Riders, Wires, Messages

Track how a history text connects ideas.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RH.6-8.5 "Describe how a text presents information (e.g., sequentially, comparatively, causally)."

NAME _____ DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline at least three words or phrases that connect ideas, and number them 1, 2, and 3. In the margin, write a one-word note for each mark that describes the connection.

A Faster Message

1 In 1860, a letter traveling by Pony Express followed a carefully planned route. First, a rider collected a mail pouch in St. Joseph, Missouri. He rode to a relay station, where he quickly moved the pouch to another horse. At a home station, a new rider took over. This pattern continued day and night across the western United States. Finally, a rider delivered the pouch to Sacramento, California. The service could carry mail in about ten days, much faster than earlier overland mail.

2 The Pony Express and the electric telegraph both carried information across long distances, but they did so differently. A Pony Express message traveled as paper in a rider's pouch, so its arrival depended on horses, weather, and the riders' speed. In contrast, a telegraph operator sent coded electrical signals through wires. The signals reached another operator far sooner than a rider could cross the same distance. However, telegraph lines did not reach every western community when the Pony Express began.

3 The Pony Express lasted only about eighteen months because the transcontinental telegraph was completed in October 1861. Once the new line connected eastern and western telegraph networks, messages could cross the country in minutes rather than days. As a result, most customers no longer needed to pay for the expensive express service. The company ended operations soon afterward. Even so, its riders showed that a scheduled relay system could move mail quickly across difficult land, and their story became a symbol of frontier communication.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. Which paragraph presents a process in time order? Give two signal words or phrases from that paragraph and explain what they help the reader follow.

2. How does paragraph 2 present information? Cite one phrase that signals this relationship, and explain which two communication methods are placed side by side.

3. What cause-and-effect relationship does paragraph 3 explain? Include the cause and at least one effect.

4. Describe how the text's organization changes from paragraph 1 to paragraph 2 to paragraph 3.

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

Write four sentences explaining a different way people send information, such as email, radio, or a text message. Use at least two words or phrases that connect ideas, then write the organization pattern you used on a separate line.

ANSWER KEY

Riders, Wires, Messages

GRADE 7 · RH.6-8.5

PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Underline at least three words or phrases that connect ideas, and number them 1, 2, and 3. In the margin, write a one-word note for each mark that describes the connection. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 · ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	Which paragraph presents a process in time order? Give two signal words or phrases from that paragraph and explain what they help the reader follow.	**Paragraph 1. "First" and "Finally" help the reader follow the steps of moving a mail pouch from St. Joseph to Sacramento.**
2	How does paragraph 2 present information? Cite one phrase that signals this relationship, and explain which two communication methods are placed side by side.	**Paragraph 2 compares the Pony Express and the electric telegraph. "In contrast" signals the comparison between paper carried by riders and electrical signals sent through wires.**
3	What cause-and-effect relationship does paragraph 3 explain? Include the cause and at least one effect.	**Completion of the transcontinental telegraph caused messages to travel in minutes instead of days. As a result, customers no longer needed the expensive Pony Express, and the company ended operations.**
4	Describe how the text's organization changes from paragraph 1 to paragraph 2 to paragraph 3.	**Paragraph 1 uses sequence to show mail delivery steps. Paragraph 2 uses comparison to show differences between the Pony Express and telegraph. Paragraph 3 uses cause and effect to explain why the Pony Express ended.**

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

First, a person opens an email app and writes a message. Next, the app sends the message through the internet to a mail server. Then, the server directs it to the recipient's email account. Finally, the recipient can read the message on a connected device. Pattern: sequential

Accept answers that correctly identify sequence, comparison, and cause-and-effect organization and support them with relevant passage evidence. For Part 3, accept any accurate four-sentence explanation of a different communication method that uses two connection words or phrases and correctly labels its organization.