had left her blind and deaf.

2. Young Helen found ways to cope with her new situation, such as developing a limited system of signs with a playmate. By the time she was seven, though, she had also become wild and undisciplined. Desperate, her family finally contacted the Perkins Institute for the Blind, which recommended a recent graduate, Anne Sullivan, to work with Helen. Of course, most people know the story of how Sullivan helped Helen realize that “w-a-t-e-r” meant the liquid running over her hand. Helen learned thirty new words that first day and went on to quickly master finger signs, touch-lip reading, and Braille reading and typing.

3. Determined to complete college, Helen graduated with high honors from Radcliffe in 1904; she also wrote and published her autobiography, *The Story of My Life*, in 1903. She wrote ten other books and many articles in her lifetime. Her greatest achievements, however, were her efforts to help others around the country and throughout the world. Many of her visits prompted the creation of new resources for blind and deaf-blind individuals. Because she could relate to people’s difficulties, she worked with leaders to improve their situations. Everywhere she went, she spread a message of strength and courage, a legacy that stands to this day.
Part 4: Guided Practice

Lesson 19

Hints

Think about the kinds of facts provided by each author. Why do they include these facts? What do they each hope to achieve?

1. How does Helen Keller’s purpose for writing her memoir differ from that of the biographer who wrote about her life?
   A. Helen tries to inform people about the facts of her life, but the biographer wants people to know about Helen’s personality.
   B. Helen tries to explain her childhood actions, while the biographer writes to tell people about Helen’s wild childhood.
   C. Helen wants to reflect on her experiences, while the biographer writes to inform people about events in Helen Keller’s life.
   D. Helen wants to entertain people by describing her point of view, but the biographer wants to amaze people with facts.

2. What event appears both in Helen Keller’s memoir and the biography of Helen Keller?
   A. how she lost both her hearing and sight
   B. how she learned that things have names
   C. how she learned to touch-read people’s lips
   D. how she helped the blind all over the world

3. Explain how the two accounts of Helen Keller’s life are different. Think about the event they both describe. What do you learn about it in the memoir? What do you learn from the biography?

   What text did you draw a box around in the biography on page 191?

What do you learn from a memoir that you can’t from a biography? How does learning about many parts of a person’s life in a biography help you understand one part?
Read the two articles about the creation of Spider-Man. Then answer the questions that follow.

Stan Lee and Spider-Man

by Simmi Patel

1 Spider-Man is a popular comic book superhero who continues to delight his fans some 50 years after his creation. In the autobiography Excelsior! The Amazing Life of Stan Lee, his creator, Stan Lee explains his version of how Spider-Man came to life.

2 Stan Lee had been working in the comic book business for over twenty years. He wanted to create a hero who had a realistic life in addition to superpowers. Lee presented his idea to his boss and publisher, Martin Goodman.

3 “I told Martin I wanted to feature a hero who had just a touch of super strength but his main power was that he could stick to walls and ceilings,” Lee says.1 Lee explained that his hero, Spider-Man, would also be a normal teenager. Spider-Man would be raised by his Aunt May and Uncle Ben and have all the normal problems of an adolescent. The hero would be worried about money, allergies, girls, and anything else that Lee could think of.

4 According to Lee, the creation of Spider-Man had sprung from his reading as a child. One of his favorite magazines was called The Spider—Master of Men, and Lee loved that name. He remembers the character wearing a slouch hat and a special spider ring. If The Spider hit someone, he would leave the impression of a spider on his victim. Although Lee remembers The Spider vividly, he clarified that this character never had superpowers like Spider-Man.

5 According to Lee, Martin Goodman hated his idea. Goodman felt that a superhero couldn't be a teenager with personal problems. He said that Spider-Man seemed more like a comedy character than a powerful superhero. Since most people don't like spiders, Goodman thought that the name “Spider-Man” was a terrible choice.

6 But Lee couldn't give up on his idea of Spider-Man. He gave artist Jack Kirby a plot line for Spider-Man and asked him to illustrate it. As Lee tells it, “Jack started to draw, but when I saw that he was making our main character, Peter Parker, a powerful-looking, handsome, self-confident typical hero type, I realized that wasn't the style I was looking for. So I took Jack off the project. He couldn't care less because he had so many other strips to draw at the time, and Spider-Man wasn't exactly our top-of-the-line character.”2

7 Lee reassigned the project to Steve Ditko, who used a more subtle and stylized style of drawing. Ditko’s rendition was exactly what Lee had in mind. They finished the comic strip, and it was published in the last issue of Amazing Fantasy in 1962. When sales figures of that publication came in, they showed that the Spider-Man issue was a huge success. According to Lee, Goodman ran into Lee’s office to congratulate himself.

