

Name: _____ Date: _____

Central Ideas and Details

A central idea of a text is one of the main points the author is making.

(Sometimes a central idea is called a main idea.)

A central idea can always be supported with details from the text.

Directions: Follow the prompts below to explore the central ideas and supporting details in "The Race Against Death."

1. Reread the introduction to "The Race Against Death." Which quote below BEST expresses the central idea of this section?

- Ⓐ "The diphtheria vaccine had been around for only a few years, and most Americans had not yet received it." (p. 6)
- Ⓑ "The *Alameda* had brought Dr. Welch his winter supplies: cotton balls, ether, tongue depressors, thermometers, and various medicines." (p. 6)
- Ⓒ "Diphtheria is a bacterial infection of the nose and throat . . ." (p. 6)
- Ⓓ ". . . without the diphtheria-fighting antitoxin, Nome's population would be helpless in an outbreak." (p. 6)

2. Read the central idea of the section "A Deadly Outbreak," stated in the box below. Then read the lines from the article listed under it. Which detail does NOT support the central idea?

Central Idea:
Diphtheria is a dangerous and life-threatening disease.

- Ⓐ "At that time, nearly 200,000 people were sickened by diphtheria each year, and it was a major cause of death among children, who are especially vulnerable." (p. 6)
- Ⓑ "Dr. Welch guessed the child was suffering from a mild infection. But by morning, the child was dead." (p. 6)
- Ⓒ "To treat the townspeople, Dr. Welch needed 1 million units of fresh antitoxin." (p. 7)
- Ⓓ "Now the boy had developed a thick, gray membrane in his throat. . . . In a matter of days, the membrane could block Billy's windpipe and kill him." (p. 6)

I chose _____ because _____

3. Read the details from the sections "A Single Push" and "The Final Musher" listed below. In the box, write a central idea that these details support.

Central Idea:

Detail 1: "As a rule, dogsled drivers avoided traveling in temperatures lower than 40 degrees below zero. That night, it was 50 below." (p. 9)

Detail 2: "But the monster blizzard had closed in, bringing powerful winds, blinding snow, and a windchill of 70 degrees below zero." (p. 9)

Detail 3: "For the next 20 miles, wind beat mercilessly at Kaasen and his dogs. The sled kept careening off the trail, dragging the dogs along with it. The musher was losing strength." (p. 10)

4. Consider the central idea of the whole article that is written below. We wrote one detail from the article that supports this idea. Write two more supporting details in the spaces provided.

Central Idea:

The mushers who participated in the race to Nome displayed incredible strength, courage, and resilience.

Supporting detail 1:

"In spite of the risks, Shannon pushed on, pausing for only a few hours near the end to rest his dogs and warm his frozen body." (p. 9)

Supporting detail 2:

Supporting detail 3:

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Central Ideas and Details

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(Sometimes a central idea is called a main idea.)

A central idea can always be supported with details from the text.

Directions: Follow the prompts below to explore the central ideas and supporting details in "The Race Against Death."

1. Read the central idea of the introduction and the section "A Deadly Outbreak" stated in the box below. Then check the boxes next to the THREE details that best support the central idea.

Central Idea:
Diphtheria is a dangerous and life-threatening disease.

- ☐ "Dr. Welch guessed the child was suffering from a mild infection. But by morning, the child was dead." (p. 6)
- ☐ "To treat the townspeople, Dr. Welch needed 1 million units of fresh antitoxin." (p. 7)
- ☐ "But as Dr. Welch well knew, the disease strikes suddenly and is highly contagious . . ." (p. 6)
- ☐ "At the time, nearly 200,000 people were sickened by diphtheria each year, and it was a major cause of death among children, who are especially vulnerable." (p. 6)
- ☐ "The diphtheria vaccine had been around for only a few years, and most Americans had not yet received it." (p. 6)

2. Read the details from the article listed below. In the box, complete the central idea that these details support.

Central Idea:
The mushers who participated in the race to Nome _____

Detail 1: "As a rule, dogsled drivers avoided traveling in temperatures lower than 40 degrees below zero. That night, it was 50 below." (p. 9)

Detail 2: "In spite of the risks, Shannon pushed on, pausing for only a few hours near the end to rest his dogs and warm his frozen body." (p. 9)

Detail 3: "He would have to travel one of Alaska's most hazardous trails and take a shortcut across the frozen Norton Sound." (p. 8)

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Summarizing

An objective summary is a short statement or paragraph that tells what an article or a story is about.
It does not include irrelevant details or the opinions of the person writing it.

