

## **The Next Step**

### **Reading Skills for Adults**

**Book 14019**

New Brunswick teachers and administrators are constantly searching for new and meaningful learning materials for use by their students. Adult upgrading teachers and coordinators encounter unique challenges in this task. The content, cost, or availability of instructional materials often makes available resources inappropriate or impossible options. Many teachers meet this challenge by creating their own materials.

The development of new partnerships and the availability of new technologies, however, have lessened the burden. Over the past decade partnerships between government agencies, educational institutions, literacy teachers, and others have resulted in the creation of a variety of meaningful and practical materials relevant to New Brunswick. New technologies and their availability in classrooms have facilitated the sharing and use of these materials.

Under the direction of New Brunswick Literacy Coordinators, it was determined that enhancements to both the curriculum and the available instructional materials were required. Several projects have been completed to create instructional materials to support this new curriculum. This project continues this work.

Specifically, the focus of this project is to revise, update, and enhance existing grade-leveled academic learning packages. The result is grade-leveled materials that match the new curriculum, adhere to clear language principles, and allow for better communication of student progress. Additionally, the grade-leveled materials better reflect the experience of New Brunswick adult upgrading students.

Many organizations and individuals have contributed to this project. They include: Jerry Hicks, Literacy Coordinator NBCC-Moncton, National Literacy Secretariat, National Adult Literacy Adult Database, New Brunswick Literacy Coordinators and Community Academic Services Program teachers NBCC-Moncton Curriculum Office, NBCC-Moncton Print Room Staff, and Academic Services Department Head.

## Table of Contents

**Concept Map - Reading Skills**  
**Reading Comprehension Skills**  
**Reading to Understand**  
**Introduction to the "Reading Process"**  
**The Reading Process**  
**Basic Reading Comprehension Skills**

The Main Idea  
Facts and Details  
Sequencing  
Context Clues  
Inferences  
Logical Conclusions  
Fact vs. Opinion

**Vocabulary**

Homonyms and Idioms

**Reading Literature**

**Figures of Speech and Literary Devices**

Anecdote  
Metaphor  
Similes  
Personification  
Alliteration  
Assonance  
Consonance  
Onomatopoeia  
Hyperboles  
Symbolism  
Pun  
Irony  
Flashback  
Foreshadowing

