

Reading for Information



Use with *Seabiscuit: An American Legend*, page 128.



READING 9D Synthesize and make logical connections between ideas and details in several texts selected to reflect a range of viewpoints on the same topic and support those findings with textual evidence.

RC-9(A) Reflect on understanding to monitor comprehension (summarizing and synthesizing).

Horse of the Century

- Magazine Article, page 139
- Timeline, page 140
- Radio Transcript, page 141

What's the Connection?

In the selection from *Seabiscuit: An American Legend*, you read about one of the most famous horseraces of the 20th century. The following selections will help you get a sense of what it was like to actually be at that race and why many Americans practically held their breath as they listened to it on the radio.

Skill Focus: Synthesize

When you read different texts on the same topic, you **synthesize** information—that is, you put together the facts, ideas, and details you get from each of them. As a result, you gain a fuller understanding of the topic than you would from reading only one text.

Here's how you can synthesize the ideas and information in the pieces about Seabiscuit:

- Summarize the main ideas and details in each piece.
- Jot down any questions that come to you as you learn new information.
- When information in one source conflicts with information in another, jot down these conflicts as questions, too.
- Look for **textual evidence**—facts and details from the selections—to help you make logical connections and to support your conclusions.

For more help synthesizing, complete a chart like the one started here as you read the following selections.

| Source | Main Ideas | New Information & Questions |
|--|---|--|
| From <i>Seabiscuit: An American Legend</i> | Jockey, owner, and fans were surprised by his defeat in the Santa Anita Handicap. | Why was this horse so popular? |
| From "Four Good Legs Between Us" | Even though Seabiscuit lost this race, he was fast becoming a celebrity. | Howard made him popular by racing him all over the country. What was going on in Europe? |



from Four Good Legs Between Us

Laura Hillenbrand

Though Seabiscuit had lost [the Santa Anita Handicap], he was rapidly becoming a phenomenal celebrity. Two factors converged to create and nourish this. The first was Charles Howard. A born adman, Howard courted the nation on behalf of his horse much as he had hawked his first Buicks, undertaking exhaustive promotion that presaged the modern marketing of athletes. Crafting daring, unprecedented coast-to-coast racing campaigns, he shipped Seabiscuit over fifty thousand railroad miles to showcase his talent at eighteen tracks in seven states and Mexico. The second factor was timing. The nation was sliding from economic ruin into the whirling eddy of Europe's cataclysm. Seabiscuit, Howard, Pollard, and Smith, whose fortunes
10 swung in epic parabolas, would have resonated in any age, but in cruel years the peculiar union among the four transcended the racetrack. **A**

The result was stupendous popularity. In one year Seabiscuit garnered more newspaper column inches than Roosevelt, Hitler, or Mussolini. *Life* even ran a pictorial on his facial expressions. Cities had to route special trains to accommodate the invariably record-shattering crowds that came to see him run. Smith, fearing Seabiscuit wouldn't get any rest, hoodwinked the press by trotting out a look-alike. Such fame fueled the immediate, immense success of Howard's Santa Anita and California's new racing industry, today a four-billion-dollar business.

A SYNTHESIZE
Summarize the two causes of Seabiscuit's popularity.

Timeline: Seabiscuit

- 1937**
- February 27:** In his first try at the Santa Anita Handicap, Seabiscuit loses to Rosemont by a nose, in a photo finish.
 - March 6:** Seabiscuit draws a crowd of 45,000 excited fans and wins the San Juan Capistrano Handicap by seven lengths, smashing the track record.
 - May 6:** The German airship *Hindenburg* bursts into flames as it is about to land in Lakehurst, New Jersey.
 - June 5:** War Admiral captures the Triple Crown after a win at the Belmont Stakes.
 - June 26:** Seabiscuit runs in the Brooklyn Handicap, beating rival Rosemont and local horse Aneroid.
 - July:** Seabiscuit wins the Butler Handicap and the Yonkers Handicap easily, despite carrying far more weight than his competitors in both races.
 - September 11:** At the Narragansett Special in Rhode Island, Seabiscuit finishes third due to muddy track conditions.
 - October 12:** Seabiscuit wins the Continental Handicap in New York, gaining the top spot in the 1937 winnings race with \$152,780 earned, \$8,000 ahead of War Admiral.
 - October 30:** Seabiscuit and War Admiral are slated to meet on the track, but Seabiscuit is scratched from the Washington Handicap due to muddy track conditions, allowing an easy victory for his rival.
 - December 7:** War Admiral is named horse of the year by *Turf and Sport Digest*.
- 1938**
- October 30:** Orson Welles's radio broadcast of *The War of the Worlds*, the tale of a Martian invasion on Earth, creates panic among listeners who mistake it for news.
 - November 1:** With 40 million listeners tuned in across the country, Seabiscuit beats War Admiral by four lengths in just over a minute fifty-six for the mile and three-sixteenths, a new Pimlico record.
- 1939**
- February 14:** Seabiscuit injures his suspensory ligament in a prep race for Santa Anita.
 - September 3:** Britain and France declare war on Germany.
- 1940**
- March 2:** Seabiscuit wins in his third try at the \$100,000 Santa Anita Handicap. He clocks the fastest mile and a quarter in Santa Anita's history, the second fastest ever run in the United States. The most people ever to attend an American horse race—75,000—watch as Pollard leads Seabiscuit from behind to victory.
 - April 10:** Seabiscuit retires to Charles Howard's Ridgewood Ranch. **B**



B SYNTHESIZE

Identify one or two new ideas or pieces of information that this timeline provides about Seabiscuit.



