



# Close reading plan

Black Frontiers: A History of African American Heroes in the Old West by Lillian Schlissel

Created by Laurie LaBossiere, 2014 Connecticut Dream Team teacher

What makes this text complex?			
<b>Text and Author</b>	Black Frontiers: A History of African American Heroes in the Old West by Lillian Schlissel	<b>Where to Access Text</b>	This text may be found at a public library.
Text Description			
This informational text is a wonderful glimpse into the world of African Americans on the Frontier and in the Old West. It chronicles the life and times of black men and women who settled the West from the end of the Civil War in 1865 to the early 1900s. The chapters are short, but full of anecdotes, supported by dozens of vintage black and white photographs. Some chapters are general overviews of types of people, whereas others are biographical sketches of specific men and women.			
Quantitative			
<b>Lexile and Grade Level</b>	1160 - 6th Grade	<b>Text Length</b>	10959
Qualitative			
Meaning/Central Ideas		Text Structure/Organization	
The meaning and central idea of the text (through hardships and perseverance, black American pioneers contributed to the expansion of the West after the Civil War) is explicitly stated in the introduction and can be implied from each separate section within the text.		Many primary source pictures; captions; headings; some dialogue and quotations; events happen in chronological order. Each section of the text can stand alone as a separate reading; one does not need to read the whole text for understanding of the central ideas.	
Prior Knowledge Demands		Language Features	
A basic knowledge of the Civil War, slavery, Reconstruction, and westward expansion is necessary.		The text is clear and literal. Some discipline-specific words relating to the time period.	
Vocabulary			
Tier Two Words (General academic vocabulary)		Tier Three Words (Domain-specific words)	
<i>"Words that are far more likely to appear in written texts than in speech. [They] often represent subtle or precise ways to say relatively simple things—saunter instead of walk, for example." (CCSS ELA Appendix A)</i>		<i>"[Tier Three words]...are specific to a domain or field of study (lava, carburetor, legislature, circumference, aorta) and key to understanding a new concept within a text." (CCSS ELA Appendix A)</i>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• harvest</li> <li>• earthen</li> <li>• settlement</li> <li>• bondage</li> <li>• prospered</li> <li>• designated</li> <li>• exodus</li> <li>• legacy</li> <li>• commemorate</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• desolate</li> <li>• sacred</li> <li>• prominent</li> <li>• daunting</li> <li>• austere</li> <li>• perpetually</li> <li>• commissioned</li> <li>• valor</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• sharecropper</li> <li>• homestead</li> <li>• reaper</li> <li>• regiments</li> <li>• cavalry</li> </ul>	
Potential Reader/Task Challenges			
Unfamiliar words related to time period may be challenging.			

Text-dependent questions		
Question	Standard alignment	Page of this document
<b>Why were many black sharecroppers willing to leave their homes in the South? Use specific evidence and quotes from the text to support your response.</b>	6.1	4
<b>The idiom "sticking it out" is used to describe what the black pioneer families did in the early days of settlement. What does this idiom mean? Use evidence from the text to support your response.</b>	6.4	7
<b>How does integrating the use of primary source photos further develop the hardships that the black pioneers faced?</b>	6.7	10
<b>How did the black pioneers contribute to the growth of the country?</b>	6.2	13
Target Standards		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 6.1 -- Cite textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text.</li> <li>• 6.2 -- Determine a central idea of a text and how it is conveyed through particular details; provide a summary of the text distinct from personal opinions or judgments.</li> <li>• 6.4 -- Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text, including figurative, connotative, and technical meanings.</li> <li>• 6.7 -- Integrate information presented in different media or formats (e.g., visually quantitatively) as well as in words to develop a coherent understanding of a topic or issue.</li> </ul>		