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2 Lee and Mair, p. 127.
and Lee on the new character. Lee says, “I can still hear his now-classic comment, ‘Stan, remember that Spider-Man idea of yours that I liked so much? Why don’t we turn it into a series?’”

8 Spider-Man became one of the most successful comic book characters ever. When Spider-Man headed up Marvel comic books’ line of heroes, sales increased from 7 million copies in 1961 to 13 million copies in 1962.

9 After Steve Ditko stopped drawing Spider-Man, artist John Romita took over. He slowly incorporated his own style, and Peter became tall and handsome as he grew up. The characters gradually took on a new look, and the Spider-Man comic strip continued to increase in popularity.

Lee and Mair, p. 128.

Lee and Mair, p. 132.

The Birth of Spider-Man

by Max Bruno

1 What do you think of when you hear the name Spider-Man? A superhero who can cling to almost anything? Devices that shoot spider webs? A “spider sense” to outwit enemies?

2 Since his appearance in the early 1960s, Spider-Man has been different than other comic book superheroes. Initially, he was a teenager who had to deal with loneliness, rejection, and other realistic problems. Over the years, Peter Parker went to college, got married, taught high school, and became a freelance photographer. By 2011, he had become a member of two superhero teams, the Avengers and the Fantastic Four. But how did Spider-Man crawl into existence?

3 In his autobiography, Excelsior! The Amazing Life of Stan Lee, Lee explains his version of the birth of Spider-Man. Stan Lee had been working in the comic book business since 1939. Lee always wanted to be a writer, and he began by writing comic book text filler. Later, he wrote features and became an editor before he was 20. According to Lee, he had been trying to develop a superhero who also needed to deal with the normal problems of daily life. He presented his idea to his boss, Martin Goodman. Lee maintains that Goodman thought Spider-Man was a terrible idea.

4 Lee claims he asked artist Jack Kirby to illustrate his plot line but later reassigned the job to artist Steve Ditko. Lee liked Ditko’s stylized approach. The comic strip was published in 1962, and it became a huge success.

5 Others, however, have called Lee’s version of events into question. In the book Stan Lee and the Rise and Fall of the American Comic Book, authors Jordan Raphael and Tom Spurgeon take a different viewpoint. They claim that the original Spider-Man was the result of the work of several artists and writers. Stan Lee wanted to create a spider superhero, but artist Jack Kirby also wanted to draw an insect superhero. Raphael and Spurgeon explain, “Stan Lee expressed the desire to do a teenage superhero using the spider motif. Jack Kirby had long wanted to do an insect-related superhero.” Kirby started to put together a slightly different version of the tale. He rejected “some of the more fantastic Lee story elements,” instead adding “a kindly aunt and uncle, and giving the superhero a secret origin revolving around a neighbor who happened to be a scientist.”

The character of Spider-Man was eventually given to artist Steve Ditko. He worked from a story summary and Kirby’s ideas, and eventually he created the drawings of Spider-Man and Peter Parker with “bottle-thick glasses, slumped shoulders, and a homemade costume. Ditko was nearly as sharp as Kirby when it came to shaping characters in ways that would make them effective on the page. The Spider-Man millions of readers came to know and love got his youth and voice from Stan Lee and his human frailty from Steve Ditko.” And the first cover drawing of Spider-Man was drawn by Jack Kirby.

According to Raphael and Spurgeon, Lee often built on contributions from other artists. Comic book publishers tried to produce as many books as possible in a short amount of time, and Lee encouraged everyone to contribute ideas. As more writers and artists were hired, everyone shared ideas. Later, legal and financial questions arose regarding who actually created which comic book character. But during the early 1960s, superhero comic books flourished through this collaborative process.

Raphael and Spurgeon, pp. 93–94.
3 Which fact appears in both articles?
A Martin Goodman felt that the name “Spider-Man” was a terrible choice.
B Spider-Man was probably the result of several writers’ ideas.
C Steve Ditko created the art for the character of Spider-Man.
D Jack Kirby also wanted to create a superhero that looked like an insect.