Races on the Radio

Santa Anita Handicap (1937) with Clem McCarthy and Buddy Twist

CLEM McCARTHY:

Eddy Thomas won't take the start until he's on his toes and the jockey is ready. Then he'll push that button, the bell will ring, and they'll be on their way. We don't have any starting barriers now, as you know. Here they go. And they're on their way down the stretch. The break was good; every horse got a chance just as they left there. **C**

As they come down here to the eighth pole, it is Time Supply and Special Agent. Special Agent is trying to force his way to the front and he's going to do a good job of it as they pass the stands. Here on the outside comes Rosemont in a good position. And as they go by me it is
 10 Special Agent on the lead by one length. Special Agent has the lead and then comes Time Supply in second place right along beside him. Going to the first turn is Special Agent by a length. Time Supply is second and on the outside of him is Accolade. And Boxthorn is close up. Far back in the crowd, on the inside, in about twelfth place is Red Rain. Up there close is Rosemont in about sixth place.

They're going into the stretch; they've gone half a mile. And the time for the first quarter over this track was 22 and two fifths seconds, the half in 45 and four. They're turning into the backstretch with Special Agent on the lead. Special Agent has a lead now of one length
 20 and a half. Right behind him comes Time Supply. And in there, slipping through on the inside is . . . Indian Broom is going up on the inside now in a good position. Around that far turn, there's still no change in the positions. Rosemont is having a hard time working his way through, he's now in sixth position going around on the inside, he's saving ground, he's got plenty left. If he's enough horse, he may get home.

C SYNTHESIZE

Read all or part of this transcript aloud, using the tone and style of a sports announcer. Where do you speed up the pace?

Language Coach

Informal Language

Because this selection is a radio transcript, it uses informal language. Informal language often includes contractions, sentence fragments, and slang. Reread lines 30–39 and identify three examples of informal speech.

And on the outside, here comes the other one, Indian Broom. And Goldeneye is moving up from the rear. Here comes Accolade in second position. And Seabiscuit is now moving up and is challenging as they turn for home.

30 It's Special Agent and Seabiscuit challenging head-and-head as they swing into the stretch. And they've only got a quarter of a mile to come. They've stepped the first mile in 1:36 and four-fifths—and that shows you what this pace is. He can't live at it. Seabiscuit has got the lead half way down the stretch. But here comes one of the Baroni entries challenging on the outside, challenging boldly. And the battle is on. Indian Broom is coming fast and here comes Rosemont between horses. And Rosemont may take it all. It's gonna be a photograph finish. And it's anybody's race right to the end.

I think Rosemont got the money. I think Rosemont was first. It
40 was an eyebrow finish. And Seabiscuit was the second horse. Seabiscuit was second and one of the Taylor entries; I think Indian Broom, was third. It was very close. That was an eyelash finish. Rosemont was closing strong, but Seabiscuit hung on. The time of the race was 2:02 and four-fifths, which makes the track almost identically like the track of two years ago . . .

BUDDY TWIST:

Oh boy, one of the most thrilling finishes I think that I've ever seen in a horse race in my life, Clem. The crowd down here has gone completely mad. The photographers are outside the charm circle, which is a white circle here, where the winner will come up in just a moment. Newsreel
50 photographers are setting up on every hand. The horses are just coming back now. And everybody, depending on who was their favorite, was shouting "Rosemont," "Seabiscuit"—one would call Rosemont, one Seabiscuit. There were half-a-dozen here who were just as sure Rosemont won as Seabiscuit, they don't know what to think of it. One of the most beautiful driving finishes I think I've ever seen.

CLEM McCARTHY:

Here's the photograph finish. Hold it now. Get ready for it. Just a few seconds and we'll know the winner of this race. I think Rosemont won it, but that's only my guess from where I stand. The photograph will tell us the actual winner. The naked eye is not as good as the photograph,
60 we'll have it in a second. They're looking at it down there. I know it was an eyelash finish. Either horse won by a whisker and that's all. Just about a quarter of an inch, I can't see any more between them. I really shouldn't express an opinion on a finish that close. And they're still waiting. That shows you what a difficult . . . There it is, Rosemont is the winner. Rosemont by a nose. Seabiscuit is second. Just a minute Buddy until I get it. Rosemont is the winner—I want you to get that jockey if you got him—Seabiscuit is second. And the Taylor entry finished third and fourth. They haven't put up the distinguishing numbers and they finished very close together. **D**

D SYNTHESIZE

What does this transcript reveal about the end of the race that was not included in the other texts?

Comprehension

1. **Recall** Which horse won the Santa Anita Handicap in 1937? What kind of a finish was it?
2. **Recall** How many times did Seabiscuit enter the Santa Anita Handicap before winning?
3. **Summarize** What major world events took place during Seabiscuit's rise to fame?

Critical Analysis

4. **Analyze Mood and Tone** What elements of the radio transcript contribute to the sense of excitement? Be specific.
5. **Synthesize** Review the ideas and information you noted in your chart. How did the world events of the day contribute to Seabiscuit's popularity? Use evidence from the texts to support your answer.



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Read for Information: Draw Conclusions

WRITING PROMPT

In a paragraph, state and support your conclusions about one of the following topics:

- horseracing as a spectator sport
- Seabiscuit's popularity
- jockeys

To answer this prompt, you will need to pick your topic and follow these steps:

1. Gather information about your topic from the three selections, as well as from Hillenbrand's biography of Seabiscuit.
2. Consider the main ideas and information you have collected. Ask yourself what conclusion(s) you can draw from them.
3. State your conclusion(s) in a topic sentence. Then, support those conclusions with ideas and information from the texts.

