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# Using This Book

Reading comprehension in nonfiction involves numerous thinking skills. Students require these skills to make sense of a text and become successful readers. This book offers practice in key skills needed to meet the Common Core State Standards in Reading/Language Arts for grade five. (See page 6 for more.) Each student page includes a short passage focusing on four of these essential comprehension skills.

## Comprehension Skills At-a-Glance

Use the information that follows to introduce the reading comprehension skills covered in this book.

### Main Idea & Details

Understanding the main or key idea of a paragraph is crucial for a reader. The main idea is what the paragraph is about. The other parts of the paragraph help to explain more about this key idea. The main idea is sometimes in the first or last sentence of a paragraph. Students should be aware that some main ideas are stated explicitly and others are implicit requiring readers to put together details to determine the main idea.

The information that supports the main idea is usually referred to as the details. Details—facts, examples, definitions, etc.—help a reader gain a fuller understanding of a paragraph.

### Summarize

Readers should be able to use main ideas to summarize a text. By summarizing, students are better able to recall important points. This is an important skill for taking notes and studying for exams.

### Context Clues

Using context clues means determining an unfamiliar word's meaning by studying the phrases, sentences, and overall text with which the word appears. Context clues help readers comprehend and enjoy a text and also read more smoothly and efficiently.


Passage 17

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Read the paragraph. Then answer the questions.

### Rolling Along

A roller brigade glides down a boulevard in Paris. This group of inline skaters is part of the city's police force. Their job is to keep bus lanes free of passenger cars on busy streets. They also pull over drivers who are chatting on mobile phones. The best part of their work is posing for pictures with tourists. The rollers wear helmets and knee pads as part of their uniform. Even so, it can be tricky to navigate some streets in Paris, especially those paved with cobblestones.



1. The main idea of this paragraph is  
☐ A. Paris has a lot of automobile traffic.  
☐ B. some police in Paris work on skates.  
☐ C. a roller wears a helmet and pads.  
☐ D. inline skates are not just for fun.
2. A supporting detail is  
☐ A. police departments try new things.  
☐ B. inline police keep bus lanes free.  
☐ C. tourists visit Paris to see the police.  
☐ D. cobblestones make driving difficult.
3. Which sentence is most likely true?  
☐ A. The whole police force has skates.  
☐ B. The word rollers is French.  
☐ C. Traffic in Paris is usually light.  
☐ D. Buses often run over the skaters.
4. Which word best reflects the writer's point of view?  
☐ A. displeased  
☐ B. thoughtful  
☐ C. puzzled

1. Main Idea 2. Details 3. Inference 4. Point of View

In this paragraph, students have to read the entire text and ask themselves "What is this paragraph mainly about?" The main idea is supported by different facts (details) about Paris police on skates.


Passage 8

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Read the paragraph. Then answer the questions.

### Cycling Secrets

What's the secret of a winning cyclist? Skill, daring, and good preparation do make a difference, of course, but another answer is technology. Since bicycle races are often very close, riders need every advantage they can get. For instance, a racer might wear a suit designed so that it has no creases or wrinkles to affect the airflow. Special racing shoes are covered with a seamless silver fabric for the same reason. Aerodynamic brakes and a bike frame made to cut through the air effectively are also part of a racer's equipment.



1. From this paragraph you can conclude that  
☐ A. cyclists like to look good when racing.  
☐ B. many riders wear the wrong kind of clothing.  
☐ C. air resistance affects a rider's speed.  
☐ D. some riders don't spend enough time training.
2. Which phrase best reflects the writer's point of view?  
☐ A. questioning about cycling technology  
☐ B. receptive to cycling technology  
☐ C. argumentative about cycling technology
3. The main idea of this paragraph is  
☐ A. special racing shoes for cyclists.  
☐ B. technological advantages for cyclists.  
☐ C. bike races are often very close.  
☐ D. skill and preparation count the most.
4. In this paragraph, the word **aerodynamic** means  
☐ A. made by hand.  
☐ B. study of beauty.  
☐ C. having to do with air pressure.  
☐ D. similar to airplanes.

1. Draw Conclusions 2. Point of View 3. Main Idea 4. Context Clues

Several clues in the paragraph (*airflow, cut through the air*) help a reader determine the meaning of **aerodynamic**.

## Figurative Language

Beyond using context clues to derive meaning is the ability to differentiate between literal and figurative language. Readers who can recognize figures of speech and determine their meanings are well on their way to fluency.

## Inference

Although some students don't know what an inference is, many are most likely making inferences—both in their daily lives and when reading—without being aware of it. Students should understand that writers don't include every detail in their writing; it is up to readers to supply some information. A reader makes a guess or inference by putting together what is in a text with what he or she already knows. Inferring makes a significant difference in how much a reader gains from a text.

