

River Records

Trace central ideas as they develop and connect in a literary text.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.11-12.2 "Determine two or more themes or central ideas of a text and analyze their development over the course of the text, including how they interact and build on one another to produce a complex account; provide an objective summary of the text."

NAME _____

DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK _____ Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline details that reveal central ideas, label each set A or B, and number 1, 2, or 3 to show the paragraph where each idea develops. Circle the detail that most clearly connects the two ideas.

The Mill Archive

- ① On the first Saturday of May, Lena volunteered in the basement archive of Riverton's library, scanning photographs from the town's closed textile mill. Her grandfather had worked there for forty years and often called the mill the reason Riverton survived. In one image, workers stood beside the river, their boots surrounded by white foam. Lena assumed it was soap from the laundry room until she found a 1978 newspaper clipping about fish dying downstream. She set the photograph aside, uneasy that the building her family praised might also have damaged the place they loved.
- ② Among the mill records, Lena found minutes from a company meeting. Managers had discussed the foam and agreed that changing the waste system would be expensive. A handwritten note in the margin said the river is not empty. The initials matched her grandfather's. Lena had expected the past to offer a simple choice between grateful workers and careless owners. Instead, the note suggested that some employees understood the danger but feared losing wages if the mill slowed down. At dinner, Lena asked her father why no one had mentioned the pollution. He answered that people had needed jobs, then quietly asked her not to judge them too quickly.
- ③ For the library's summer exhibit, Lena placed the photograph, the meeting minutes, and recorded memories from former workers in the same display. Her label explained that the mill supplied paychecks, financed local shops, and polluted the river for years. She also included the unsigned warning, though her father worried neighbors would treat it as an accusation. When visitors gathered, Lena said the exhibit was not meant to make one person a hero or a villain. By showing both dependence on the mill and the consequences of its decisions, she hoped Riverton could remember its workers honestly and demand better choices from future employers.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE _____ Use the passage

1 Identify two central ideas in the passage. For each idea, cite one detail that supports it.

2 How does the idea of economic dependence develop from paragraph 1 through paragraph 3? Use details from each paragraph.

3 How do the two central ideas interact in the final paragraph to create a more complex account of the mill's history?

4 Write an objective summary of the passage in 45 to 60 words. Include the main events and central ideas without adding your opinion.

3 YOUR TURN _____ Your own words

Write one analytical paragraph of 130 to 160 words. State two central ideas, trace each across all three paragraphs with at least three specific details, and explain how their interaction creates a complex account of Riverton's history.

PART 1 • READ AND MARK

Underline details that reveal central ideas, label each set A or B, and number 1, 2, or 3 to show the paragraph where each idea develops. Circle the detail that most clearly connects the two ideas. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 • ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	Identify two central ideas in the passage. For each idea, cite one detail that supports it.	One central idea is that economic reliance can discourage people from confronting wrongdoing, shown by workers' fear of losing wages. Another is that honest community memory must include both benefits and harm, shown by Lena's label naming paychecks and pollution.
2	How does the idea of economic dependence develop from paragraph 1 through paragraph 3? Use details from each paragraph.	Paragraph 1 presents the mill as the source of Riverton's survival through Lena's grandfather's praise. Paragraph 2 explains that workers feared losing wages. Paragraph 3 acknowledges that the mill supplied paychecks and supported local shops.
3	How do the two central ideas interact in the final paragraph to create a more complex account of the mill's history?	The final paragraph shows that dependence on the mill helps explain why people did not speak openly about pollution, but it does not remove responsibility for the damage. Lena presents both realities so the town can remember honestly and expect better decisions later.
4	Write an objective summary of the passage in 45 to 60 words. Include the main events and central ideas without adding your opinion.	While scanning mill archives, Lena discovers evidence that Riverton's textile mill polluted the river despite internal warnings. Records and family conversations reveal workers' dependence on mill wages. For an exhibit, Lena presents the mill's economic benefits and environmental damage together, urging an honest public memory and better future decisions.

PART 3 • YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

Lena's investigation develops two central ideas: economic need can silence moral objections, and truthful community memory requires complexity rather than blame. In the first paragraph, her grandfather's praise of the mill conflicts with the photograph and clipping, introducing a gap between family pride and environmental harm. The second paragraph deepens that conflict when his margin note shows awareness of the danger, while workers fear losing wages and her father resists quick judgment. In the final paragraph, Lena refuses to hide either the jobs or the pollution. Her exhibit joins records with workers' memories and rejects simple heroes and villains. These ideas build on each other because economic dependence explains why the warning remained obscure, but it does not erase the river's damage. A complete memory therefore becomes the basis for holding future employers to better standards.

Accept equivalent central ideas when students support them with accurate details and explain development across the passage. Objective summaries should remain neutral and include Lena's discovery, the workers' dependence on the mill, and the exhibit's balanced presentation.