

Substitute Guide: Central Idea and Evidence Across Two Texts

Grade: 6 **Subject:** Reading / Language Arts **Time:** ~45 min core + ~15 min extension RLA

Learning goal (plain language)

Students read **two short informational texts** about the same topic (light pollution) and figure out the **central idea** of each, make an **inference**, find the sentence that **best supports** a claim, and **compare** what the two texts agree on and how they differ. They finish by writing a short **evidence-based paragraph** that states a shared central idea and supports it with one piece of evidence from **each** text. **You do not need an English or reading background to run this.** Everything students need — including both full texts — is printed in their packet, and every question can be answered directly from those texts.

Standards alignment

Framework: 19 TAC §110.22 (Grade 6 English Language Arts and Reading).

- **Central idea:** identify and explain the central idea of an informational text and how details support it.
- **Inference:** make inferences supported by textual evidence.
- **Text evidence:** use specific evidence from the text to support responses and compare ideas across two texts.

Provisional — pending educator verification against the current official TAC source.

(Standards are paraphrased here, not quoted. Please confirm codes and wording against your official source.)

Setup Before class (5 min)

- Count and hand out one **student packet** per student.
- Confirm each student has a **pencil**. No devices or other materials are needed.
- Write the date on the board and remind students to fill in the name line.
- Keep the **answer key** with you — it is a separate file and is **not** in the student packet.

Materials What's needed

- Printed student packet (4–6 pages) per student.
- Pencil per student.
- This guide and the separate answer key (teacher only).
- No technology, no calculator, no special materials.

Timing Suggested pacing (~45–60 min)

Segment	Time	What students do
Start — Notice & Predict	5 min	Q1–Q2 warm-up

Segment	Time	What students do
Build — Read two texts	10 min	Read Text A and Text B, word bank; Q3 retrieval
Apply — Read closely	20 min	Q4–Q8 (central idea ×2, inference, evidence, compare)
Explain — Evidence paragraph	5–10 min	Q9 shared central idea + one piece of evidence from each text
Close — ACE	5 min	Articulate / Connect / Extend
Continue — early finishers	optional ~15 min	Write a headline and a two-sentence caption

Script Read aloud to start

"Today's assignment is a reading and writing activity called *Central Idea and Evidence Across Two Texts*. You will work by yourself with just a pencil — no computers. You will read **two short texts** about the same topic, light pollution. Both texts have numbered paragraphs so you can point to where you found your answers. Every question can be answered from the texts, so if you're unsure, go back and reread. Answer the questions in order; if one is tricky, skip it and come back. Write in complete sentences where it asks you to explain. You may quietly read the texts aloud to yourself. Put your name, class period, and date at the top now. You have about 45 minutes; raise your hand if you need a word read to you or explained."

Support When students ask for help

- **You may read any part aloud** — either text or any question — to a student or the class.
- If they are stuck, point them to the **paragraph numbers** [1]–[3] in each text; every answer is in the texts.
- Remind them a **central idea** is a full sentence about the topic (the main point), not a single topic word — the packet gives an example.
- For the compare item (Q8) and Q9, remind them to answer **only from the texts**, not from what they already know.
- Encourage the printed **sentence stems** and the **word bank** for Q9 and ACE.
- Do **not** give answers; prompt with "Which paragraph shows that?" or "What do both texts say about turning lights off?"
- It is fine if a student cannot finish the optional early-finisher task.

Access Accommodations & language support

- **Read-aloud** of either text or any question is allowed for all students.
- Point students to the **sentence stems** and the **word bank** (definitions provided).
- Extended time is fine; the core can stop after Q9 if time runs short.
- Students may answer in phrases if writing full sentences is a barrier, as long as the idea is clear.
- The packet is grayscale-safe — it prints and reads clearly in black and white.

Tools Allowed & not allowed

Allowed: pencil, the printed packet, quiet self-read-aloud. **Not needed / not allowed:** phones, computers, outside sources (everything is in the two texts).

Collect at the end: Collect every packet, whether finished or not, with names on them. Stack them for the teacher. Note on a sticky how far most students got and any questions that caused confusion.

Answer key: The **answer key is a separate file** (answerkey.html) and is for the teacher only. Please do not hand it to students.

Teacher follow-up (for the returning teacher)

Watch for the common mix-ups of *topic* vs. *central idea* (writing "light pollution" instead of a full sentence stating the main point) and *using only one text* (Q9 asks for evidence from **both** Text A and Text B). A quick next-day mini-lesson turning topic words into central-idea sentences would reinforce this well. The compare item (Q8) and the evidence item (Q7) quickly show who can locate and use text evidence across two sources; the Q9 paragraphs show who can state a defensible central idea and support it from both texts.

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