4 Compare and contrast the way the two authors presented information about Spider-Man in these articles. Describe similarities and differences in the authors’ purposes, their points of view, and the facts they chose. Use evidence from the articles to support your response.

Self Check Go back and see what you can check off on the Self Check on page 177.
Lesson 19  (Student Book pages 187–196)

Comparing and Contrasting Texts

Theme: American Icons

LESSON OBJECTIVES

• Recognize the difference between facts and opinions.

• Compare and contrast texts by different authors about the same topic or event.

• Identify how an author’s purpose for writing influences the focus of the text and the details presented.

THE LEARNING PROGRESSION

• Grade 5: CCLS RI.5.9 requires students to integrate information from several texts on the same topic in order to write or speak about the subject knowledgeably.

• Grade 6: CCLS RI.6.9 builds on the Grade 5 standard by having students compare and contrast one author’s presentation of events with that of another. Students compare and contrast texts on the same events, not simply the same subject.

• Grade 7: CCLS RI.7.9 requires students to analyze how two or more authors writing about the same topic shape their presentations of key information by emphasizing different evidence or advancing different interpretations of facts.

PREREQUISITE SKILLS

• Identify the central idea and topic of a text.

• Compare and contrast different aspects of nonfiction texts.

• Identify an author’s point of view and purpose for writing.

TAP STUDENTS’ PRIOR KNOWLEDGE

• Tell students they will be working on a lesson comparing and contrasting different texts about the same topics and events. Remind students of the different purposes authors have for writing. (to inform, entertain, persuade)

• Ask students why it is important to determine the author’s purpose while reading. (Depending on the author’s purpose, he or she might present only some of the important details. Readers might not get the whole picture or all of the information.)

• Have students think about the difference between facts and opinions. (A fact is information that can be proved to be true. An opinion is what someone thinks, feels, or believes.)

• Then have students think about the difference between first-person and third-person accounts. (A first-person account, such as an autobiography, tells about events from someone who was there to experience them. A third-person account, such as a biography, relates facts about events from someone who wasn’t there when they happened.)

• Explain to students that they should always pay attention to the author’s purpose for writing. It helps them not only better understand the text but also interpret the information that is provided.

PREREQUISITE SKILLS

• Identify the central idea and topic of a text.

• Compare and contrast different aspects of nonfiction texts.

• Identify an author’s point of view and purpose for writing.

CCLS Focus

RI.6.9 Compare and contrast one author’s presentation of events with that of another (e.g., a memoir written by and a biography on the same person).

**AT A GLANCE**

By reading two historical accounts of the same event, students practice comparing and contrasting texts.

**STEP BY STEP**

- Remind students that authors have different purposes for writing. Writing can be entertaining, educational, persuasive, or personal. Explain that two authors can write about the same event but with a different purpose for writing.

- Read the first paragraph and review the meanings of *biography* and *autobiography*. Have students compare and contrast the features of each.

- Have students read the two historical accounts. Then have them determine each author’s purpose for writing. What is the same about the two accounts? What is different?

- To help students compare and contrast the two accounts, have them circle information that is the same or similar between the two paragraphs. Then have them underline details that are in one account but not the other.

- Discuss with students the information they marked. Then read the paragraph at the bottom of the page and have students compare the details they circled and underlined to the information in the paragraph.

**Genre Focus**

**Informational Texts: Memoir**

Explain to students that a memoir is a form of autobiographical writing in which the writer shares details of their own life with readers. Memoirs are often informal or intimate in tone.

Remind students that an autobiography is an informational text about the events in the author’s life. Autobiographies include facts and details about the person’s life. They are usually written by famous people who have achieved great things, but they can be written by anyone. Often, an autobiography will focus on the reflections and important memories a person has about his or her life.

A memoir is slightly different from other autobiographies in that it usually relates very personal thoughts and feelings. It is more personal in nature. An autobiography is written to keep the writer’s memories alive, but a memoir is written to keep the writer’s feelings and emotions alive.

Point out that diaries can sometimes be a form of memoir. Cite the example of *The Diary of a Young Girl* by Anne Frank. She wrote it as a personal diary, but it was later published as a personal memoir of an important person during a significant time in history.

Have students share examples of other memoirs and autobiographies with which they are familiar.
Students read a short biography of Amelia Earhart and then determine how the author’s purpose influences the focus of the text.