Directions: Answer the questions below to help you write an objective summary of “The Race Against Death.”

1. Who is the article mainly about? (It can be an individual or a group of people.)

2. What significant event does the article describe?

3. What problem does the main person(s) in the article face?

4. How was this problem solved?

5. Are there any other important details you haven’t mentioned? Write them here.

Directions: Your turn! Write an objective summary of “The Race Against Death.” You can use the information in your answers from questions 1-5 in any order. Most of the information from your answers should be included in your summary, but leave out any details you find unnecessary.

Summary of “The Race Against Death”

This image shows a single sheet of white paper with horizontal ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There are no margins, text, or other markings on the paper.

Name: _____ Date: _____

Summarizing

An objective summary is a short statement or paragraph that tells what an article or a story is about.
It does not include unimportant details or the opinions of the person writing it.

Directions: Follow the prompts in the margins to complete the summary of "The Race Against Death."

In the winter of 1925, disaster struck the town of Nome, Alaska. There was an outbreak of a deadly infection called diphtheria. Diphtheria _____
_____, but the town of Nome did not have a fresh supply. The closest supply was hundreds of miles away in a city called Anchorage, and it would be nearly impossible to transport the medicine from Anchorage to Nome because _____
_____. So Nome's officials came up with a plan: _____
_____.
The mushers and their dogs _____
_____. Nevertheless, the teams persevered and delivered the medicine to Nome in _____.
The diphtheria outbreak was stopped and hundreds of lives were saved.

2. Why was getting the antitoxin to Nome a problem?

1. How was diphtheria treated at the time?

3. How was the medicine to be delivered to Nome?

4. What kind of conditions did the teams travel in?

5. How long did the trip take?

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Exploring Text Features

Authors use text features to bring attention to important details. In a nonfiction article, text features include titles, subheadings, photos, captions, charts, and maps.

Directions: Answer the questions below to help you explore the text features in "The Race Against Death."

1. How do the maps on page 6 contribute to the article?

2. What does the photo of the hospital on page 7 tell you about what Nome was like in the winter?

3. What does the caption "What Makes a Great Sled Dog?" on page 8 help you understand about how the dogs were able to survive their treacherous journey?

4. What does the photo of Gunnar Kaasen and Balto on page 10 suggest about their relationship? Explain your answer.

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Read, Think, Explain

Identifying Nonfiction Elements

Use this activity sheet with “The Race Against Death.” See *Scope’s* “Glossary of Nonfiction Terms” and “Glossary of Literary Terms” for definitions of the words that appear in bold.

Before Reading

Text Features, Mood, Inference

1. Read the headline and study the image on pages 4-5. What **mood** do these features create? Explain your answer.

2. What does the photo of the hospital on page 7 tell you about what Nome was like in the winter?

3. Study the image of the national vaccine campaign poster at the bottom of page 9. What does it tell you about how Americans viewed diphtheria in the early 1900s?

4. Read the **subheadings** in the article. Based on your preview of the article, write one sentence predicting what the article will be mainly about.

During Reading

Mood, Text Structure, Tone

5. There is a shift in mood in the section “A Deadly Outbreak.” Describe how the mood changes from the beginning to the end of this section.

6. Reread the section “Super Mushers.” What is the author’s **tone** as he writes about Leonhard Seppala? Explain your answer.

7. **A.** Check (☒) the statement that BEST describes the **text structure** (the way the author organizes information) in the sections “A Single Push” and “The Final Musher.”

The author compares the skills of mushers Leonhard Seppala, Charlie Olson, and Gunnar Kaasen.

The author gives a chronological account of the mushers’ race across Alaska.

The author explains the problems that the mushers encountered on their journey and how these problems were solved.

- B.** Explain how you know.

After Reading

Central Idea/Details and Objective Summary

- 8.** Below are three **supporting details** for a central idea of the article. In the space provided, write a **central idea** that these details support.