**Question 1**

<b>Question #1</b>	<b>Why were many black sharecroppers willing to leave their homes in the South? Use specific evidence and quotes from the text to support your response.</b>
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<b>Standard(s) covered:</b>	<b>RI.6.1</b> - Cite textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text.
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<b>Example response that meets standard</b>	<b>Look-fors</b>
<p>Many black sharecroppers were willing to leave their homes in the South because their lives were not very good. After the Civil War ended black Americans had their freedom, but their lives were still similar to when they were slaves. The land that they farmed "still belonged to the families that had once owned them." The sharecroppers were expected to "pay back a share of their harvests to the land owners in exchange for seeds, plows and mules", as well as a share of their overall harvest for rent and food. Due to this, the black sharecroppers felt that they were "perpetually in debt." They saw a new start at life and were willing to leave behind the lives they knew for a fresh start in the West.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Accurately identifies black sharecroppers' journey in life.</li> <li>Includes specific details (cited or paraphrased) from the text that support the fact that the black sharecroppers still had a hard life in the South.</li> </ul>

**If students are struggling to answer the text-dependent question, use this follow-up plan for modeling and practice:**

<b>Objective</b>	In this lesson, you will learn how to determine the meaning of a text by gathering text evidence to support inferences.
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<b>Prior knowledge to review</b>	No review of prior knowledge needed.
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<b>Steps to achieve objective</b>	<b>Think aloud for direct instruction</b>
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<p>1) Ask yourself, "What key words in the question should I look for in the text?"</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The question asks me WHY many African American sharecroppers were willing to leave their homes. The key words that I see in this question are WHY and WILLING TO LEAVE.</li> <li>There must be reasons stated in the text to help me figure out why the black sharecroppers were willing to leave. "Willing" means that they WANTED to go on their own accord.</li> <li>Let me scan the text to see if I can find evidence that shows reasons why they may want to leave. I remember when I read this text for the first time a particular section at the beginning of the text talked about this. Hmm, yes, there it is on the first page. I will reread this part to become more familiar with the information.</li> </ul>
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<p>2) Ask yourself, "What evidence helps answer the question?"</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Now that I've reread this part of the text, I will decide what information will be important in supporting my answer. I can write each of these facts on a sticky note.</li> <li>• In the text it says that "the land that they farmed still belonged to the families that had once owned them." The sharecroppers were expected to "pay back a share" of their harvests to the land owners in exchange for seeds, plows and mules, as well as a share of their overall harvest for rent and food. Due to this, the black sharecroppers felt that they were "perpetually in debt." These facts are important reasons why the black sharecroppers were struggling in their lives, even though they were now free people.</li> <li>• I now have to ask myself, given the evidence I have found in the text, "How did this life make the black sharecroppers feel?" They were not slaves any more, but they still had to work just as hard on land that they didn't own and had to pay back a share of what they made to their former owners. They were technically free people, but their lives hadn't changed much from when they were slaves.</li> <li>• Hmmm, "What conclusions can I draw from this?" I can see that their lives were not good, and probably not going to get any better where they were, so that is why they were willing to leave their homes in the South--to make a new start in the West where they could start fresh on their own land and work for themselves. This is going to be my answer to the question.</li> <li>• Now I need to decide on which specific evidence to use within my answer.</li> </ul>
<p>3) Summarize the evidence, using direct quotes to support your answer.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Once I have this decided, I need to write my response. We should always start with an introductory sentence that answers the question. One of the best ways to do this is to rephrase the original question. In this case, we could say: "Many black sharecroppers were willing to leave their homes in the South because their lives were not very good."</li> <li>• Then, we need to add in the details that we found that supported our response. We should write each of the ideas that are on our sticky notes into complete sentences to answer the question with great supporting evidence from the text. For the sticky note that has "pay back a share of their harvests to the land owners in exchange for seeds, plows and mules," we can write a sentence that says, The sharecroppers were expected to "pay back a share of their harvests to the land owners in exchange for seeds, plows and mules", as well as a share of their overall harvest for rent and food.</li> <li>• CONTINUE ADDING IN ALL OF THE OTHER IMPORTANT SUPPORTING DETAILS that are written on the sticky notes into complete sentences.</li> <li>• Now to finish off your response, you will need to wrap up your thinking by stating why your evidence supports your answer of why the black sharecroppers were willing to leave their homes. I can say something like this: "They saw a new start at life in the West and were willing to leave behind the lives they knew for a fresh start in the West."</li> </ul>

### Extension and practice

- If students are having a hard time using direct quotes from the text, practice with additional quotes from the text. Have students copy down important phrases from the text onto sticky notes, making sure that they use quotation marks for any words/phrases that they copy down directly. Then, model with the students how they can turn those directly quoted phrases into complete sentences, making sure to be mindful of keeping the quotation marks around the pieces of text that they quoted specifically. Once students are successful with this, they can continue the process with the phrases on their sticky notes.
- As an extension activity, have pairs of students list all of the evidence that supports the question. Then, have the students work independently to order the list by how supportive the evidence is to the question. The most supportive will be #1, next #2, etc., until the whole list is numbered. Once students are done with this, they will pair together again and each defend, with their own reasoning, why they selected that evidence as the most supportive, as well as the least supportive.

