

If you only have 30 minutes ...

Good readers can identify the main idea of an article and can cite the information in the article that supports it.

While reading an article like “Somaliland’s Midwife,” how can you be confident that you understand it? Here’s a good way to check. First, can you state, in a sentence or two, the main idea of the article, by answering what happened? And second, can you state a few bits of evidence that support or express the main idea?

Let’s give it a try with “Somaliland’s Midwife.” Below, you can see the main point of the article. Notice that we have stated it in our own words, rather than quoting a specific line from the article. There are two reasons for that. First, not every article states its thesis directly. And second, it’s a good way to “own” the content of the article—to put it in our own words.

Main Idea of the Article

Public health in Somaliland has improved, and opportunities for women have increased since Edna Adan started her work after the Somaliland war.

You pick it up from here. Read the article (including the photo captions) for evidence that supports the main idea. We have included a few categories of evidence to guide you. Fill in the table with as much evidence as you can find. When you have finished, watch the video that accompanies “Somaliland’s Midwife,” and gather more evidence that support the thesis.

Supporting Evidence From the Article

Evidence of improved health outcomes:¹

Evidence of increased number of health workers:²

Evidence of opportunities created for women:³

Now that you've stated the article's thesis and identified evidence that supports it, take one more step that scholars take: Think about what you'd like to know more about. What questions does this article raise for you? You're probably used to thinking that as a student you're supposed to answer questions. But it's just as important that you *ask* questions. What else would you like to know regarding Edna Adan, her hospital and/or healthcare in Somaliland? See if you can come up with five questions for further research. Work alone or in a group.

Common Core Standard(s) Met:

CCRA.R.1 Read closely to determine what the text says explicitly and to make logical inferences from it; cite specific textual evidence when writing or speaking to support conclusions drawn from the text.

CCRA.R.2 Determine central ideas or themes of a text and analyze their development; summarize the key supporting details and ideas.

¹ Evidence of improved outcomes may include the following: maternal mortality has fallen from 1,600 per 100,000 live births before the civil war to 400 per 100,000; infant mortality has fallen by more than one-fourth; and from the video, many lives have been saved.

² Evidence of increased number of health workers may include the following: Edna has trained 1,500 nurses, midwives, and lab technicians. (Video says 800 health care professionals.); volunteer health-care professionals from other countries have joined workers at Somaliland hospital; from the video, of the first class at Edna's school, one graduate is a surgeon, another is dean of the nursing school, another is a gynecologist and still another is volunteering at the hospital as a manager; and three midwife-training centers now operate in Somaliland.

³ Evidence of opportunities created for women may include the following: the hospital's chief doctor has performed many "first" procedures; more than half the clinical residents at the hospital are women; and from the video, the first students at Edna's school, all women, have succeeded and now serve important positions.