

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 one. (See page 6 for more.) Each student page includes a short passage focusing on three 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. Sometimes, the main idea is in the first sentence of a paragraph.

The information that supports the main idea is usually referred to as the details. Details help a reader gain a fuller understanding of a paragraph.

Sequence

Readers need to understand that when several things happen in a paragraph or a story, they occur in sequence. Following the sequence of a selection helps readers recognize the time order of events or the order in which steps are taken. Students should become aware of common words or phrases which signal sequence, such as *first*, *then*, *next*, and *finally*.

Context Clues

Using context 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.

Compare & Contrast

Recognizing how events, characters, places, and facts are alike and different helps a reader gain a richer understanding of a text. Sometimes a reader can learn more about something by finding out what it is *not* like than what it is like. A comparison shows similarities, while a contrast shows differences.

Page 34

Identify the main idea.

Plants We Eat

Read the first sentence of the paragraph. The first sentence identifies the main idea. The main idea is supported by examples in the rest of the paragraph.

1. Which is the main idea of the paragraph?

A. Plants are important to eat.

B. Plants are important to grow.

C. Plants are important to look at.

D. Plants are important to smell.

2. Which is the main idea of the paragraph?

A. Plants are important to eat.

B. Plants are important to grow.

C. Plants are important to look at.

D. Plants are important to smell.

In "Plants We Eat," the first sentence identifies the main idea. The main idea is supported by examples in the rest of the paragraph.

Page 35

Identify the sequence.

Home in a Shell

Read the first sentence of the paragraph. The first sentence identifies the main idea. The main idea is supported by examples in the rest of the paragraph.

1. Which is the main idea of the paragraph?

A. Snails are important to eat.

B. Snails are important to grow.

C. Snails are important to look at.

D. Snails are important to smell.

2. Which is the main idea of the paragraph?

A. Snails are important to eat.

B. Snails are important to grow.

C. Snails are important to look at.

D. Snails are important to smell.

In this paragraph, other words in the sentence provide a contrast for comprehending the word *home*.

Predict

Good readers take time to think about a text. One way they do this is by thinking ahead to determine what may happen next or how an event will unfold. Often, information a reader has come across in the text provides clues to what will happen next. In many cases readers also use what they already know when they make predictions.

Inference

Although most primary 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.

Make Connections

Good readers learn that there are connections between characters, events, ideas, or pieces of information in a text. Recognizing these relationships is an important way for readers to deepen their understanding of a text.

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* and *you should*, that signal opinions.

Page 36

Identify the main idea.

The Secret Plan

Read the first sentence of the paragraph. The first sentence identifies the main idea. The main idea is supported by examples in the rest of the paragraph.

1. Which is the main idea of the paragraph?

A. Petra and her father are going to the beach.

B. Petra and her father are going to the store.

C. Petra and her father are going to the park.

D. Petra and her father are going to the school.

2. Which is the main idea of the paragraph?

A. Petra and her father are going to the beach.

B. Petra and her father are going to the store.

C. Petra and her father are going to the park.

D. Petra and her father are going to the school.

The writer never says what Petra and her father are doing, but information in the paragraph plus what readers already know helps make it clear.

Page 37

Identify the main idea.

Mr. Turtle's Dog

Read the first sentence of the paragraph. The first sentence identifies the main idea. The main idea is supported by examples in the rest of the paragraph.

1. Which is the main idea of the paragraph?

A. Mr. Turtle's dog is a turtle.

B. Mr. Turtle's dog is a dog.

C. Mr. Turtle's dog is a cat.

D. Mr. Turtle's dog is a bird.

2. Which is the main idea of the paragraph?

A. Mr. Turtle's dog is a turtle.

B. Mr. Turtle's dog is a dog.

C. Mr. Turtle's dog is a cat.

D. Mr. Turtle's dog is a bird.

To appreciate this story, the reader should understand that the writer has shared several opinions as well as some facts about the neighbor's dog.

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.