Central Idea		
Detail #1 “As a rule, dogsled drivers avoided traveling in temperatures lower than 40 degrees below zero. That night, it was 50 below.” (p. 9)	Detail #2 “In spite of the risks, Shannon pushed on, pausing for only a few hours near the end to rest his dogs and warm his frozen body.” (p. 9)	Detail #3 “For the next 20 miles, wind beat mercilessly at Kaasen and his dogs. The sled kept careening off the trail, dragging the dogs along with it.” (p. 10)

9. Write an **objective summary** of “The Race Against Death.” (Hint: Think about what you would say to a friend who asks, “What is this article about?”)

This image shows a blank sheet of white paper with horizontal ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There are no margins, text, or other markings on the paper.

Name: _____ Date: _____

Read, Think, Explain

Identifying Nonfiction Elements

Use this activity sheet with “The Race Against Death.” See *Scope’s* “Glossary of Nonfiction Terms” and “Glossary of Literary Terms” for definitions of the words that appear in bold.

Before Reading Text Features, Mood, Inference

1. Read the headline and study the image on pages 4–5. What **mood** do these features create? Explain your answer.

2. What does the photo of the hospital on page 7 tell you about what Nome was like in the winter?

3. Study the image of the national vaccine campaign poster at the bottom of page 9. What does it tell you about how Americans thought about diphtheria in the early 1900s?

4. Read the **subheadings** in the article. Based on your preview of the article, write one sentence predicting what the article will be mainly about.

During Reading

Mood, Text Structure, Tone

5. **A.** In the opening of the section “A Deadly Outbreak,” the author describes the first days of the diphtheria outbreak in Nome. Then, toward the end of the section, the author explains that a supply of antitoxin had been found and town officials had a plan to get it.

Mood is the feeling the reader gets from a piece of writing. In the section “A Deadly Outbreak,” the mood changes from

- Ⓐ excited to hopeless.
- Ⓑ frightened to hopeful.
- Ⓒ angry to thankful.

B. Briefly explain how you know:

6. **Text structure** is the term for how an author organizes information. In the sections “Super Mushers” and “A Single Push” the author uses a sequence-of-events structure to give a chronological account of the mushers’ race across Alaska. Which words and phrases in the sections help you identify this text structure?

- Ⓐ *on January 27; As Seppala raced east; When he arrived in Tolovana; By now*
- Ⓑ *sharp fragments of ice; frigid temperatures; frozen terrain; 50 below*
- Ⓒ *bravest and most experienced; the fastest musher; in just six days*

7. **A. Tone** is the author’s attitude toward the subject matter or toward the reader or audience. Circle the word that best describes the tone the author uses when writing about Leonhard Seppala in the section “Super Mushers.”

joyful

doubtful

impressed

B. Briefly explain how you know:

After Reading
Central Idea/Details and Objective Summary

- 8. A.** Below is a **central idea** of the sections “A Single Push” and “The Final Musher” and three **supporting details**. Two details DO support the central idea. Cross out the detail that DOES NOT.

Central Idea The mushers and dogs persevered through dangerous conditions.		
Detail #1 “In spite of the risks, Shannon pushed on, pausing for only a few hours near the end to rest his dogs and warm his frozen body.” (p. 9)	Detail #2 “The crate of medicine weighed 20 pounds.” (p. 8)	Detail #3 “For the next 20 miles, wind beat mercilessly at Kaasen and his dogs. The sled kept careening off the trail, dragging the dogs along with it.” (p. 10)

- B.** Briefly explain why the detail you crossed out does NOT support the central idea above.

- 9.** An **objective summary** is a short statement or paragraph that tells what an article is about. Draw a line through the three sentences below that should definitely NOT be included in an objective summary of “The Race Against Death.”

- a. Nome, Alaska, is located on a peninsula that can be difficult to travel to in the winter.
- b. It’s hard to believe that the mushers made it to Nome in only six days.
- c. The mushers who were bringing the medicine to Nome endured dangerous weather conditions.
- d. The article was very interesting to read.
- e. Balto was mostly black with some white on his chest and legs.
- f. Diphtheria is a dangerous disease that is highly contagious.

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The Story of Nome

Directions: It's February 2, 1925. Gunnar Kassen has just arrived in Nome, Alaska, and you are a journalist on the scene. Use this activity to help you gather the information you will use in your news article, video, or podcast about what has just happened. (Yeah, we know there were no videos or podcasts in 1925; let's just imagine that there were.) Use details from the article "The Race Against Death."

