

Rails and Reasons

Spot how a railroad brochure shapes its message.

L6-8RHSS6 "Identify aspects of a text that reveal an author's point of view or purpose (e.g., loaded language, inclusion or avoidance of particular facts)."

NAME _____

DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK _____ Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline words that make the railroad sound positive, circle facts about its benefits, and number two facts from paragraph 3 that the brochure leaves out.

A Railroad Company's Brochure

- ① In 1869, railroad companies promoted the newly completed transcontinental railroad in brochures aimed at travelers and investors. The line joined tracks of the Central Pacific Railroad and Union Pacific Railroad at Promontory Summit, Utah, on May 10. One brochure called the railroad "a shining road to progress" and promised a "swift, comfortable journey" across the continent. It described new markets for farmers and merchants. The brochure presented the railroad as a powerful link that would quickly bring opportunity to every place it reached for many Americans.
- ② To make the route sound inviting, the brochure chose bright words such as "shining," "progress," and "opportunity." It included facts that supported sales: the railroad connected eastern rail lines with California and shortened travel across the United States compared with earlier overland or sea routes. It praised investors, farmers, and merchants who might profit from faster shipping. Readers learn much about business and travel. They learn little about the people who built the line or about communities already living in the regions the tracks crossed.
- ③ Thousands of workers, including many Chinese laborers for the Central Pacific and many Irish immigrants for the Union Pacific, helped build the railroad. Construction was dangerous, especially in mountain tunnels and winter weather. Railroad building also crossed lands used and inhabited by Native American nations, bringing conflict and major changes to their communities. Those facts do not fit the brochure's cheerful picture of a road bringing opportunity to "every place." The brochure instead directs readers toward buying tickets, using freight service, or investing in railroad-related businesses.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE _____ Use the passage

1 Choose two positive words or phrases from the brochure. What impression do they give readers about the railroad?

2 Who was the brochure trying to attract? Use one detail from the passage to support your answer.

3 Name two facts from paragraph 3 that the brochure does not discuss.

4 What was the railroad company's main purpose for the brochure? Give two details that reveal this purpose.

3 YOUR TURN _____ Your own words

Write a three-sentence source note for a history book about this brochure. Identify the company's viewpoint and purpose, use one quoted positive phrase, and explain how one missing fact from paragraph 3 affects the reader's understanding.

PART 1 • READ AND MARK

Underline words that make the railroad sound positive, circle facts about its benefits, and number two facts from paragraph 3 that the brochure leaves out. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 • ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	Choose two positive words or phrases from the brochure. What impression do they give readers about the railroad?	Answers may name "shining," "progress," "swift," "comfortable," or "opportunity." These words make the railroad seem exciting, helpful, fast, and pleasant.
2	Who was the brochure trying to attract? Use one detail from the passage to support your answer.	It was trying to attract travelers and investors. It also praises farmers and merchants who could profit from faster shipping.
3	Name two facts from paragraph 3 that the brochure does not discuss.	Any two: Chinese and Irish workers helped build the railroad, construction was dangerous, or railroad building crossed Native American lands and brought conflict and change.
4	What was the railroad company's main purpose for the brochure? Give two details that reveal this purpose.	Its purpose was to persuade people to travel, use freight service, or invest in railroad-related businesses. Evidence includes positive phrases such as "shining road to progress" and information about faster travel, new markets, and profit.

PART 3 • YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

This brochure presents the viewpoint of a railroad company that wanted travelers and investors to see the line as useful and profitable. Its description of a "shining road to progress" makes the railroad sound exciting and beneficial. However, leaving out dangerous construction and Native communities makes the project seem less harmful than it was.

Accept equivalent explanations that connect positive language, selected benefits, or omitted costs to the company's goal of attracting customers or investors. For the source note, require all three parts: viewpoint and purpose, quoted language, and an explanation of an omitted fact's effect.