**Poetry**

Narrative Poetry  
Sonnet  
Limerick  
Haiku  
Concrete

**Short Stories**

Fables  
Myths  
Legends

Tales and Tall Tales  
Modern Short Story  
Science Fiction

**Novels**  
**Non Fiction**

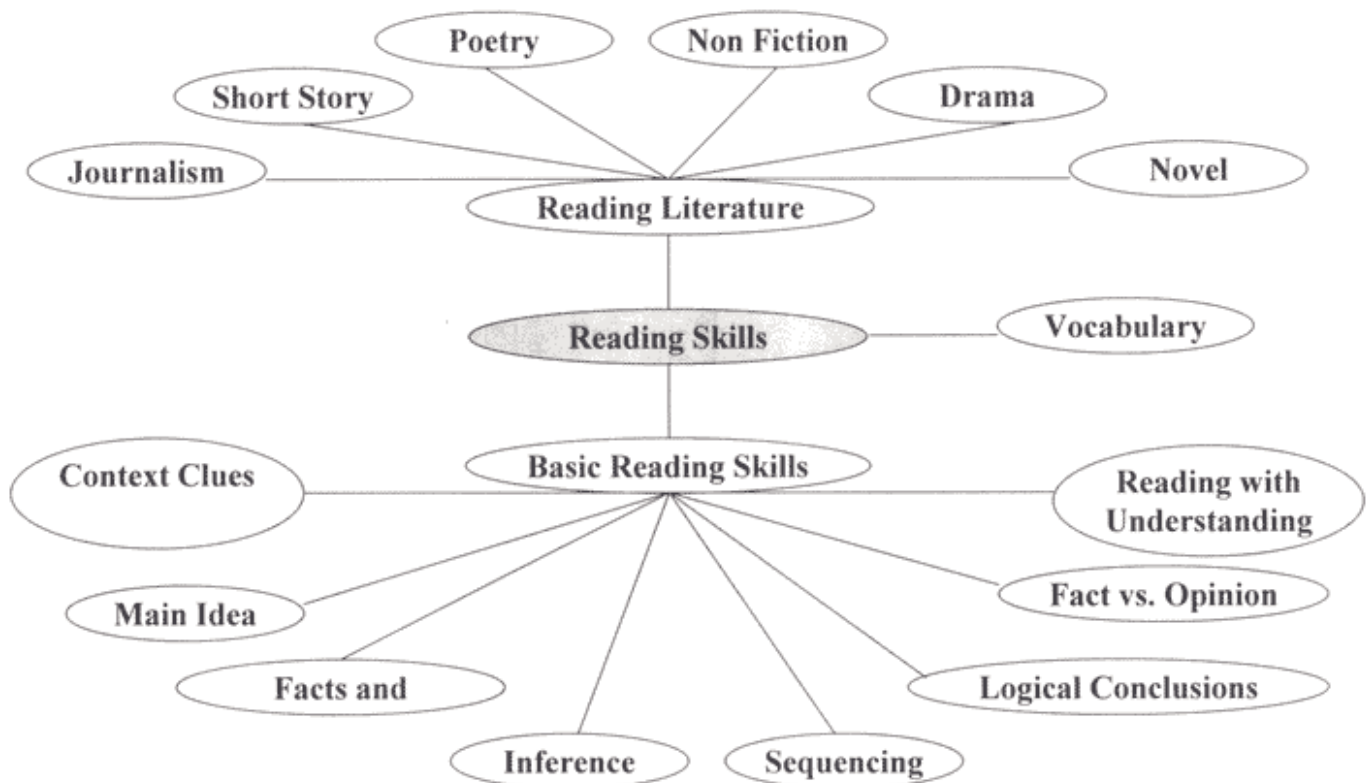
Biography and Autobiography  
Journals and Diaries  
Essays

**Journalism**

Magazines  
Newspapers

**Drama**

**Concept Map - Reading Skills**



## Reading Comprehension Skills

### Introduction

Reading is one part of the communication process between a writer and a reader. Some people communicate in the written format out of necessity, such as, reading signs, directions, notes, e-mail, bills, invoices, and letters. The main purpose of this type of reading is to get information. If a person can't read well, they will miss out on many opportunities to get information and to communicate with other people.

People also read for enjoyment. Reading can be an enjoyable way to learn more about an interest. However, reading may also be used purely for entertainment, such as reading a novel. Whether people read out of necessity or for enjoyment, successful readers are able to understand and to remember what they read. They have learned how to read.

Like other communication skills, reading becomes easier, more productive, and more enjoyable with practice. Beginning readers often find reading slow. There are many reasons for this. Some reasons include: having a small vocabulary, reading aloud, and lacking knowledge about how to read. Experienced readers are able to understand the meaning of many words, to read silently most of the time, and to use several reading strategies efficiently.

If you asked experienced readers to tell you about the strategies and process they use, they might not be able to answer you. Good readers often use reading strategies without thinking about them. Reading skills can be grouped in to three categories. These categories include: pre-reading skills, reading skills, and post-reading skills. Each category has its own goals and strategies.

In addition to learning the strategies in this section, one of your goals should be to increase your vocabulary. This means increasing the number of words you know their meanings and uses. The best way to increase your vocabulary is by reading regularly and by reading different types of materials.



## Reading to Understand

You can improve your ability to understand and remember what you read. The way of doing this is to get ready physically to read. You can do this by sitting at a desk or table, sitting straight, finding a well-lit area, reading where physical distractions are minimal, and getting paper and a pen. You can get ready mentally by starting with a positive attitude.