**STEP BY STEP**

- Remind students they just compared and contrasted two texts about the same event—the moon landing. Tell students that in this lesson they will read a short biography of Amelia Earhart. They will determine the author’s purpose for writing and how that purpose influences the focus of the text.

- Read aloud the biography “Born to Fly.” Then read the question “How does the author’s purpose influence the focus of the text and the details presented?”

- Tell students you will use a Think Aloud to demonstrate a way of answering the question.

**Think Aloud:** This is a biography, not an autobiography, so the author’s purpose for writing is most likely to inform. She wants the reader to learn more about Amelia Earhart and her life. This article is about the early part of Earhart’s life. The author wants to explain how and why Earhart learned to love flying.

- Have students circle or underline details that help the reader understand how and why Amelia Earhart learned to love flying.

**Think Aloud:** The second paragraph talks about how Frank Hawks took her for her first flight and how she took flying lessons five days later. This is important. It shows that Earhart was immediately in love with flying and wanted to learn how to do it herself.

- Have students respond to the prompt with other facts from the text. Sample response: The author writes to inform readers about Earhart’s early career and how she decided she wanted to be a pilot. For example, the text mentions her first flight with Frank Hawks and how she took flying lessons five days later.

- Then have partners discuss the question at the bottom of the page. Sample response: The author respects and admires Amelia Earhart. She includes positive language such as “fearless,” “born to fly,” and “flying was truly in her blood.” The author included this language and the specific facts that she chose in order to show readers Earhart’s greatness.

- With a partner, discuss the author’s point of view about Amelia Earhart and how these feelings are shown throughout the text. How might the author’s point of view toward Earhart have affected her choice of details and her presentation of events?

**ELL Support: Contractions**

- Explain to students that a contraction is two words that have been joined together and shortened. When the words are joined, letters are dropped. An apostrophe is added to take the place of any dropped letters.

- Work with students to identify the two words in a contraction. Point out the word didn’t in paragraph 1. Explain that it is made up of the words did not. Tell students that the letter o in not has been dropped, and an apostrophe has been put in its place.

- Next, point out the word wasn’t in paragraph 1 and Earhart’s in paragraph 2. Have students identify which word is a contraction (wasn’t) and tell what two words are in it (was and not). Point out that Earhart’s is a possessive noun that shows ownership. (L.6.1)
Lesson 19
Part 3: guided Instruction

189

Genre:
Biography

Show your thinking

Read another biography of Amelia Earhart. Use the Close Reading and the Hint to complete the activity.

Earhart on Equality

As a famous female aviator, Amelia Earhart did much to advance equality for women. In 1928, she became the first woman to fly across the Atlantic, and she spent the rest of her life fearlessly flying farther, faster. Earhart was first to fly many long, dangerous routes, and she encouraged other women to fly. She championed women in the sciences as a guest professor at Purdue University. She said, “Women must try to do things as men have tried. When they fail, their failure must be but a challenge to others.”

Fill in the chart below based on the two biographies you read. Write facts that are different under the title of each biography. Write facts that are similar in the two biographies under Both.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>“Born to Fly”</th>
<th>Both</th>
<th>“Earhart on Equality”</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>First airplane ride in 1920</td>
<td>Female aviator</td>
<td>First woman to fly across the Atlantic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Flying lessons 5 days later</td>
<td>Fearless</td>
<td>Encouraged women to fly and be scientists</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female altitude record</td>
<td>Set records</td>
<td>Said women must try the same as men</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Hint

Both biographies contain some of the same facts, but the authors use them differently. How does this help convey different messages about Amelia Earhart?

Responses will vary.

With a partner, discuss why these two biographies about Earhart are different. Consider the authors’ purposes for writing, their points of view, and the information they chose.

Tier 2 Vocabulary: Championed

- Direct students to the word championed. Remind them that they can look for other words in the text that have a similar meaning, or are synonyms, to help them understand an unfamiliar word. Ask them to identify synonyms and other context clues that help them understand the meaning of championed. (“encouraged,” “challenge”) Then have them define championed in their own words. (“supported”)

- Encourage students to use a thesaurus to identify synonyms of championed as it is used in this text. (RI.6.4; L.6.4.a; L.6.4.c)

AT A GLANCE

Students read another biographical article about Amelia Earhart. They then identify details to help them compare and contrast each text.

