

Grade Level

Middle
and High
School

GREENWOOD CULTURAL CENTER ARTIFACT LESSON PLAN

W.H. PARKS LETTER
JUNE 1, 1921

Lesson Objectives

- To summarize a document using the essential questions (who, what, when, where, how and why)
- To identify the author's viewpoint of the events of the 1921 Tulsa Race Massacre.
- To identify factors that may have helped to shape the author's viewpoint (and/or bias).
- To identify key words that support the summary of a document.

Introduction

Letters provide a lens into what someone is thinking or feeling. They provide a perspective of what it's author is seeing or experiencing. In order to better understand what the letter's author may be thinking or feeling, we must get to the GIST of it.

Gist n – the main or essential part of a communication (dictionary.com)

GIST Template

Name _____

Article Title _____

Article Source _____

1. Read the article.
2. Fill out the 5Ws and H.

Who: _____

What: _____

Where: _____

When: _____

Why: _____

How: _____

3. Write a 20-word GIST.

_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____

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Directions

- Read the following primary source document.
- Annotate as you read.
- When you are finished use the document to complete the GIST worksheet (note: the term 'article' refers to this document).
- Your 20 word GIST should be key words from the document that support your answers to your essential questions (5Ws and H).

W.H. PARKS LETTER

June 1, 1921

Was going to send you some papers but I believe I will just send you a few clippings. Forgot to tell you we are all well. All the kids are fine now.

Dear Sister,

The box and your letter rec'd in good shape. You don't know how I appreciated the contents of that box. There is surely nothing we needed worse. It surely seemed queer the way it happened. I had just said to Hays the day it came, and not more than 2 hours before, that I hated to take the money but I guessed I'd have to get a few sheets. The nightgown is so pretty and I needed it as bad as the sheets.

You shouldn't have done it though and you certainly shouldn't have sent the money and I am going to send it back because I know you need it. I will send it in this letter if I can get a check cashed Hays got. He has had a few days work but still nothing steady.

I neglected answering your letter so I could tell you how our lawsuit turned out. Hays and I had to testify a week ago last Mon. & Tues. but the judge withheld

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his decision until Wed. though we knew what it would be and so did the defendant. He decided in our favor so Newberry's lawyer immediately gave notice that he would appeal the case and he has 10 days in which to file appeal papers but hadn't done so yet yesterday and the ten days are nearly up. I don't believe they will. I think it was just an excuse for a judge reprieve. The judge and lawyer said we have a clear case. We are not afraid of a new hearing.

I can't get my mind settled to writing.

Tulsa has surely gone through a day of murder, bloodshed and fire yesterday. All night before last and all day yesterday a bloody race riot was going on full blast. I never dreamed of any thing so awful ever happening where I would have to witness it. You have undoubtedly read accounts of it in your papers before you get this letter.

There is a sharp line drawn here between the

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Whites and the blacks.

The negroes all live in there own part of town here and it is called "Little Africa." The white people set fire to the town yesterday about daylight and the whole thing went up in flames with a great loss of life. Mobs of white men stood with guns to keep the firemen from turning even a single stream of water on the blaze. All night we could hear the shots they were coming thick and fast about five o'clock. We live about a mile or so from Little Africa but we could see the flames and big black clouds of smoke. There is a Curtis Airplane field about three miles out from us and two or three big planes circled around in and out the smoke the whole time it was burning.

One of our neighbors who has two sons in the home guards told us that when the fighting was the worst about daylight the planes dropped bombs in negro sections.

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There was a fine church the colored people had just finished at a cost of \$85,000 to \$100,000 and it was simply grand. Today it is a total loss. Hays says just a pile of ruins. They just had there opening services there not more than a month ago.

The hospitals are full of wounded, white and black, and as many more deaths are expected in the next few days among the wounded as have already occurred.

Hays worked all day in the negro district.

He tore down many stable doors and let out horses and mules, hogs and chickens. He helped colored women carry out part of their furniture. He wrapped up several cut and burnt hands and carried many little children out of burning houses. Some offered to help and some didn't.

Those that didn't stood and looked on at all the suffering but those that wanted to help done so and no one offered to harm them.

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Greenwood Cultural Center, Tulsa, OK

W.H. PARKS LETTER

They let the blacks lay where they fell and Hays says he saw many. Down by the Frisco Depot a dead negro lay with his stomach cut open and his intestines laying on the ground and across his legs.

He laid there several hours, the flies swarming thick over him.

Talk of war! This was sure war and bloody one. This morning's paper estimated the negro dead at close to three hundred but it said that it may average a hundred more. They have no way yet of telling how many lost their lives in the fire. Hays wasn't there until two or three hours after the fire started but they told him, men that were there, that the blacks run in their houses and whites kept shooting and rather than be shot they stayed in until the roof would fall and many burned alive.

They have all they could round up in Convention Hall and

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churches and about 2,000 out in the ball park. They are being fed and cared for but that seems such a pitiful little bit.

Families are separated wives and husband, mothers and children, and many do not know if their loved ones are dead or wounded or if their houses were destroyed. They have started a relief fund this morning and the morning paper headed it with one thousand dollars, a judge gave \$500. And another man give \$500. How I wish I had \$500 to give them. I have forgotten to tell you what started it all. A young colored boy assaulted a young girl that runs an elevator in the building down town. He assaulted her in the elevator. They were alone in it. The paper didn't say but from the account he must have stopped it between two floors.

She is a young orphan girl and is very well spoken of by all the people in this building and runs the elevator

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to pay for a course in business college.

They arrested the nigger and there was talk of lynching him. The blacks heard of it and over two hundred gathered at the court house well armed at about ten o'clock and of course a large crowd of white people gathered too and the blacks opened fire on the unarmed whites. Calls for help and arms were sent out all over the city and in a little while the streets were full of dead and wounded. Some laid there till daylight.

White men broke into the hard-ware stores taking all the guns and ammunition. Some store owners came and opened willingly but those who didn't had their doors hammered down. Their loss is quite a lot.

Damage to the negro district is estimated at close to \$2,000,000. Many white people owned property there and the insurance companies wont have to pay a cent as they are not liable in war or riot. Many negroes owned their own home. Will send some clippings from papers. Write soon lots of love.

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Greenwood Cultural Center, Tulsa, OK

ANSWER SUGGESTIONS FOR W.H. PARKS LETTER

GIST Template

Name _____ Student's name _____
Article Title _____ W.H. Park Letter _____
Article Source _____ Letter written in 1921, artifact of Greenwood Cultural Center of Tulsa, OK _____

1. Read the article. (and annotate)

2. Fill out the 5Ws and H.

Who: Sister of W.H. Park, married to Hayes

What: Letter: is thank you for money and gift; provides update to a lawsuit they are in; provides their perspective of the events of the Massacre.

Where: Tulsa, OK 1921, one mile from the Greenwood community (Little Africa)

When: June 1, 1921

Why: According to the author the massacre (riot) begin because of the actions of Dick Rowland

How: Students may identify the events of the riot/massacre and/or the cultural tensions of the 1921 that were mentioned.

3. Write a 20-word GIST.

lawsuit	fire	planes	blacks
appeal	race	bombs	nigger
Tulsa	riot	ruins	Convention Hall
murder	mob	deaths	Dick Rowland
bloodshed	Little Africa	whites	orphan girl