The second way of getting ready to read is to prepare mentally. Answering the following questions will help you prepare.

***What is my purpose for reading?***

***How do I need to read?***

### What is my purpose for reading?

People read for many different reasons. You need to be clear of your purpose for reading. Some possible reasons include: to learn new facts, to have new experiences, to experience another person's thoughts or feelings, to be entertained, to find the main idea, to summarize the information later, to retell the information to other people, to improve your reading speed, to increase your vocabulary, to criticize the ideas, to determine if the ideas are logical. You may have more than one purpose for reading. Your purpose for reading will influence "how you decide to read".

### How do I need to read?

How you decide to read depends on your purpose. It also depends on the type of material you are reading. Fictional literature, made-up stories, is written differently than non-fictional, true, material. For example, you would need to read a bank statement differently than a short story.

The bank statement requires you to read slowly and carefully. You may need to read each word carefully and think about its meaning. It is also a combination of words, numbers, and graphs. For the short story, you may be able to read faster but skipping some words or parts, especially if your goal is simply to get the main idea of the story. On the other hand, if your purpose for reading the short story is to critique the author's style, then you will need to read more slowly. For either type of material you may need to reread.

How many times you need to reread the material depends on your reading ability, your vocabulary, your familiarity with the information, and your familiarity with the type and style of the material. If you are a less experienced reader, you may need to read slower because you will need to focus on each word. If you are a more experienced reader, you may only need to quickly skim the reading material.

Likewise, if you are reading material which has many new words, you may need to read slower and more carefully. For example, if you have never read poetry, you may need to read more slowly and carefully to be able to understand and to remember the ideas.

Although you may have a large vocabulary, and you may be familiar with the type of material, a writer's style may be new to you. For instance, a writer writing about a topic two hundred years

ago might have a different style than a modern day writer. To adjust for this difference you may need to read more carefully.

Regardless of your purpose, type of material, or familiarity with the material, you should preview the material before you begin the reading process. This means quickly reading the table of contents, notes about the author, or similar material. This will get you focused on the reading process and it will help you answer the questions: "*Why am I reading?*" and "*How do I need to read?*" Once you have prepared physically and mentally to read, you are ready to begin the reading process.

## **Introduction to the Reading Process**

It should not be surprising that using a reading process will help you understand and remember what you read. After all, writers follow a process in creating the material. Although there are some similarities between the writing process and the reading process, there are also differences. Just like the writing process. There is a pre-reading process, a reading process, and a post-reading process.

For each step in the process of reading, there are specific goals and strategies to be used. A study method called the "SQ3R Study Method" is very useful during the reading process. The "SQ3R Study Method" has five steps. The first two steps, Survey and Question, are part of the pre-reading process. The Reading step is simply reading. Finally, the Recite and Review steps are used during the post-reading process.

On the following pages, each step, its goals, and its strategies will be explained. To get ready to read these pages, look at the diagram on the next page. Read the title, sub-titles, and look at any pictures. Stop at the title "Basic Reading Comprehension Skills". Then, start back at the beginning of this section and read carefully.

### **Are you ready to read?**

## "The Reading Process"

### (SQ3R Method)

#### *Pre-Reading*

#### **1. Survey**



*to predict the Main idea*

#### **2. Question**



*to Direct Reading*

#### *Reading*

#### **3. Read**



*to Remember / to Understand*

#### *Post-reading*

#### **4. Recite**



*to Check Memory / to Check Understanding*

#### **5. Review**



*to Remember / to Understand*

### **What is pre-reading?**

Defining the purpose for reading and deciding how you will need to read can be considered part of the pre-reading process. Other important tasks to be done during the pre-reading process include: thinking about knowledge you already have about a topic, surveying the material you are about to read, guessing at the main idea of the material, and listing questions that will guide your reading.