STEP BY STEP

- Tell students they will read another biographical article about Amelia Earhart. They should read for details that are similar to and different from the first biography.

- Close Reading helps students identify details about Earhart’s life that this author chose to include. The Hint will help students recognize the different ways that authors can use facts and details.

- Have students read the article and underline important facts about Amelia Earhart, as directed by Close Reading.

- Ask volunteers to share the facts they underlined. Discuss why these facts are important and whether they are different from the facts used in “Born to Fly.” If necessary, ask, “What was Earhart the first to do?”

- Have students fill in the chart with information from both articles.

- Then have partners respond to the prompts in Show Your Thinking. Sample response: Both name her as a famous, fearless aviator who set records. The first biography focuses on Earhart’s early life and what motivated her to become a famous aviator. The second was written to show her accomplishments on behalf of all women.

ANSWER ANALYSIS

Refer to the annotations provided on the facsimile page at right.

ERROR ALERT: Students who had difficulty completing the chart may not have understood similarities between the two articles. Have them ask themselves: “What do I learn about in the first article that I then read about in the second article?”
Part 4: Guided Practice

Lesson 19

AT A GLANCE

Students read a memoir by Helen Keller twice. After the first reading, you will ask three questions to check your students’ comprehension of the passage.

STEP BY STEP

• Have students read the memoir silently without referring to the Study Buddy or Close Reading text.

• Ask the following questions to ensure students’ comprehension of the text:

  Why are many of the words in this passage spelled out with letters? (Helen is showing that she was learning everything had a name and those names are spelled with letters.)

  How does Helen feel after she breaks the doll? (She feels good. She is happy that she has gotten rid of something that was bothering her and causing her problems.)

  How does Helen finally learn the word water? (She feels cool water rush over her hand as it is pumped from a well.)

• Ask students to reread the passage and look at the Study Buddy think aloud. What does the Study Buddy help them think about?

Tip: The Study Buddy asks students to identify details that reveal Helen's emotions and how they influence her writing. This is the very nature of the author’s purpose for writing. Students should repeatedly practice this as they read memoirs.

• Have students answer the questions and follow the directions in the Close Reading.

Tip: The Close Reading asks students to analyze Helen's purpose for writing. Be sure students are familiar with the differences between biographies (such as those about Amelia Earhart) and autobiographies and their differing purposes.

Tier 2 Vocabulary: Confounding

• Point out the word confounding in paragraph 1. Have students identify the part of speech (verb). Then encourage them to use context clues to determine the meaning of this word. If students need to, they may also use a dictionary to find the definition of the word as it is used in this context. ("mixing up or confusing two things")

• Have students give examples of other related words that would make sense in this context. (confusing, mixing up) (RI.6.4; L.6.4.a; L.6.4.d)
Students read another article about Helen Keller, this one a biography. After the first reading, you will ask three questions to check your students’ comprehension of the text.

**STEP BY STEP**

- Have students read the biography silently without referring to the Study Buddy or Close Reading text.

- Ask the following questions to ensure students’ comprehension of the text:

  **Who is the subject of this article? Did he or she write it?** *(The subject is Helen Keller. She did not write this passage; it is a biography by Mary Wilkes.)*

  **How does this article begin?** *(The biography begins with Helen’s birth in 1880.)*

  **What kinds of details does the author include in this article? What are some examples?** *(The author includes many facts and details about Helen’s life. Examples include her time learning from Anne Sullivan and what she accomplished after graduating from Radcliffe in 1904.)*

- Ask students to reread the biography and look at the Study Buddy think aloud. What does the Study Buddy help them think about?

**Tip:** The Study Buddy helps students look for clues that point to the author’s purpose for writing. This will be different from the memoir. Students should recognize and understand that both texts are about the same topic, but they have different purposes.

- Have students answer the questions and follow the directions in the Close Reading.

**Tip:** The Close Reading guides students to look for similarities and differences. Encourage students to think about how details that are unique to this text reveal the author’s purpose for writing. This will help them better understand what they read.

- Finally, have students answer the questions on page 192. Use the Answer Analysis to discuss correct and incorrect responses.

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**ELL Support: Prefixes**

- Explain to students that many English words have prefixes. A prefix is a group of letters that is added to the beginning of a word to change the word’s meaning.

