A Safer Night Sky

Find the central ideas, then restate the evidence in your own words.

9.2.R.1 "Students will summarize the main ideas and paraphrase significant parts of increasingly complex texts."

NAME _____ DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline one sentence in each paragraph that expresses its central idea, and circle one detail in each paragraph that you could paraphrase.

When City Lights Meet Migrating Birds

1 Each spring and fall, millions of birds cross North America after sunset. Flying at night often means cooler air and fewer daytime predators. Many species use several cues to stay on course, including stars and Earth's magnetic field. A city changes the sky they travel through: office towers, stadiums, and decorative signs can make the ground brighter than the horizon. Light does not affect every bird in the same way, and scientists are still studying exactly why some species approach it. Yet the pattern creates a serious question for cities: how can they remain visible to people without making travel more dangerous for birds?

2 On cloudy nights, bright buildings can be especially troublesome because low clouds reflect artificial light and hide some natural cues. Birds may gather near lit structures, fly in circles, or use energy they need for the rest of their journey. Some then strike glass, which can be hard to see at night. Window collisions also happen in daylight, when glass reflects trees or sky, so turning off lights cannot prevent every crash. Still, studies that track collisions at particular buildings have found fewer dead birds when those buildings have fewer lights on at night. The evidence points to a preventable share of the problem, not a single cure.

3 Many cities now ask building owners to switch off unnecessary lights during peak migration, often in spring and fall. This approach is sometimes called Lights Out. It focuses on bright exterior lights and empty offices rather than requiring streets or occupied rooms to go dark. Where light is needed for safety, timers, motion sensors, or downward-facing fixtures can reduce light spilling into the sky. Volunteers may count birds found near buildings before and after changes, although weather and migration traffic also affect the numbers. The goal is not to erase the city at night but to make its glow less hazardous along a bird's route.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. Summarize the central idea of paragraph 1 in your own words. Include two details that explain why birds travel at night or how they find their way.

2. In your own words, explain why cloudy nights can make bright buildings especially dangerous for migrating birds.

3. Summarize what the collision studies in paragraph 2 suggest. Why would it be inaccurate to call reduced lighting a complete solution?

4. Summarize the approach in paragraph 3. How does it address the needs of both birds and people?

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

Write a 70 to 90 word note to a building manager recommending a change to nighttime lighting. In your own words, summarize the problem, explain two important details from the passage, and acknowledge a practical need or a limit of the change.

ANSWER KEY

A Safer Night Sky

GRADE 9 · 9.2.R.1

PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Underline one sentence in each paragraph that expresses its central idea, and circle one detail in each paragraph that you could paraphrase. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 · ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	Summarize the central idea of paragraph 1 in your own words. Include two details that explain why birds travel at night or how they find their way.	**Night travel benefits many migrating birds, but city lighting may interfere with their routes. Cooler air and fewer daytime predators make nighttime flight useful, and birds can navigate by stars and Earth's magnetic field.**
2	In your own words, explain why cloudy nights can make bright buildings especially dangerous for migrating birds.	**Low clouds can reflect city light and block natural navigation cues. Birds may linger or circle near bright buildings, wasting energy and sometimes hitting glass.**
3	Summarize what the collision studies in paragraph 2 suggest. Why would it be inaccurate to call reduced lighting a complete solution?	**The studies suggest that using fewer lights at night can reduce collisions at some buildings. It cannot prevent every crash because birds also hit windows during the day.**
4	Summarize the approach in paragraph 3. How does it address the needs of both birds and people?	**Buildings can turn off lights that are not needed during migration while keeping necessary lighting. Timers, motion sensors, and downward-facing fixtures can provide light for people while reducing light that spills into the sky.**

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

Dear Building Manager, Please turn off unused office and exterior lights during spring and fall migration. Many birds travel after dark using cues such as stars and Earth's magnetic field, but bright city buildings can disrupt their route. When clouds reflect city light, some birds linger near buildings and waste energy or hit glass. Reducing unnecessary lighting may lower collisions, though it will not stop birds from striking windows in daylight. Keep essential safety lights on, and use timers or downward-facing fixtures where possible.

Accept accurate paraphrases that preserve the passage's distinction between reducing nighttime risk and preventing all window collisions. The note should make a recommendation supported by two passage-based details without copying the passage's phrasing.