#### **1. Survey**

### **What is surveying?**

Surveying is thinking about what you are about to read. Thinking about reading is called active reading. Active reading is more than simply making the sounds of letters and words. It is more than recognizing words. It is using the information that you are reading.



## **Why do I need to use surveying?**

Readers survey what they read to help them understand what they are about to read. Surveying gives the reader some context. It gives the reading context about the content and, also, about how the material has been written. This information guides the reader in deciding how to read the material. It helps the reader focus on what is important and to skip over what is not important.

## **How do I use surveying?**

So, how does a person survey what they are about to read? A good reader will survey the parts of written material that often have clues to the topics and the main idea. Some of these places include:

***Titles***

***Sub-titles***

***Headings***

***Table of contents***

***Outlines***

***Pictures***

***Illustrations***

***Tables***

***Footnotes***

***First sentences***

***Last sentences***

***First paragraphs***

***Last paragraphs***

Try to predict the main ideas, topics, and details that will be presented. If some parts of the material is new, you may want to plan to spend more time reading those sections. If there are new words, you may want to consult a dictionary before you begin. You will understand more when you begin reading. You will also know what section you will need to read carefully and what sections you can scan quickly.



## 2. Question

### What is Questioning?

Questioning is making a list of questions you want answered. It may be a written list or it may be a mental list. There are two types of questions. The first group of questions focuses on your predictions. The second group of questions deals with details.



### Why do I need to use Questioning?

Thinking about questions to ask before you begin reading will make your reading more focused. It also makes you an active reader, which will help you understand and remember what you read. It not only helps you focus on new material, but it helps you predict what you will encounter while reading. Your predictions are tested when you read.

### How do I use Questioning?

Make a list of predictions. Write them in the form of a question. For example, you might ask, "Is my prediction about the main idea correct?" These are some other questions you might want to ask:

***What do I think the main idea is?***

***What facts or details will probably be used?***

***How will I need to read?***

***Can I guess the meaning of new words?***

Make a list of specific questions you want answered. For instance, you will want to ask questions like:

***Who are the characters?***

***What is the setting?***

***What is the conflict?***

***What is the moral of the story?***

For other types of materials, you may think of several general and specific questions to ask. You may decide to add more questions to your list as you go through the reading process. In the "Reading Literature" section, you will find specific questions that apply specifically to each type of literature.

## What is reading?

Reading is one part of the communication process between a writer and a reader. The main goal during the reading process is to understand and to remember what you have. You get to try to answer the questions you created during the pre-reading process.

## 3. Read

### What is reading?



Books have been written about the topic of reading. Here we will simply give a definition. Reading is the process of perceiving symbols, decoding symbols, obtaining meaning from symbols, and remembering the meaning. There are strategies that can be used for each part of the reading process.

You have spent a lot of time and energy learning how to perceive and to decode symbols. You have learned how each letter makes a sound, how sounds and letters are grouped to make words, how words are grouped to make parts of sentences, how parts of sentences are grouped to make sentences, and how sentences are grouped to make paragraphs. You have also learned to perceive and decode the meanings of other symbols, such as road signs. Some people encounter barriers to perceiving or decoding written symbols.

Some of these barriers include poor eyesight and distractions. These barriers can be overcome by wearing glasses, reading in good light, removing distractions, and using strategies to focus on specific symbols. One strategy is to use a piece of paper to guide or to cover up the part of the material that is not being read. There are also strategies to improve reading speed. Although this is a valuable skill, it is more important than understanding and remembering. Reading aloud is a strategy that is suitable for some types of reading. For example, reading poetry or reading difficult material. Rereading is also a strategy. Many people read quickly the first time to get the general idea of some material. The second time they read more carefully for details. They may even read the material a third or fourth time.

Getting meaning from the symbols we perceive and decode is complex. It depends on previous experience and knowledge. For example, a medical doctor and a patient might read the same article. However, it is safe to suggest that the level of meaning might be different.

Remembering what we read can be a challenge. Reading actively will help you remember what you read. There are strategies, which will be mentioned later, that you can use to help you remember.