- Direct students to the word *undisciplined* on this page. Write the word on the board and circle the prefix. *(un-*) Then point out the base word. *(discipline)*

- Encourage students to read the sentence aloud and try to determine the meaning of the word and prefix. Then have students think of or find other words with prefixes. *(L.6.4.b)*
STEP BY STEP

• Have students read questions 1–3, using the Hints to help them answer those questions.

Tip: Question 3 requires students to compare and contrast the articles about Helen Keller. Students should have already identified much of this information as they read those texts. Remind students to pay attention to the authors’ purposes.

• Discuss with students the Answer Analysis below.

ANSWER ANALYSIS

1 The correct choice is C. The memoir includes more personal feelings and reflections on her life. The biography includes more facts and is intended to inform. Choice A is incorrect because Helen doesn’t want simply to inform people about her life. She wants to share some personal experiences. Choice B is incorrect because Helen doesn’t attempt to explain her actions, and the biographer never calls Helen’s childhood “wild.” Choice D is incorrect because neither text is written to entertain.

2 The correct choice is B. Both articles mention the event when Helen realized that “w-a-t-e-r” meant cool liquid, or water. Choices A, C, and D are incorrect because those events are not mentioned in both texts—only in the biography.

3 Sample response: Both texts tell about how Sullivan helped Helen learn about the names for things. The memoir describes the events in detail, along with Helen’s thoughts and feelings. The biography gives less detail about the event itself, but it describes other important events in her life in a factual way.

RETEACHING

Use a chart to organize details from the texts to answer Question 3. Draw the chart below, and have students fill in the boxes. Sample responses are provided.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>The Story of My Life</th>
<th>Both</th>
<th>“A Remarkable Life”</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>lots of detail</td>
<td>Anne Sullivan helped Helen learn about the names of things.</td>
<td>not much detail describes other events</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>includes thoughts and feelings</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Integrating Standards

Use these questions to further students’ understanding of the two texts.

1 What can you infer from the memoir about Helen’s attempts to learn that everything has a name? (RI.6.1)

Helen says she “persisted in confounding” different words. She also describes her impatience and discomfort. I can infer that this was a very difficult process for her, and she was easily frustrated while she was trying to learn. Once she learns that “w-a-t-e-r” means water, she says the realization “awakened my soul . . . set it free.”

2 How does the biography introduce the event when Helen learns that words name things? (RI.6.3)

The event is quickly referenced as something “most people know.” It is used as an example of the obstacles Helen had to overcome.
Read the two articles about the creation of Spider-Man. Then answer the questions that follow.

**Stan Lee and Spider-Man**

*by Simmi Patel*

1. Spider-Man is a popular comic book superhero who continues to delight his fans some 50 years after his creation. In the autobiography *Excelsior! The Amazing Life of Stan Lee*, his creator, Stan Lee explains his version of how Spider-Man came to life.

2. Stan Lee had been working in the comic book business for over twenty years. He wanted to create a hero who had a realistic life in addition to superpowers. Lee presented his idea to his boss and publisher, Martin Goodman.

3. "I told Martin I wanted to feature a hero who had just a touch of super strength but his main power was that he could stick to walls and ceilings," Lee says. 1 Lee explains that his hero, Spider-Man, would also be a normal teenager. Spider-Man would be raised by his Aunt May and Uncle Ben and have all the normal problems of an adolescent. The hero would be worried about money, allergies, girls, and anything else that Lee could think of.

4. According to Lee, the creation of Spider-Man had sprung from his reading as a child. One of his favorite magazines was called *The Spider—Master of Men*, and Lee loved that name. He remembers the character wearing a duchess hat and a special spider ring. If the Spider hit someone, he would leave the impression of a spider on his victim. Although Lee remembers *The Spider* vividly, he clarified that this character never had superpowers like Spider-Man.

5. According to Lee, Martin Goodman hated his idea. Goodman felt that a superhero couldn’t be a teenager with personal problems. He said that Spider-Man sounded more like a comedy character than a powerful superhero. Since most people didn’t like superheroes, Goodman thought that the name “Spider-Man” was a terrible choice.