## Draw Conclusions

After thinking about information in a text, a reader makes a decision or conclusion by examining evidence rooted in the text. Students should know that writers don't always state all of their ideas, so readers have to look for clues to understand what is meant.

## Fact & Opinion

Readers who can identify and differentiate between statements of fact and opinion are better able to analyze and assess a text. Students should learn to recognize phrases, such as *I think*, *you should*, and *it's the best/most*, that signal opinions.

## Point of View

While distinguishing fact from opinion is one step in the reading process, it is important for students to go further. They should be able to sort facts, opinions, and feelings to help determine a writer's point of view and compare it to what they themselves think. Students should learn that good readers consult several sources on subjects of interest to gain different points of view.

### Tips

★ Tell students to first read the passage and then answer the questions. Show them how to fill in the circles for bubble-test questions.

★ The comprehension skills targeted in the questions accompanying each passage are labeled at the bottom of the page.

★ Review the completed pages with students on a regular basis. Encourage them to explain their thinking for each correct answer.


Passage 29

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Read the paragraph. Then answer the questions.

### Campaign Words

**Do words buy votes?** Many candidates for public office think so. Certain words are used over and over again in their speeches. For example, the word *hope* in a candidate's speech is as predictable as the sunrise. Another likely word is *jobs*. Most candidates also throw in words such as *values* and *strength*. When candidates are running for national office, they almost always bring up the words *health care* and *economy*. Candidates use these words to tap into the concerns of voters.



- The underlined words in this paragraph are an example of figurative language called.
  - ☐ A. metaphor
  - ☐ B. personification
  - ☐ C. simile
  - ☐ D. hyperbole
- The word that best reflects the writer's point of view is.
  - ☐ A. incredulous
  - ☐ B. casual
  - ☐ C. scornful
- Which sentence is most likely not true?
  - ☐ A. Voters respond well to certain words.
  - ☐ B. Candidates want to win elections.
  - ☐ C. Voters never get bored by candidates.
  - ☐ D. Candidates make promises to voters.
- Read the paragraph. Find and write an example of a simile.

1. Figurative Language 2. Point of View 3. Inference 4. Figurative Language

Students have to read closely to answer the inference question, "Which sentence is most likely not true?" They may be surprised by how many inferences a reader can make from one paragraph.


Passage 14

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Read the paragraph. Then answer the questions.

### Past Pastime

How did wealthy people spend leisure time in the late 1800s? One fascinating pastime was to exchange afternoon visits. At each house, a visitor would leave a calling card. These printed cards included the person's name, much like a business card of today. The cards would be placed on a tray and taken by a servant to the lady of the house. The hostess would then decide to accept the visit, decline the visit, or **postpone** the visit. After World War I, telephones and cars led to the end of this quaint social custom.



- Which phrase best reflects the writer's point of view?
  - ☐ A. shocked by the custom
  - ☐ B. distressed by the custom
  - ☐ C. intrigued by the custom
- Write fact or opinion next to each sentence.
  - ☐ A. One fascinating pastime was to exchange afternoon visits.
  - ☐ B. At each house, a visitor would leave a calling card.
  - ☐ C. The cards would be placed on a tray and taken by a servant to the lady of the house.
- The title that best summarizes this paragraph is.
  - ☐ A. An Afternoon Activity.
  - ☐ B. Decisions for a Hostess.
  - ☐ C. Calling Card Customs.
  - ☐ D. Before Cars and Telephones.
- In this paragraph, the word **postpone** means.
  - ☐ A. get ready for.
  - ☐ B. make a decision.
  - ☐ C. answer.
  - ☐ D. put off until later.

1. Point of View 2. Fact & Opinion 3. Inference 4. Context Clue

To appreciate this text, the reader should understand that the writer has inserted commentary or opinion into the paragraph. For example, the sentence, *One fascinating pastime was to exchange afternoon visits*, is the author's opinion.

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Read the paragraph. Then answer the questions.

# Big on Breakfast

Do you eat breakfast every day? Researchers have found that people who eat a balanced breakfast are likely to be healthier than those who don't. One reason is that most people eat whole grains at breakfast, and these promote good health. Breakfast eaters also tend to have fewer weight problems than those who skip the meal. People who don't eat breakfast usually eat too much later in the day. Often, these foods are not healthy and cause weight gain and other problems. So, be sure to eat breakfast. It is definitely the most important meal of the day.



**1.** The main idea of this paragraph is

- ☐ A. breakfast is the most important meal.
- ☐ B. breakfast is a delicious meal.
- ☐ C. skipping breakfast makes you hungry.
- ☐ D. breakfast eaters have fewer weight problems.