### What next?

For additional practice, with students or for students' independent work, apply this learning objective and set of steps to other informational texts to determine the meaning of a text by gathering text evidence to support inferences. (RI.6.1)

See more examples of how to teach determining the meaning of a text by gathering text evidence to support inferences. (RI.6.1)

Objective: In this lesson, you will learn how to determine the meaning of a text by gathering text evidence to support inferences.

1. Ask yourself, "What key words in the question should I look for in the text?"
2. Ask yourself, "What evidence helps answer the question?"
3. Summarize the evidence, using direct quotes to support your answer.

[Draw inferences from the text](#)

[Make inferences based on a character's actions](#)

[Use quotes from a text to answer questions](#)

**Question 2**

<b>Question #2</b>	<b>The idiom "sticking it out" is used to describe what the black pioneer families did in the early days of settlement. What does this idiom mean? Use evidence from the text to support your response.</b>	
<b>Standard(s) covered:</b>	<b>RI. 6.4:</b> Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text, including figurative, connotative, and technical meanings.	
<b>Example response that meets standard</b>		<b>Look-fors</b>
<p>The idiom "sticking it out" means to do something, or keep with it, even though it may be hard. The black pioneer families had many struggles during the early days of settlement. There were few black families among the settlers, so they were lonely. They had to build their homes from what was available around them, such as sod that they had to cut from the ground. With no stoves, women had to dig holes in the ground and add weeds and small stones to keep a hot fire. Buffalo chips had to be collected to provide fuel. All of these things were difficult to do, but the black pioneers held on and continued to build their lives in the West even though life was tough. By using this idiom, the reader gets a sense of determination, that the black pioneers were a strong people, and that they didn't give up despite the many struggles they had.</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Accurately identifies the meaning of the idiom "sticking it out."</li> <li>• Provides evidence from the text to support the meaning of the idiom.</li> </ul>
<b>If students are struggling to answer the text-dependent question, use this follow-up plan for modeling and practice:</b>		
<b>Objective</b>	In this lesson you will learn how to determine the meaning of figurative language by gathering specific evidence from the text.	
<b>Prior knowledge to review</b>	Figurative language (Idioms) - Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text, including figurative language such as metaphors and similes (RL.5.4).	
<b>Steps to achieve objective</b>	<b>Think aloud for direct instruction</b>	

<p>1.) Notice when the author uses certain words or phrases that don't have the same meaning as the literal meaning.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• We first have to find the idiom in the text, and reread that section to try to think about what the idiom means. Did the author give us any clues as to what it means?</li> <li>• Here, in the last sentence of the section BLACK HOMESTEADERS it states, "But black pioneer families held on, and in sticking it out, they made the way easier for those who came after."</li> <li>• It looks like this is a cause and effect sentence--the author is trying to make us see that because the black families hung on, the effect was that life was easier for the black families that came after them.</li> <li>• So, why do the families have to "hang on?" What is so bad about their lives? Let's look in the text to find things that made life a struggle for the black pioneer families and make a bulleted list. It states that there were few black families so they led a very desolate life. They had to build their homes from what they could find in the land, such as trees or sod. They had no stoves to cook in, so they had to dig holes in the ground and add hot stones and weeds to keep a hot fire. Buffalo chips had to be collected to use as fuel.</li> </ul>
<p>2) Ask yourself: "What conclusion can I draw about the intended meaning?"</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Now that we know how hard life was for the black pioneers, we can draw a conclusion about what the idiom means.</li> <li>• Their lives were hard, but they kept going despite the hardships. This shows that they were "sticking it out."</li> </ul>
<p>3) Write a response that answers the question and gives supporting evidence from the text.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Now we can write a response to the question by first stating what the idiom means, and then supporting this with the text details that we found. Write some of the details that you had listed in the bulleted list into complete sentences to support your idea of what the idiom means. I can start off my response like this: "The idiom "sticking it out" means to do something, or keep with it, even though it may be hard. The black pioneer families had many struggles during the early days of settlement." Now, I can add my evidence from the text, such as: "There were few black families among the settlers, so they were lonely. They had to build their homes from what was available around them, such as sod that they had to cut from the ground. With no stoves, women had to dig holes in the ground and add weeds and small stones to keep a hot fire. Buffalo chips had to be collected to provide fuel."</li> <li>• Be sure to end your response by connecting your evidence back to the meaning of the idiom. This could be written as: "All of these things were hard to do, but the black pioneers held on and continued to build their lives in the West even though life was tough. By using this idiom, the reader gets a sense of determination, that the black pioneers were a strong people, and that they didn't give up despite the many struggles they had."</li> </ul>



