Fire, Three Lenses

Compare how expertise shapes accounts of prescribed burning.

9.RI.3.A "Compare the perspectives and viewpoints of two or more authors regarding their treatment of the same or similar topics, including the details they include and emphasize in their respective accounts as well as the impact of each author's..."

NAME _____ DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline one detail each author emphasizes, then write 1 for Dr. Elena Ruiz, 2 for Marcus Lee, or 3 for Nora Patel beside that detail. Circle each author's qualification and draw an arrow to an idea that qualification makes especially credible.

Should Forests Be Burned on Purpose?

(1) Forest ecologist Dr. Elena Ruiz studies how fire moves through dry ponderosa pine forests. She supports carefully planned prescribed burns because they consume needles, small branches, and other surface fuels before a wildfire arrives. Ruiz emphasizes that many of these forests historically experienced frequent, lower-intensity fires, although she notes that today's conditions are not identical to the past. Her account focuses on long-term forest structure and the chance that later fires will be less severe. As a researcher who measures vegetation and fire effects, she bases her viewpoint on field studies, while admitting that smoke can affect nearby communities.

(2) Marcus Lee, the county public health director, does not reject prescribed burns, but he judges them first by their effects on people breathing the air. He emphasizes fine particle pollution, which can worsen asthma and other lung conditions, especially for children and older adults. Lee wants burn managers to choose days with good smoke dispersion, publish clear alerts, and provide clean-air spaces when needed. Unlike Ruiz, he gives little attention to forest history or fuel patterns. His medical and public-health training makes his warnings about exposure especially useful, though his account does not assess whether a particular burn will control future wildfire.

(3) Fire chief Nora Patel views prescribed burning as one tool in a larger safety plan. She agrees that reducing fuels can help, but she emphasizes the strict conditions required to ignite a burn: trained crews, equipment, permission, moisture levels, wind limits, and a plan for keeping flames inside a boundary. Patel also describes how a short period of managed smoke may be preferable to weeks of hazardous smoke from a large wildfire. Her experience directing emergency operations gives weight to her practical details about readiness and risk. However, she does not conduct the ecological measurements Ruiz uses or the health studies Lee relies on.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. Compare Ruiz's and Lee's viewpoints. What outcome does each author emphasize when discussing prescribed burns?

2. What operational details does Patel include that Ruiz does not emphasize? Explain what these details show about Patel's viewpoint.

3. How do Ruiz's and Patel's qualifications affect the kinds of details each author provides?

4. Which author's account is most useful for planning protections for people with asthma? Use the author's qualifications and one emphasized detail to support your answer.

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

Write a four-sentence recommendation to city leaders about using prescribed burns. Compare the viewpoints of at least two authors, include one specific detail from each account, and explain how the authors' qualifications affect your recommendation.

ANSWER KEY

Fire, Three Lenses

GRADE 9 · 9.RI.3.A

PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Underline one detail each author emphasizes, then write 1 for Dr. Elena Ruiz, 2 for Marcus Lee, or 3 for Nora Patel beside that detail. Circle each author's qualification and draw an arrow to an idea that qualification makes especially credible. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 · ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	Compare Ruiz's and Lee's viewpoints. What outcome does each author emphasize when discussing prescribed burns?	**Ruiz emphasizes healthier forest conditions and less severe future fires. Lee emphasizes protecting people from smoke exposure and particle pollution.**
2	What operational details does Patel include that Ruiz does not emphasize? Explain what these details show about Patel's viewpoint.	**Patel includes trained crews, equipment, permission, moisture levels, wind limits, and containment plans. These details show that she views prescribed burning as an emergency-safety operation that requires strict preparation.**
3	How do Ruiz's and Patel's qualifications affect the kinds of details each author provides?	**Ruiz is a forest ecologist, so she provides field-study details about vegetation, fire effects, and forest history. Patel directs emergency operations, so she provides practical details about crews, weather limits, readiness, and risk.**
4	Which author's account is most useful for planning protections for people with asthma? Use the author's qualifications and one emphasized detail to support your answer.	**Lee's account is most useful because he is the county public health director. He emphasizes fine particle pollution, asthma risks, alerts, and clean-air spaces.**

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

City leaders should use prescribed burns only when health safeguards and operational limits are in place. Ruiz's field research supports reducing surface fuels, so her evidence makes a long-term safety benefit convincing. Lee's public-health expertise makes his call for smoke alerts and clean-air spaces important for protecting residents. Patel's experience directing emergencies supports requiring trained crews and wind limits before a burn begins.

Accept equivalent comparisons when students accurately connect each author's emphasis to the author's qualifications. For the open response, require four sentences, a recommendation, comparison of at least two accounts, specific passage details, and an explanation of expertise.