### Why do I need to read actively and critically?

People who read actively and critically are better able to use the information they obtain from reading. People who read actively understand more and they remember more. They understand and remember more because they relate what they are reading to the knowledge they already have. Readers who read critically evaluate the usefulness of the information they read. They are more likely to find flaws in arguments or statements made by the writer. They are also more able to respond to the ideas, opinions, and statements in their reading, because they actively form their own opinions based on clear thinking.

## **How do I read?**

During the reading process, you can use a number of basic skills to help you understand what you read. The basic skills are related to reading actively and reading critically. Most people can improve these skills by practicing reading a variety of different material. The basic skills are listed below.

***Finding the main idea***

***Finding facts and details***

***Finding sequences and patterns***

***Using context clues***

***Making inferences***

***Making logical conclusions***

***Sorting facts from opinions***

Reading actively and critically will not only help you understand what you read, but it will also help you remember what you read. Many people use other skills and strategies to help them remember.

If you have your own book, you may consider underlining or highlighting key words or phrases that relate to the main idea. Many readers also make notes in the margins of their books. There are different types of notes. Some of these include: questions, answers, relationships, or highlights. A reader might write a question in the margin about material they do not understand with the purpose of finding the answer later. Answers to the questions they listed during the pre-reading process can be written in the margins, making them easier to find later. A reader might also make notes about parts of the material that are related to previous readings or knowledge. Important facts or details might also be highlighted in the margins. Of course if the book you are using needs to be returned, you will need to make notes on your own paper.

You have read actively and critically. You may have read the material several times. You found all of the answers to your questions, and you have looked up the meanings of new words. You must be done, right? Well, not quite. Remember your goal for reading is to understand and to remember. Well most people lose part of their understanding and memory if they stop the reading process now. It is time to move to the post-reading process.

## **What is post-reading?**

There are two steps in the post-reading process. They are named reciting and reviewing. Both of these steps require that the reader do something with the information they have learned.

## 4. Recite



### What is reciting?

Reciting means retelling what you have just read. It is best to use your “own words” to retell what you have read. The most common way of retelling what you have just read is to summarize it. This may mean writing a summary, or may mean speaking aloud. Be sure to compare your summary with the material you have read. You may choose to change your summary slightly by adding or changing parts.

### Why do I need to recite?

Reciting is necessary for two reasons. First, it gives you a chance to check your understanding of the material you have read. Second, it helps you to remember what you have read. It helps you remember because you are used to the information, and because you repeat the information. Most people need to use a new skill or information several times before they remember that skill or information. In the case of a written summary, it can be referred to later for study purposes.

### How do I use reciting?

There are different ways to recite information. Use the method that works best for you. This may mean writing a summary sentence or a summary paragraph. Writers call this summary a “précis”. Other methods of summarizing include outlining and concept mapping. You have probably used these skills to help you write your own material. Regardless of the method you choose, be sure to include the main idea, details, and your own comment or opinion about the material.

## 5. Review



### What is reviewing?

Reviewing is the last step in the reading process. The main goal of the reviewing step is to help you remember what you read.

### Why do I need to use reviewing?

The practice using and repeating the information in the reciting stage is not enough to keep most of the information in your memory. More practice is needed.

### How do I use reviewing?

Reviewing can be done in several different ways. Some of these include rereading the original material. It also involves reviewing underlined or highlighted notes. It also involves reviewing written summaries and concept maps. You should review material twenty-four hours after reading it. You will also need to review the material periodically.

## Basic Reading Comprehension Skills

Mastering several basic reading skills helps you understand and remember the events and information you read. Each of the following will be explained in this section: finding the main idea, finding facts and details, finding sequences and patterns, using context clues, making inferences, making logical conclusions, and sorting facts from opinions. All of the basic skills work together. For example, it is difficult to find the main idea if you do not also find details or use context clues. Although the basic skills are presented one at a time for clarity, they all work together.