### Extension and practice

- If students struggle with the idea of idioms, review common idioms and how they are not meant to be read literally. Some common idioms are: piece of cake, costs an arm and a leg, break a leg, hit the books, let the cat out of the bag, hit the nail on the head, when pigs fly, you can't judge a book by its cover, bite off more than you can chew, or scratch someone's back. Then, have them draw pictures of common idioms. On one side of a piece of paper, have them draw what the idiom literally means, and on the other, the figurative meaning. Once students are more comfortable with what idioms are, you can go back to the idiom used in the text, "sticking it out." Have student complete the same exercise with this, drawing the literal meaning on one side, and then the figurative meaning on the other.
- As an extension activity, students can research the idiom "sticking it out" to find out how the idiom came to be. An example of this could be given using the idiom "to blow off steam." Boilers are commonly used in steam heating systems and steam engines such as those used in a steam locomotive. The boilers contain water that is heated by burning some fuel such as oil. The heated water turns to steam, which is then sent through a system of radiators (in the case of heating systems) or harnessed by a steam engine. The steam creates considerable pressure in the boiler. If the pressure becomes too great, there is a danger of the boiler exploding. Hence boilers are equipped with safety valves called blow off valves that open if the pressure becomes too great. "Blowing off steam" prevents explosions by relieving the pressure in a boiler by venting excess steam and pressure. The figurative meaning of this would be to do or say something that helps you get rid of strong feelings or energy. Students can then see how the figurative meaning relates to the actual words or phrase of the idiom.

### What next?

For additional practice, with students or for students' independent work, apply this learning objective and set of steps to any text with phrases of figurative language, such as idioms. (RI.6.4)

See more examples of how to teach figurative language within a text. (RI.6.4).

Objective: In this lesson you will learn how to determine the meaning of an idiom by gathering evidence from the text about the idiom.

1. Notice when the author uses certain words or phrases that don't have the same meaning as the literal meaning.
2. Ask yourself: "What conclusion can I draw about the intended meaning?"
3. Write a response that answers the question and gives supporting evidence from the text.

[Understanding figurative language "Spill the beans"](#)

[Understanding figurative language "Take the bull by the horns"](#)

**Question 3**

<b>Question #3</b>	<b>How does integrating the use of primary source photos further develop the hardships that the black pioneers faced?</b>	
<b>Standard(s) covered:</b>	<b>RI.6.7:</b> Integrate information presented in different media or formats (e.g., visually, quantitatively) as well as in words to develop a coherent understanding of a topic or issue.	
	<b>Example response that meets standard</b>	<b>Look-fors</b>
	<p>The author used many primary source photographs throughout the text. In doing this, she was able to give the reader a better understanding of the hardships that the black pioneers faced. The text states that the black pioneers learned that “sod could be cut like bricks and piled, layer upon layer, until it took the shape of a house.” In the picture, “Loading sod for a house on the Dismal River, Thomas County, Kansas” the pioneers are shown with their shovels in hand, loading the back of a horse drawn wagon with large pieces of thick sod. This picture shows that the pioneers had to cut the sod out by hand using the shovels, then load the large pieces onto the back of a wagon in order to bring the sod to where it would be needed to build their houses. The photo gives the reader a much better visualization of the hard work that was involved in what the pioneers had to do in order to build their houses.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• References a hardship that the black pioneers faced.</li> <li>• References an example of a photo from the text that further develops this hardship faced by the black pioneers.</li> <li>• Accurately explains how the photo develops a coherent understanding of the hardship.</li> </ul>
<b>If students are struggling to answer the text-dependent question, use this follow-up plan for modeling and practice:</b>		
<b>Objective</b>	In this lesson you will learn how to identify when a photo further develops a deeper understanding of the topic by examining photos and asking, “How does this photo further develop the topic?”	
<b>Prior knowledge to review</b>	Primary and secondary sources--review the differences between primary and secondary sources.	
<b>Steps to achieve objective</b>	<b>Think aloud for direct instruction</b>	