Super Short Summary

Write a sentence about what just happened and BRIEFLY explain why Kaasen's arrival in Nome is a big deal.

People

Who were the people involved in the event? List their names and brief descriptions of their roles.

Places

What places play an important part in this story? List them along with short notes about their roles.

Dates

What are the important dates to report? List them and briefly note why each is important.

Quotes

OK, you can't really go back in time and interview people. But are there any quotes in "The Race Against Death" you can use? You can also imagine interviewing bystanders at the scene and invent quotes for them. Don't invent quotes for any of the real people though.

Other important details

What other key facts or numbers might you want to include in your news story?

Turn to the next page for some tips on putting it all together.

News Story Outline

Now that you've gathered your information, it's time to start crafting your article. Here's an idea of how you might organize your article.

1

HEADLINE/TITLE

This should tell your readers, viewers, or listeners in just a few words what your article is about.

2

BYLINE

This is the name of the journalist or journalists reporting the story.
In this case, that's you. Be sure to give your name!

3

LEAD

Your first paragraph should give a preview of the whole story. In other words, it should be a brief summary of everything you are going to write/talk about in this article. From just this paragraph, a reader/viewer/listener should know all of the most important information: What happened, why it happened, when it happened, where it happened, and who was involved.

4

BODY PARAGRAPHS

Here's where you go into detail. Give some background information (what happened in Nome before Kassen arrived) and more information on what you said in your lead. Be descriptive and clear so that your audience understands and can picture the events you are describing.

5

CONCLUSION

Find a way to sum it all up. One idea is to use a quote. Another idea is to tell what might happen next in Nome.

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Close-Reading Questions

"The Race Against Death"

1. Consider the last line of the introduction: "Unfortunately, the people of Nome would not be that lucky." What literary device is the author using? What purpose does it serve? (literary devices, author's craft)
2. A place that is remote is far away and hard to get to. In the section "A Deadly Outbreak," how does the author support the idea that Nome, Alaska, was a remote place? (key ideas and supporting details)
3. Why was the trip to Nome so dangerous for the mushers? (key ideas and details, inference)
4. On page 9, the author writes, "In spite of the risks, Shannon pushed on, pausing for only a few hours near the end to rest his dogs and warm his frozen body." What does this detail tell you about Shannon? (inference)
5. Personification is the assignment of human qualities or emotions to nonhuman animals, objects, or ideas. What is the author personifying in the following line on page 10: "The minutes crawled by as Balto sniffed through several feet of snow . . ." What effect does this personification create? (figurative language, mood)

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Critical-Thinking Questions

"The Race Against Death"

1. Why is it unlikely that the people of Nome would face the same crisis today that they faced in 1925?
2. Why do you think the story of Nome captured national attention?

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“The Race Against Death” Quiz

Directions: Read “The Race Against Death,” then answer the questions below.

1. Which statement best describes the section “A Deadly Outbreak”?

- (A) The author lists several causes of the diphtheria outbreak in Nome.
- (B) The author compares and contrasts Nome, Alaska to other parts of Alaska.
- (C) The author describes the diphtheria outbreak in Nome and then explains how the problem could be solved.
- (D) The author gives a chronological account of the dogsled race to Nome.

2. The authors develop the idea that diphtheria is dangerous in each of the following ways EXCEPT

- (A) by explaining that there was a vaccine for diphtheria.
- (B) by explaining how diphtheria spreads from person to person.
- (C) by listing the possible complications that diphtheria can cause.
- (D) by including a statistic about how many people were killed by diphtheria each year.

3. How do the authors characterize the mushers?

- (A) easygoing and friendly
- (B) determined and resilient
- (C) helpless and lonely
- (D) hopeful and stubborn

4. Choose TWO details that best support your answer to question 3.

- (A) “In spite of the risks, Shannon pushed on, pausing for only a few hours near the end to rest his dogs and warm his frozen body.” (p. 9)
- (B) “The musher was losing his strength.” (p. 10)
- (C) “Severe frostbite can cause flesh to die.” (p. 9)
- (D) “The mushers had made the trip in just six days.” (p. 10)

5. On page 9, the authors write, “In Nome, the crisis was becoming graver by the hour.” Context clues reveal that in this sentence, *grave* most closely means

- (A) serious.
- (B) lively.
- (C) unlucky.
- (D) encouraging.