6. But Lee couldn’t give up on his ideas of Spider-Man. He gave artist Jack Kirby a plot line for Spider-Man and asked him to illustrate it. As Lee tells it, “Jack started to draw, but when I saw that he was making our main character, Peter Parker, a powerful-looking, handsome, self-confident typical hero type, I realized that wasn’t the style he was looking for. So I took Jack off the project. He couldn’t care less because he had so many other strips to draw at the time, and Spider-Man wasn’t exactly our top-of-the-line character.” 2

7. Lee reassigned the project to Steve Ditko, who used a more subtle and stylized style of drawing. Ditko’s rendition was exactly what Lee had in mind. They finished the comic strip, and it was published in the last issue of *Amazing Fantasy* in 1962. When sales figures of that publication came in, they showed that the last issue of the comic book was a huge success. According to Lee, Goodman ran into Lee’s office to congratulate himself in 1962. When sales figures of that publication came in, they showed that the last issue of the comic book was a huge success. According to Lee, Goodman ran into Lee’s office to congratulate himself in 1962.

8. Lee reassigned the project to Steve Ditko, who used a more subtle and stylized style of drawing. Ditko’s rendition was exactly what Lee had in mind. They finished the comic strip, and it was published in the last issue of *Amazing Fantasy* in 1962. When sales figures of that publication came in, they showed that the last issue of the comic book was a huge success. According to Lee, Goodman ran into Lee’s office to congratulate himself in 1962. When sales figures of that publication came in, they showed that the last issue of the comic book was a huge success. According to Lee, Goodman ran into Lee’s office to congratulate himself in 1962.

**The Birth of Spider-Man**

*by Max Bruno*

1. What do you think of when you hear the name Spider-Man? A superhero who can cling to anything? Devices that shoot spider webs? A “spider sense” to inform him? 1

2. Since his appearance in the early 1960s, Spider-Man has been different than other comic book superheroes. Initially, he was a teenager who had to deal with loneliness, rejection, and other realistic problems. Over the years, Peter Parker went to college, got married, raised high school, and became a freelance photographer. By 2011, he had become a member of two superhero teams, the Avengers and the Fantastic Four. But how did Spider-Man crawl into existence?

3. In his autobiography, *Excelsior! The Amazing Life of Stan Lee*, Lee explains his version of the birth of Spider-Man. Stan Lee had been working in the comic book business since 1959. Lee always wanted to be a writer, and he began by writing comic book text fillers. Later, he wrote features and became an editor before he was 20. According to Lee, he had been trying to develop a superhero who also needed to deal with the normal problems of daily life. He presented his idea to his boss, Martin Goodman. Lee maintains that Goodman thought Spider-Man was a terrible idea.

4. Lee claims he asked artist Jack Kirby to illustrate his plot line but later reassigned the job to artist Steve Ditko. Lee liked Ditko’s stylized approach. The comic strip was published in 1962, and it became a huge success.

5. Others, however, have called Lee’s version of events into question. In the book *Stan Lee and the Rise and Fall of the American Comic Book*, authors Jordan Raphael and Tom Spurgeon take a different viewpoint. They claim that the original Spider-Man was the result of the work of several artists and writers. Stan Lee wanted to create a spider superhero, but artist Jack Kirby also wanted to draw an insect superhero. Raphael and Spurgeon explain, “Stan Lee expressed the desire to do a teenage superhero using the spider motif. Jack Kirby had long wanted to do an insect related superhero.” Kirby started to put together a slightly different version of the tale. He rejected “some of the more fantastic Lee story elements,” instead adding “a kindly aunt and uncle, and giving the superhero a secret origin revolving around a neighbor who happened to be a scientist.” 2


2 Lee and Mair, p. 132.

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2 Choice D is correct. The first article says that Goodman hated Lee's idea and felt that "a superhero couldn't be a teenager with personal problems." The second article also says that Goodman thought Spider-Man was "a terrible idea." Choices A, B, and C are incorrect because none of them are supported by evidence in the texts. Martin Goodman was Stan Lee's boss, but there are no details in either text to suggest he developed the character or respected Lee as a writer.

3 Choice C is correct. This fact appears in Paragraph 7 of the first article and in Paragraphs 4 and 6 of the second article. Choice A is not correct because Goodman hated the entire idea of Spider-Man, not just the name. Choices B and D are facts that appear only in the second article.

