

Assessing with Primary Sources

Grade Level: High School (Grades 9-10)

Standard(s) or Objectives: CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RI.9-10.4
Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text, including figurative, connotative, and technical meanings; analyze the cumulative impact of specific word choices on meaning and tone (e.g., how the language of a court opinion differs from that of a newspaper).

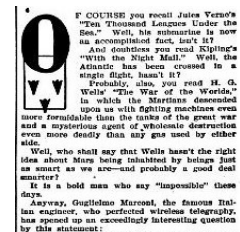
Library of Congress Resources:



"Hello, Earth! Hello!"
The Tomahawk.

White Earth, Becker County, Minn., March 18, 1920
Page 6

<http://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn89064695/1920-03-18/ed-1/seq-6/>



Topic Background:

A century ago, *wireless* meant an awesome tool used by the military, shipping industry, communications services, and amateur "ham" operators to send messages via radio waves without wires—"wireless telegraphy." Italian inventor and engineer Guglielmo Marconi developed, demonstrated and marketed the first successful long-distance wireless telegraph and in 1901 broadcast the first transatlantic radio signal. His company's Marconi radios ended the isolation of ocean travel and saved hundreds of lives, including all of the surviving passengers from the sinking Titanic. In 1909 he shared the Nobel Prize in Physics for his radio work.

Excerpts from: <http://americainclass.org/sources/becomingmodern/machine/text5/text5.htm>
<http://www.history.com/topics/inventions/guglielmo-marconi>

Source(s) Used:

The source used for this assessment is an excerpt from a newspaper article appearing on March 18, 1920, on page 6 in *The Tomahawk*, a newspaper from Becker County, Minnesota. The author quotes testimony from Guglielmo Marconi, who explains that he has received strange sounds while experimenting with wireless technology. He believes these sounds are signals that originated from the inhabitants of other planets. The article goes on to say that many other scientists, including Thomas Edison, also believe that these signals may be some type of communication from another planet.

Multiple Choice Answer Key:

Question 1 – D

Question 2 – A

THE TOMAHAWK.

OFFICIAL ORGAN OF THE MINNESOTA CHIPPEWAS.
"Truth before Favor."

White Earth, Becker County, Minnesota, Thursday, March 18, 1920.

"Hello, Earth! Hello!"

OF COURSE you recall Jules Verne's "Ten Thousand Leagues Under the Sea." Well, his submarine is now an accomplished fact, isn't it? And doubtless you read Kipling's "With the Night Mail." Well, the Atlantic has been crossed in a single flight, hasn't it? Probably, also, you read H. G. Wells' "The War of the Worlds," in which the Martians descended upon us with fighting machines even more formidable than the tanks of the great war and a mysterious agent of wholesale destruction even more deadly than any gas used by either side.

Well, who shall say that Wells hasn't the right idea about Mars being inhabited by beings just as smart as we are—and probably a good deal smarter?

It is a bold man who say "impossible" these days.

Anyway, Guglielmo Marconi, the famous Italian engineer, who perfected wireless telegraphy, has opened up an exceedingly interesting question by this statement:

"I have encountered during my experiments with wireless telegraphy most amazing phenomena. Most striking of all is the receipt by me personally of signals which I believe originated in the space beyond our planet. I believe it is entirely possible that these signals may have been sent by the inhabitants of other planets to the inhabitants of earth.

"If there are any human beings on Mars I would not be surprised if they should find a means of communication with this planet. Linking of the science of astronomy with that of electricity may bring about almost anything.

→ "While our own planet is a storehouse of wonders, we are not warranted in accepting as a fact the general supposition that the inhabitants of our comparatively insignificant planet are any more highly developed than inhabitants (if there be such) of other planets.

"For all we know, the strange sounds that I have received by wireless may be only a forerunner of a tremendous discovery.

"The messages have been distinct but unintelligible. They have been received simultaneously in London and in New York, with identical intensity, indicating that they must have originated at a great distance.

Questions:

Consider the following sentence from the paragraph marked with the arrow:

"While our own planet is a storehouse of wonders, we are not warranted in accepting as a fact the general supposition that the inhabitants of our comparatively insignificant planet are any more highly developed than inhabitants (if there be such) of other planets."

- Which of these words is closest in meaning to the underlined word warranted? (CCSS.ELA.RI.9-10.4)
 - Opposed
 - Incorrect
 - misguided
 - justified
- Based on the entire paragraph, what is the meaning of the underlined word supposition? (CCSS.ELA.RI.9-10.4)
 - A theory believed to be true even without proof.
 - A fact about which there is no doubt.
 - A belief that is known to be true.
 - An opinion that is believed to be untrue.