

Assessing with Primary Sources

Grade Level: High School (Grades 9-10)

Standards or Objectives: CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RI.9-10.1

Cite strong and thorough textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RI.9-10.3

Analyze how the author unfolds an analysis or series of ideas or events, including the order in which the points are made, how they are introduced and developed, and the connections that are drawn between them.

Library of Congress Resources:

A TOTAL SOLAR ECLIPSE.
It is a Very Impressive and Most Wonderful Spectacle.
One of the most beautiful and interesting sights to be seen is an eclipse of the sun. It is quite a remarkable fact that the sun is 400 times as broad as the moon and at the same time is about 400 times as far away. So to us they appear to be the same size.
A total eclipse of the sun is a very impressive and wonderful sight, says Harold W. Clark in Farm and Home.
As the time of the total eclipse draws near the darkness increases. About ten minutes before totally the darkness can almost be felt. Men's faces show a copper color, which makes them look ghastly. Birds cease their songs and go to roost. Flowers close, and an awful stillness rests upon all the face of Nature. The temperature falls and dew appears. Then away to the west we see the shadow

“A Total Solar Eclipse”

Lincoln County Leader (Toledo, Oregon)

Friday, September 13, 1912

<http://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn85033162/1912-09-13/ed-1/seq-4/>

Topic Background:

Even today, because of the infrequency of total solar eclipses, these events are surrounded by a sense of wonder and uncertainty. In the past, people were even more unsure of what exactly would happen during a total eclipse, especially because of the lack of photos or recordings of past eclipses. Writers and journalists sought to enlighten the general public with details, descriptions, and explanations, especially as a date of a total solar eclipse either grew near or happened recently.

Source Used:

The source used for this assessment is a newspaper article published in the Lincoln County Leader in Toledo, Oregon on September 13, 1912. The title of the article is *A Total Solar Eclipse*. The article is recreated in its entirety.

Multiple Choice Answer Key:

Question 1 – A

Question 2 – D

Lincoln County Leader

TOLEDO, LINCOLN COUNTY, OREGON, FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 13, 1912

A TOTAL SOLAR ECLIPSE

It is a Very Impressive and Most Wonderful Spectacle

One of the most beautiful and interesting sights to be seen is an eclipse of the sun. It is quite a remarkable fact that the sun is 400 times as broad as the moon and at the same time is about 400 times as far away. So to us they appear to be the same size.

A total eclipse of the sun is a very impressive and wonderful sight, says Harold W. Clark in Farm and Home.

As the time of the total eclipse draws near the darkness increases. About ten minutes before totality the darkness can almost be felt. Men's faces show a copper color, which makes them look ghastly. Birds cease their songs and go to roost. Flowers close, and an awful stillness rests upon all the face of Nature. The temperature falls and dew appears. Then away to the west we see the shadow of the moon coming with almost terrifying swiftness. It comes at the rate of 1,000 miles an hour and pounces upon us so suddenly that we are startled.

Looking at the sun, we see it wholly covered by the moon, but surrounded by a brilliant light that flashes out all around it. This is the corona and is seen only during total eclipses. The eclipse lasts only for four or five minutes, and then the shadow of the moon passes us, and we can see the sun again.

If we should ever be so fortunate as to get a chance to see a total solar eclipse, we should count ourselves lucky indeed. It would be worth going many miles to see.

Questions:

1. According to the article, why do the moon and sun appear to be the same size? (CCSS.ELA.RI.9-10.1)
 - a. The sun is 400 times farther away than the moon & 400 times as broad as the moon.
 - b. The moon is 400 times cooler than the sun & 400 times smaller than the sun.
 - c. The sun is 400 times brighter than the moon & 400 times farther away than the moon.
 - d. The moon is 400 times less dense than the sun & 400 times closer than the sun.
2. How does the author best communicate the significance and wonder of a total solar eclipse? (CCSS.ELA.RI.9-10.3)
 - a. The author quotes Harold W. Clark, who tells the reader how impressive and wonderful a total solar eclipse is to see.
 - b. The author describes the corona and explains that it is only seen during total eclipses.
 - c. The author impresses us with the fact that the sun is 400 times bigger than the moon.
 - d. The author describes what is felt, seen, and heard at the moment the darkness approaches.