

Two Views of Totality

Compare a witness account with a report about one eclipse.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RI.4.6 "Compare and contrast a firsthand and secondhand account of the same event or topic; describe the differences in focus and the information provided."

NAME _____

DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK _____ Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline two details in paragraph 2 that show the writer was there. Circle two details in paragraph 3 that explain facts from reports, then use your marks to compare the accounts.

The 2017 Solar Eclipse

- ① On August 21, 2017, a total solar eclipse crossed the United States from Oregon to South Carolina. In Carbondale, Illinois, people saw the Sun disappear completely behind the Moon for about two minutes and forty seconds. The passages below describe that same event. One writer stood in the crowd, while another writer studied reports and explains what happened.
- ② I arrived before noon with my aunt and a pair of safe eclipse glasses. As the sky dimmed, crickets began chirping, and the air felt cooler. Many people lifted their phones, but I kept looking through my glasses until totality began. During totality, a pale, glowing corona surrounded the dark Moon. Everyone around me cheered. I forgot to speak because I was watching the strange sky above us.
- ③ Science reporters explained that a solar eclipse happens when the Moon moves between Earth and the Sun. Totality reached Carbondale because the city lay in the path of the Moon's darkest shadow. Reports also noted that viewers needed special eclipse glasses before and after totality to protect their eyes. The writers focused on the eclipse's cause, path, and safety rather than one person's feelings.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE _____ Use the passage

1 Which paragraph gives a firsthand account? Write two details that show the writer experienced the eclipse.

2 What is the focus of the firsthand account? What is the focus of the secondhand account?

3 Name two facts the secondhand account gives that the firsthand account does not give.

4 How does being a witness change the information in paragraph 2?

3 YOUR TURN _____ Your own words

Choose a school event, such as a game, concert, or fundraiser. Write a two-sentence firsthand account and a two-sentence secondhand account of the same event. Make each account focus on different kinds of information.

PART 1 • READ AND MARK

Underline two details in paragraph 2 that show the writer was there. Circle two details in paragraph 3 that explain facts from reports, then use your marks to compare the accounts. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 • ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	Which paragraph gives a firsthand account? Write two details that show the writer experienced the eclipse.	Paragraph 2. The writer says, “I arrived” with an aunt and describes hearing crickets, feeling cooler air, seeing the corona, and hearing people cheer.
2	What is the focus of the firsthand account? What is the focus of the secondhand account?	The firsthand account focuses on what one person saw, heard, and felt. The secondhand account focuses on facts about how the eclipse happened, where totality occurred, and eye safety.
3	Name two facts the secondhand account gives that the firsthand account does not give.	It explains that the Moon moves between Earth and the Sun, that Carbondale was in the Moon's darkest shadow, and that viewers needed special glasses before and after totality.
4	How does being a witness change the information in paragraph 2?	Because the writer was a witness, paragraph 2 includes personal actions, feelings, and sensory details, such as the cooler air, crickets, cheering, and being unable to speak.

PART 3 • YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

Firsthand account: I stood near the finish line when Maya crossed it first in the fun run. My classmates clapped, and I heard her quick breaths as she stopped. Secondhand account: The school newsletter reported that the fun run raised \$860 for new playground balls. It explained that students ran laps during the morning and families donated money.

Accept answers that correctly identify paragraph 2 as firsthand and paragraph 3 as secondhand, with supporting details from the text. For Your Turn, accept any same-event pair in which the firsthand account includes a witness perspective and the secondhand account gives reported or researched facts.