<p>1) Find a photo in the text that may further develop the topic.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Okay, first I need to look back into the text at the primary source photographs that are included. Since this text includes many choices, I will need to narrow my focus down to one photograph that I can use.</li> <li>• What specifically should I be looking for in a photo? I will want to choose a photo that relates specifically to information that was written about in the text. In the picture, "Loading sod for a house on the Dismal River, Thomas County, Kansas" the pioneers are shown with their shovels in hand, loading the back of a horse drawn wagon with large pieces of thick sod. I think that this will be a good photo to choose because I remember the text mentioned that the black pioneers needed to build their own houses when they went out West.</li> </ul>
<p>2) Ask: "How does this photo further develop the topic?"</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Now, I need to ask myself, "How does this photo further develop the topic?"</li> <li>• As I look at the photo and analyze it, I see that the men are using a shovel to cut the sod by hand. They are cutting up large pieces of the ground, and there is a lot of it cut up! They must need a lot of sod pieces to build their house. Another man is lifting up the big pieces of sod onto a horse drawn wagon. This must be tiring after a while. The sod looks heavy and there are a lot of pieces already on the wagon that he has loaded. This photo gives the reader a really good image of all of the work that the black pioneers had to do to build a sod house.</li> <li>• In the text, it says that the black pioneers learned that "sod could be cut like bricks and piled, layer upon layer, until it took the shape of a house." This is all that the author mentions about the black pioneers and their sod homes. However, by looking at the photograph that the author provided, I can see that this picture shows me a whole lot more about what it was like for the black pioneers to build a sod home. The fact that they had to cut through the thick sod by hand, and then gather up the sod pieces and lift them onto the wagon and transport them to where they were building their house, shows that it took a lot of hard physical work. This photo definitely develops that idea that the black pioneers faced hardships by giving you more insight than just the text gave you.</li> </ul>
<p>3) Construct a response, using text evidence as well as your own thinking, to show how the photo further develops the topic.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Now you will need to construct a response to the question. You always need to turn the question around to start your answer so that you make sure to answer what the question is asking. The question asks, "How does integrating the use of primary source photos further develop the hardships that the black pioneers faced?" One way to do this would be to state, "The author used many primary source photographs throughout the text. In doing this, she was able to give the reader a better understanding of the hardships that the black pioneers faced."</li> <li>• Then, you need to write what the text stated about the topic. In this case, the text stated, " sod could be cut like bricks and piled, layer upon layer, until it took the shape of a house," so I will need to add this into my response.</li> <li>• Now, I need to add my thinking about the photo and how it developed the topic. I want to also make sure that I note specifically which photo I am referencing. So, for this I could say, "In the picture, Loading sod for a house on the Dismal River, Thomas County, Kansas, the pioneers are shown with their shovels in hand, loading the back of a horse drawn wagon with large pieces of thick sod. This picture shows that the pioneers had to cut the sod out by hand using the shovels, and then load the large pieces onto the back of a wagon to bring them to where they need to use them to build their houses.</li> <li>• Lastly, I need to make sure to connect my response back to the original question and make sure I've answered why my evidence supports my answer. I can do this by saying, "The photo gives the reader a much better understanding of the hard work that was involved in what the pioneers had to do in order to build their houses."</li> </ul>

### Extension and practice

- If students are having a hard time deciding what hardships the pioneers faced, brainstorm with the students a list of hardships from the text on chart paper so that students can have a reference point to refer to as they look at the photographs.
- If students are having a hard time choosing a photo that further develops an idea in the text, have them work in pairs. They can start by just picking any photograph in the text and look closely at it with their partner. Look at the people and ask, "What are they doing? Why are they doing this?" or "What do you notice about this photograph?" Discuss with the partner if this photo relates to any of the hardships that the black pioneers faced.
- Students needing an extension can choose one of the ideas written about in the text and draw a picture that could be used in the book. Guide them to think about what the text says explicitly, and what they can then infer from that. This can then be infused into their drawing.