6. Which detail would be LEAST important to include in a summary of the article?

- (A) The mushers made the trip to Nome in only six days.
- (B) Leonhard Seppala had to take a shortcut across the frozen Norton Sound.
- (C) Nome, Alaska, is difficult to reach in the winter because of its remote location.
- (D) Diphtheria is a highly contagious and dangerous disease.

Constructed-Response Questions

Directions: Write your answer to each question in a well-organized paragraph.

7. In the section “A Deadly Outbreak,” there is a shift in mood. How does the mood change? How do the authors create this shift in mood? Explain using text evidence.

8. Read the caption “What Makes a Great Sled Dog” on page 8. Why might the authors have included this caption? Explain your answer.

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“The Race Against Death” Quiz

Directions: Read “The Race Against Death,” then answer the questions below.

1. The authors included the section “A Deadly Outbreak” mainly to
 - (A) explain how diphtheria spreads.
 - (B) show where Nome is located in Alaska.
 - (C) describe the diphtheria outbreak in Nome and explain how it was being dealt with.
 - (D) provide information about Alaska.
2. Which of the following lines best supports the idea that diphtheria is a dangerous disease?
 - (A) “In a matter of days, the membrane could block Billy’s windpipe and kill him.” (p. 6)
 - (B) “. . . Dr. Welch guessed the child was suffering from a mild infection.” (p. 6)
 - (C) “The diphtheria vaccine had been around for only a few years, and most Americans had not received it.” (p. 6)
 - (D) “The name *diphtheria* comes from the Greek word for ‘leather’. . .” (p. 6)
3. The authors portray “Wild Bill” Shannon as
 - (A) easygoing and friendly.
 - (B) strong and resilient.
 - (C) helpless and in trouble.
 - (D) hopeful and stubborn.
4. Choose TWO details that best support your answer to question 3.
 - (A) “In spite of the risks, Shannon pushed on, pausing for only a few hours near the end to rest his dogs and warm his frozen body.” (p. 9)
 - (B) “Three of his dogs were too exhausted to continue. . .” (p. 9)
 - (C) “Severe frostbite can cause flesh to die.” (p. 9)
 - (D) “He traveled the final four hours of the journey with only six dogs. When he arrived in Tolovana, his face was black with frostbite.” (p. 9)
5. On page 9, the authors write, “In Nome, the crisis was becoming graver by the hour.” Context clues reveal that *grave* most closely means
 - (A) serious.
 - (B) lively.
 - (C) unlucky.
 - (D) encouraging.
6. Information about how many children were saved by the delivery of the antitoxin to Nome would best fit into which section of the article?
 - (A) “A Single Push”
 - (B) “The Final Musher”
 - (C) “A Deadly Outbreak”
 - (D) “Super Mushers”

Constructed-Response Questions

Directions: Write your answers to the questions below on the back of this paper or type them up on a computer.

7. The mood of the section “A Deadly Outbreak” starts out frightening but becomes hopeful toward the end. How do the authors create this shift in mood? Explain using text evidence.
8. Read the caption “What Makes a Great Sled Dog” on page 8. What does it help you understand about the article?

Note: *Scope* does not accept Google Docs. If you are e-mailing your entry, please send a .pdf or .doc file.

Balto Contest

Imagine that Gunnar Kaasen has just arrived in Nome, and you are a journalist covering the crisis there. Write a news article, create a three-minute news video, or record a three-minute news podcast about what happened. Five winners will get *Ice Dogs* by Terry Lynn Johnson.

Entries will be judged on:

- ⇒ a clearly stated central idea
- ⇒ use of supporting text evidence
- ⇒ good organization and transitions
- ⇒ grammar, spelling, and punctuation

My name: _____

My home phone number: _____ My grade: _____

My teacher's name: _____ My teacher's e-mail: _____

School name: _____

School address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ ZIP: _____

School phone number: _____

My parent or legal guardian consents
to my participation in this contest.

Parent's or legal guardian's signature: _____

Include this form with your written entry and send both to: scopemag@scholastic.com
or mail them to: Balto Contest, c/o *Scope*, P.O. Box 712, New York, NY 10013-0712

ENTRIES MUST BE RECEIVED BY November 15, 2018!