**2.** A supporting detail is

- ☐ A. people eat too much at lunch.
- ☐ B. only healthy people eat breakfast.
- ☐ C. no one has time to eat breakfast.
- ☐ D. whole grains at breakfast promote health.

**3.** Write *fact* or *opinion* next to each statement.

- \_\_\_\_\_ A. People who don't eat breakfast usually eat too much later in the day.
- \_\_\_\_\_ B. Often, these foods are not healthy and cause weight gain and other problems.
- \_\_\_\_\_ C. It is definitely the most important meal of the day.

**4.** Which word reflects the writer's point of view about the value of breakfast?

- ☐ A. unsure
- ☐ B. entertained
- ☐ C. convinced

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Read the paragraph. Then answer the questions.

# Was It a Car?

People take cars and other road vehicles for granted today. However, the idea of such vehicles was unheard of about 500 years ago. Then, in 1478, the artist and inventor Leonardo da Vinci designed a **self-propelled** vehicle. His drawing showed a boxy, open-topped wooden machine with three wheels. Coiled springs would make the vehicle move somewhat like a windup toy. Models of Leonardo's vehicle have been made in recent years and are on exhibit in museums in Italy.



1. A title that best summarizes this paragraph is
  - ☐ A. Models in Museums Today.
  - ☐ B. Taking Cars for Granted.
  - ☐ C. Da Vinci's Self-Propelled Vehicle.
  - ☐ D. Three-Wheeled Wooden Machine.
2. Which sentence is most likely true?
  - ☐ A. People can still use Leonardo's drawings.
  - ☐ B. Leonardo da Vinci is still working.
  - ☐ C. Leonardo invented windup toys.
  - ☐ D. Leonardo painted his new vehicle.
3. From this paragraph, you can conclude that
  - ☐ A. Leonardo started a car-making business.
  - ☐ B. Leonardo didn't think his invention would work.
  - ☐ C. Leonardo's vehicle design amazed people.
  - ☐ D. Leonardo's drawings weren't very good.
4. In this paragraph, the word **self-propelled** means
  - ☐ A. a fuel that makes things go.
  - ☐ B. moves by its own power.
  - ☐ C. a kind of propeller.
  - ☐ D. is powered by an engine.



Name \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Read the paragraph. Then answer the questions.

# Violent Storms

Watch out for cyclones! These violent tropical storms can cause enormous \_\_\_\_\_. Other names for cyclones are *hurricanes* and *typhoons*. They usually begin in areas of low pressure near the equator where the sea is especially warm. Warm air rushes toward these areas and swirls upward in circles over the sea. Within the center of this spinning mass is the eye of the storm. Around the eye, rage fierce winds and **torrential** rains. When cyclones hit land, they can flatten buildings, rip off roofs, and wash away roads.



1. The best word for the blank in this paragraph is
 

<input type="radio"/> A. wonder.	<input type="radio"/> B. moisture.
<input type="radio"/> C. destruction.	<input type="radio"/> D. deafening.
2. From this paragraph, you can conclude that people
 

<input type="radio"/> A. like to watch cyclones.	<input type="radio"/> B. try to prevent cyclones.
<input type="radio"/> C. try to prepare for cyclones.	<input type="radio"/> D. can't wait for cyclones.
3. A title that best summarizes this paragraph is
 

<input type="radio"/> A. Here Come the Hurricanes.
<input type="radio"/> B. Learning About Cyclones.
<input type="radio"/> C. Watch Out for Damage.
<input type="radio"/> D. The Eye of the Storm.
4. In this paragraph, the word **torrential** must mean
 

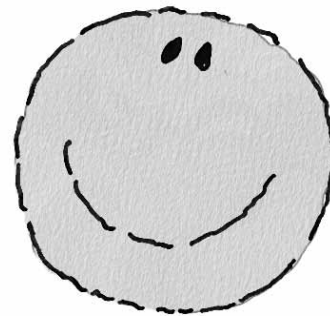
<input type="radio"/> A. soft and gentle.	<input type="radio"/> B. slow and steady.
<input type="radio"/> C. very heavy.	<input type="radio"/> D. really warm.

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Read the paragraph. Then answer the questions.

# Happy, Happy

For many people, August is a day in the sun. It is a time to go to the beach or the mountains or the woods. With its warm, sunny weather, August invites people to play and relax. Some people also think that August is a good time to smile. These folks belong to the Secret Society of Happy People. On this group's calendar, August is called the National Happiness Happens Month. How do you celebrate this month? Some people do funny things while others just smile a lot. This is really an excellent month.



1. The underlined words in this paragraph are an example of figurative language called

- ☐ A. metaphor.
- ☐ B. personification.
- ☐ C. simile.
- ☐ D. hyperbole.