4 Sample response: Both articles tell about the creation of the comic book character Spider-Man. The first article explains Stan Lee's version of how he came to create the character. The author quotes from Lee's own memoir to describe how ideas about the character came to him over time. The second article claims that the Spider-Man character was the result of the collaboration of many artists, as much from Jack Kirby and Steve Ditko as from Stan Lee. Some information in the second article contradicts what Lee wrote in his memoir. The second author writes that Spider-Man "got his youth and voice from Stan Lee [but] his human frailty from Steve Ditko." The author describing Lee's memoir suggests that Lee himself was the key force behind creating the popular hero.
Integrating Standards

Use these questions and tasks as opportunities to interact with “Stan Lee and Spider-Man” and “The Birth of Spider-Man.”

1. What is the central idea of both articles? How are they different from each other? *(RI.6.2)*

   The central idea of the first article is that Stan Lee was the driving force behind the creation of Spider-Man. The central idea of the second article is that the creation of Spider-Man was a joint effort by several people. These ideas are different because the authors had different purposes for writing.

2. What does the phrase “just a touch” mean in Paragraph 3 of the first article? *(RI.6.4; L.6.5a)*

   The phrase “just a touch” means just a small amount of something. Stan Lee says that he wanted to create a superhero with just a small amount of super strength to make him more relatable and human. His main superpower would be the ability to stick to walls and ceilings.

3. What is the second author's point of view? How is it conveyed in the article? *(RI.6.6)*

   The second author's point of view is that Spider-Man was created by several different people. He disputes Stan Lee’s version of events and introduces evidence to support his own view. He says, “Lee often built on contributions from other artists” and “Lee encouraged everyone to contribute ideas.”

4. Write a summary of the two articles and how they differ from each other. How do the purposes for writing affect the texts? *(RI.6.2; W.6.2)*

   Summaries will vary.

5. Discuss in small groups: Think about creativity and the creation of new ideas. Are new ideas usually from one person, or are they the result of several people’s thinking? *(SL.6.1)*

   Discussions will vary. Remind students to use details from the text to support their ideas. They should also paraphrase other students’ perspectives.
Writing Activities

Write an Argument (W.6.1)

• Have students think about the characteristics of memoirs and autobiographies. Do authors have a bias to present themselves in a certain way? How might this style of writing influence the facts and details the author chooses to include? Can they be believed?

• Ask students to write an argument either for or against the validity of memoirs. Students can take either side of the issue, but they should support their claims with clear reasons and relevant evidence.

Nonrestrictive Elements (L.6.2.a; W.6.4)

• Explain to students that nonrestrictive elements are words, phrases, or dependent clauses that provide additional, but not essential, information to a sentence. These elements are usually set off with commas.

• Direct students to paragraph 3 of “The Birth of Spider-Man.” Point out that the title of Stan Lee’s autobiography is set off with commas. This sentence would be fine without this title, but it provides additional information for the reader.

• Have students find other examples of nonrestrictive elements in this lesson’s articles. Then have students write two or three sentences with nonrestrictive elements set off by commas.

LISTENING ACTIVITY (SL.6.4)

Listen Closely/Present Claims and Findings

• Have small groups of students reread the articles about Spider-Man. Then have them orally present the claims from each text. They should sequence their ideas logically and use relevant facts and details to support the claims.

• Students must listen closely to the oral arguments. They should be able to summarize what they hear and explain how these claims are a result of the authors’ purpose for writing.

DISCUSSION ACTIVITY (RI.6.8; SL.6.1)

Talk in a Group/Evaluate Arguments

• Ask students to compare and contrast the information presented in two articles about the same topic from this lesson.

• Have students evaluate the claims made in each. Which are based in fact? Which are based in personal experience? Students should be able to identify claims that are supported by evidence.

• Appoint one member of each group to take notes. Allow 10 to 15 minutes for discussion, and then have each group share its results with the class.

MEDIA ACTIVITY (RI.6.7)

Be Creative/Read a Graphic Novel

• Direct students to several appropriate graphic novels featuring the character of Spider-Man. If possible, provide different versions of the same event, such as Spider-Man’s origin.

• Students should read the graphic novels and compare and contrast how they each portray the same event. Have them pay attention to the art, dialogue, and tone of each piece.

RESEARCH ACTIVITY (W.6.8; SL.6.4)

Research and Present/Research Amelia Earhart

• Ask students to research more about the life of Amelia Earhart. What important events in her life were not mentioned in either of this lesson’s articles? What else did she do that was interesting or significant?

• Remind students to assess the credibility of each source they choose and quote or paraphrase their conclusions.

• Students should present their findings orally to the class. Have them create a bibliography or references list that includes all their sources.