Blackout in Panels

Use key details to build a clear mental picture.

8.P.EICC.3.d "Summarize and visualize sections of the text to maintain understanding. (I)"

NAME _____ DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline the most important action or change in each paragraph. In the margin, write one or two words that name an image you can picture from that paragraph.

The 2003 Blackout

1 On August 14, 2003, a power failure spread across parts of the northeastern United States and Ontario, Canada. During the late afternoon, transmission lines shut down suddenly in a chain reaction across the region. In New York City, traffic lights went dark, elevators stopped, and subway trains halted. The outage eventually affected about 50 million people. At first, many residents did not know whether the cause was an accident, a natural disaster, or something else.

2 Investigators later found that the blackout did not begin with one dramatic explosion. In Ohio, several high-voltage lines touched overgrown trees and switched off. A computer system that should have warned operators also failed, so the trouble was not recognized quickly. As more lines disconnected, electricity rushed onto other lines, which then overloaded. This cascade cut power to a wide area. The event showed how closely linked electrical systems can be during a major emergency.

3 Without electricity, people used flashlights, walked up apartment stairs, and waited in long lines for buses. Some stores closed because registers and security systems could not operate. Hospitals relied on backup generators, while emergency workers directed traffic at busy intersections. Power returned at different times, and many places were restored by the next day. Afterward, utilities and government agencies studied the failure and strengthened procedures intended to prevent a similar failure from spreading across the region.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. Write a one-sentence summary of paragraph 1 that includes the main event and its immediate effects.

2. List three details from paragraph 2 that you could include in a sketch showing how the failure spread.

3. For a three-box timeline of paragraph 3, what event belongs in each box? Put the events in order.

4. What central idea connects all three paragraphs? Write a concise statement of 12 to 18 words.

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

Create a labeled three-panel storyboard for the whole passage. In each panel, include one simple image and a caption of 10 to 15 words explaining the important change.

ANSWER KEY

Blackout in Panels

GRADE 8 · 8.P.EICC.3.d

PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Underline the most important action or change in each paragraph. In the margin, write one or two words that name an image you can picture from that paragraph. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 · ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	Write a one-sentence summary of paragraph 1 that includes the main event and its immediate effects.	**On August 14, 2003, a cascading power failure affected about 50 million people and stopped transportation and other services in New York City.**
2	List three details from paragraph 2 that you could include in a sketch showing how the failure spread.	**Overgrown trees touched high-voltage lines, a warning computer system failed, and disconnected lines overloaded other lines.**
3	For a three-box timeline of paragraph 3, what event belongs in each box? Put the events in order.	**1. People used flashlights, climbed stairs, and waited for buses. 2. Hospitals used generators and emergency workers directed traffic. 3. Power returned, and agencies studied the failure.**
4	What central idea connects all three paragraphs? Write a concise statement of 12 to 18 words.	**A local equipment and communication failure triggered a vast blackout and led to stronger safeguards.**

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

Panel 1, image: Dark traffic signal beside a stopped subway train. Caption: A cascading outage darkened New York City and stopped transportation. Panel 2, image: Tree branch touching a power line near a computer. Caption: Overgrown trees and a failed warning system allowed the electrical trouble to spread. Panel 3, image: Flashlight, generator, and workers at an intersection. Caption: Residents adapted overnight as emergency services worked, then power returned across many areas.

Accept accurate summaries that state the major event or change rather than listing every detail. Accept visual choices and storyboard images that clearly match the passage and captions that meet the stated word count.