2. Write *fact* or *opinion* next to each sentence.

- \_\_\_\_\_ A. Some people do funny things while others just smile a lot.
- \_\_\_\_\_ B. These folks belong to the Secret Society of Happy People.
- \_\_\_\_\_ C. This is really an excellent month.

3. Which word reflects the writer's point of view about National Happiness Happens Month?

- ☐ A. confused
- ☐ B. pleased
- ☐ C. bothered

4. Reread the paragraph. Find and write an example of personification.

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Name \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Read the paragraph. Then answer the questions.

# Spelling Matters

Poor spellers shouldn't try to sell things through online ads. Suppose you want to sell a camera on eBay, but your ad says "Camra for Sale." Buyers looking for cameras aren't likely to find your ad. However, some clever buyers are on the lookout for misspelled ads written by careless sellers. When they find one, they offer a low bid. Since no one else is bidding for the item, the seller is likely to let the item go for a low price. Often, the smart buyers then turn around and sell the item for more—through an ad that's spelled correctly!



1. Which word in the passage is a clue to how the writer feels about sellers who misspell?

- ☐ A. clever  
☐ B. careless  
☐ C. smart

2. Which sentence is most likely true?

- ☐ A. People misspell words on purpose.  
☐ B. The writer is a careful speller.  
☐ C. Spelling isn't important.  
☐ D. Poor spellers make money.

3. Write *fact* or *opinion* next to each statement.

- \_\_\_\_\_ A. Poor spellers shouldn't try to sell things through ads.  
 \_\_\_\_\_ B. When they find one, they offer a low bid.  
 \_\_\_\_\_ C. However, some clever buyers are on the lookout for misspelled ads by careless sellers.

4. Reread the paragraph and write the main idea.

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Name \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Read the paragraph. Then answer the questions.

# Parrot Passenger

When they come to a stoplight, drivers sometimes look at the people in other cars. Mr. Beren noticed that a man in the car next to him had a large green parrot on the passenger seat. The parrot seemed to be talking. When the man rolled down his window, Mr. Beren was surprised to hear that the bird wasn't talking but barking. The owner leaned out his window and explained, "He lives with three golden retrievers, and he thinks he's a dog." The light changed, and Mr. Beren **chuckled** all the way home.



1. Fill in the correct circle to show whether each statement is a fact or an inference.

**Fact   Inference**

- |                       |                       |   |
|-----------------------|-----------------------|---|
| <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | A. Mr. Beren noticed a large green parrot in a car.     |
| <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | B. Mr. Beren was curious.                               |
| <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | C. The parrot learned to bark by listening to the dogs. |
| <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | D. The parrot's behavior amused Mr. Beren.              |

2. In this paragraph, the word **chuckled** means

- |                                   |                                      |
|-----------------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| <input type="radio"/> A. vomited. | <input type="radio"/> B. challenged. |
| <input type="radio"/> C. laughed. | <input type="radio"/> D. sighed.     |

3. The main idea of this paragraph is

- ☐ A. a surprised passenger.
- ☐ B. a bewildered driver.
- ☐ C. a barking parrot.
- ☐ D. a red light stop.

4. From this paragraph, you can conclude that

- ☐ A. the dogs were in the car.
- ☐ B. the parrot often surprised people.
- ☐ C. the parrot really was a dog.
- ☐ D. the dogs disliked the parrot.

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Read the paragraph. Then answer the questions.

# Emperor's Tomb

The first emperor of China must have been strange. He spent much of his life planning for his tomb. It took 700,000 workers 36 years to get it ready. In the tomb were 6,000 life-size soldiers made from terra-cotta, a kind of pottery. Each soldier had an individual face, just like the soldiers in the emperor's real army. I think this is **bizarre**. Also in the tomb were carriages and horses made from bronze. The tomb was a big secret for thousands of years. Then, some farmers found it while digging a well in 1974.



1. Write *fact* or *opinion* next to each sentence.

- \_\_\_\_\_ A. The first emperor of China must have been strange.  
 \_\_\_\_\_ B. It took 700,000 workers 36 years to get it ready.  
 \_\_\_\_\_ C. I think this is bizarre.

2. The title that best summarizes this paragraph is

- ☐ A. An Army in a Tomb.  
☐ B. Bronze Carriages and Horses.  
☐ C. A Big Secret.  
☐ D. A Strange Emperor.

3. Reread the paragraph. Which statement would most likely *not* be true?

- ☐ A. The tomb was huge.  
☐ B. The emperor wanted protection in death.  
☐ C. The farmers dug their well someplace else.  
☐ D. It was easy to build the tomb.

4. In this paragraph, the word **bizarre** means

- ☐ A. wonderful.  
☐ B. strange.  
☐ C. normal.  
☐ D. catastrophic.