### What next?

For additional practice, with students or for students' independent work, apply this learning objective and set of steps to any informational text with photographs that further develop a topic presented within the text.  
(RI. 6.7)

See more examples of integrating information in different media formats.  
(RI.6.7)

Objective: In this lesson you will learn how to identify when a photo further develops a deeper understanding of the topic by examining photos and asking, "How does this photo further develop the topic?"

1. Find a photo in the text that may further develop a topic.
2. Ask: "How does this photo further develop the topic?"
3. Construct a response, using text evidence as well as your thinking, to show how the photo further develops the topic.

[Interpret pictures and photographs in an informational text](#)

[Gather information from nonfiction text features](#)

[Use information from text and illustrations to understand a topic](#)

**Question 4**

<b>Question #4</b>	<b>How did the black pioneers contribute to the growth of the country?</b>	
<b>Standard(s) covered:</b>	<b>RI.6.2:</b> Determine a central idea of a text and how it is conveyed through particular details; provide a summary of the text distinct from personal opinions or judgments.	
	<b>Example response that meets standard</b>	<b>Look-fors</b>
	<p>Black pioneers made many contributions to the growth of the country after the Civil War. Exodusters, as the black homesteaders were called, started communities. Two famous communities were Dunlap and Nicodemus located in Kansas. Communities such as these grew, developed and prospered. As developments became more successful, many settlers started to move farther west to states such as Nebraska and Oklahoma. These exodusters helped to further develop the land in the west as they started communities and businesses where they went. Another way the black pioneers contributed to the growth of the country was through the Buffalo Soldiers. Many of these black soldiers helped bring law and order to the areas where ranchers fought with the farmers, Indian tribes fought with white men, and bandits tried to take over towns. Not only did these Buffalo Soldiers “leave a legacy of courageous service in U.S. military history,” but they played an important role in developing the West. Therefore, black pioneers contributed to the growth of the country in many ways.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Uses specific and compelling evidence/details from across the text to support the central idea.</li> <li>• Explains how each piece of evidence/key detail supports the central idea.</li> <li>• Includes some transition words to move between and connect ideas and evidence.</li> </ul>
<b>If students are struggling to answer the text-dependent question, use this follow-up plan for modeling and practice:</b>		
<b>Objective</b>	In this lesson you will learn how to determine the central idea of a text by using key details to summarize the text.	
<b>Prior knowledge to review</b>	Main Idea – the most important, or central, thought of a text (RI.5.2).	
<b>Steps to achieve objective</b>	<b>Think aloud for direct instruction</b>	
1) Skim the text to determine key details/evidence to support the central idea.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Okay, I’m looking through the text to find examples of how the black pioneers contributed to the growth of the country. As I reread the text, I realize that each section is broken up into a different person or group who contributed something to the country. I need to decide which people/groups contributed the most. These will be the most compelling details or evidence from across the text to support my response.</li> </ul>	

<p>2) Create a chart to organize the information you found.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• I can jot down my ideas into a chart with the people on the left, what they contributed in the middle, and how it contributed to the growth of the country on the right (See example).</li> <li>• Now, I can start filling in the first two columns in my chart. I can start with the Exodusters. I will put this in the first spot in the left column. I notice that the Exodusters, as the black homesteaders were called, started communities. Two famous communities were Dunlap and Nicodemus located in Kansas. Communities such as these grew, developed and prospered. Many settlers started to move farther west to states such as Nebraska and Oklahoma. I can put all this information in the middle column since it is what they contributed.</li> <li>• CONTINUE FILLING IN THE FIRST AND SECOND COLUMNS.</li> </ul>
<p>3) Ask yourself, “How do these details all fit together?”</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Since I have found the details/evidence to support the central idea, I now need to determine how all of this contributed to the growth of the country. I will look at each of the groups of people that I wrote down in my chart.</li> <li>• If I look at the Exodusters, I see that they started communities that prospered and developed into larger communities, which moved further West into other states. This shows that they indeed helped in the growth of the country—it made the country grow in population and size. I will add this to my chart in the right hand column within the Exodusters row.</li> <li>• FOLLOW THE SAME PROCEDURE FOR THE REST OF THE GROUPS OF BLACK PIONEERS.</li> </ul>
<p>4) Summarize these details to support the central idea.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Now that I know that these groups of black pioneers made significant contributions to the growth of the country, I can use the evidence and specific details to support my response.</li> <li>• I always want to start my response by pulling out specific information from the question to make sure I answer it. I can do this by phrasing it something like, “Black pioneers made many contributions to the growth of the country after the Civil War.</li> <li>• Then, I want to add in the specific supporting details of the first group that I found significantly contributed to the growth of the country. I also want to make sure that after I put in the specific details, I talk about how this shows <u>GROWTH</u> to the country. An example of this could be, “Exodusters, as the black homesteaders were called, started communities. Two famous communities were Dunlap and Nicodemus located in Kansas. Communities such as these grew, developed and prospered. Many settlers started to move farther west to states such as Nebraska and Oklahoma. These exodusters helped to further develop the land in the west as they started communities and businesses where they went.”</li> <li>• Next I need to make sure that I add in a transition word or phrase to connect my second supporting detail. I could use something like, “Another way the black pioneers contributed to the growth of the country...”</li> <li>• REPEAT FOR THE SECOND SUPPORTING DETAIL.</li> </ul>

### Extension and practice

- If students are struggling with identifying people/groups who contributed to the growth of the country, in a small group, brainstorm a list of all of the people/groups that the text discussed and create a chart to fill in, with the group on the left and what they contributed as a group on the right. From here, students can work in partners to add specific details from the text about each particular group. Once the brainstorming is completed, have students talk about the various groups. Which group contributed the most? How do you know? These discussions will allow students to see what groups contributed, as well as which groups contributed more than others to the development of the country.
- For students needing an extension, they can work in pairs to consider another central idea found within the text and list the supporting details for this additional central idea.

### What next?

For additional practice, with students or for students' independent work, apply this learning objective and set of steps to other nonfiction texts to teach how to determine the central idea of a text by using key details to summarize the text. (RI.6.2)

See more examples of how to teach determining the central idea of a text by using key details to summarize the text. (RI.6.2)

Objective: In this lesson you will learn how to determine the central idea of a text by using key details to summarize the text.

1. Skim the text to determine key details/evidence to support the central idea.
2. Create a chart to organize the information you found.
3. Ask yourself, "How do these details all fit together?"
4. Summarize these details to support the central idea.

[Determine a central idea of a text](#)

[Determine the central idea](#)

Black Pioneer/Group	Contribution	How They Contributed to the GROWTH of the Country



Black Pioneer/Group	Contribution	How They Contributed to the GROWTH of the Country
Exodusters	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Groups of black pioneers who moved west to settle into a new life.</li> <li>Started communities, such as Dunlap and Nicodemus.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>These developments became successful, more and more people moved out West.</li> <li>Other communities were started due to how successful these original ones were.</li> <li>This grew the size as well as the population of the country.</li> </ul>
Buffalo Soldiers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Brought law and order to areas where ranchers fought with the farmers, Indian tribes fought with white men, and bandits tried to take over towns.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The Buffalo Soldiers brought law and order to many areas in the West. This allowed the towns and communities to thrive.</li> </ul>
John Lewis Solomon	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Had been a soldier in the Union army and knew his rights.</li> <li>Took a stand against a boat captain-threatened to sue if the boat captain didn't allow his family on.</li> <li>Fought for the rights of blacks.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>John Lewis Solomon fought to enforce the rights of blacks after the Civil War. This allowed more black pioneers to move west with their families, further adding to the push of settlers in the western part of the country.</li> </ul>