### The Main Idea



One of the main goals for reading is to discover the main idea. Main ideas sometimes are called the theme or thesis. For narrative writing the main idea is often called the theme or moral of the story. For expository (information) forms of writing, the main idea is often referred to as the thesis.

### What are main ideas?

The main idea, theme, thesis, or moral of the story is the writer's message. Sometimes the main idea is clearly and directly stated. This is particularly true for expository writing. Other times the main idea is not clearly stated. For both situations, using all of the basic reading skills will be useful.

### How do I find main ideas?

Sometimes main ideas are confused with topics. "Organic farming practices" is a topic. "Organic farming practices should be adopted by all farmers" is a main idea. Discovering the topic of the work can be a start to discovering the main idea.

Finding the topic and the main idea is easy if you know where to look. Main ideas or clues about main ideas are often found at the beginning or ending of a paragraph in expository writing. For longer works, information about the main idea is often found in the first and the last paragraph.

For other types of works, you may need to rely on clues about the main idea. You may also need to rely on the basic reading skill called making inferences. Words or phrases which are repeated through out the works are usually related to the main idea. Sometimes ideas are repeated by using different words or phrases. It is important to look carefully at how the ideas and sentences are related.

Skimming a work, reading parts of a work quickly, can help you predict the main idea of a work before you begin reading more carefully. Scanning, looking for specific words, phrases, or patterns, can help you locate words or details related to the topic or main idea.

**Practice Exercise 1 A**

***Main Idea***

A.

- Scan the paragraph quickly.
- Predict the main idea.
- Read the paragraph carefully.
- Underline the words or phrases related to the main idea

*"Many parents are more interested in what is going on in their own social circle than in what is happening to their children. Others spend their evenings in the local bars instead of staying at home and fulfilling their family responsibilities. Some say, "I am working to provide for my children, and I don't have time for play." When both parents are working away from home, children, left to themselves, naturally get in trouble. Boys and girls who find neither comradeship nor entertainment at home naturally seek it at the corner drugstore or in less desirable places, where they have too much freedom and too little discipline. Many communities are making studies of the causes of juvenile delinquency. The results show that the first cause is lack of parental care."*

Adapted from, *Intermediate English Skills Development Series Book 3, 3A Main Idea*

**Practice Exercise 1 B**

*Main Idea*

B. Answer the questions.

1. Was your prediction about the main idea correct?

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2. Where did you find clues about the main idea?

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3. Summarize the main idea in one sentence.

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4. Write a title for the paragraph.

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## Facts and Details

Facts and details are the building blocks of all writing. When you read for information, you are looking for the facts and the details.



### What are facts and details?

Facts and details support the main idea, thesis, moral, or theme of a piece of writing. Facts and details are used differently in different types of writing. In expository writing, facts may be reasons, statistics, causes, effects or more. In narratives, facts and details involve settings, characters, and events. Finally, in descriptive writing, facts and details involve sensory details. Recognizing facts and details are important.

When the main idea is not stated, you will need to find the important facts and details, so you can “infer” the main idea. Missing details or misunderstanding the relationships between ideas may lead to an incorrect assumption about the main idea.

### How do I find facts and details?

Facts and details are usually easier to find when you know what you are looking for. Asking specific questions during the pre-reading process can help you find facts and details. Reporters use six simple questions to help them find the facts and details they need to infer a main idea and to include in their own writing.

The six questions are **who, what, where, when, why,** and **how**. The form of each question changes slightly, depending on what you are reading. For example, a good question for reading a narrative is “Who are the characters?” For reading a scientific report, a good question might be “Who did the experiment or wrote the report?”

Remembering facts and details is made easier by visualizing (seeing a picture in your head) the information. If it is a narrative, then try to visualize the details of the setting, the voices of the characters, and the other details. If it is a set of instructions, try to visualise your movement and the object at each step. You may also want to make notes or diagrams to help you visualize.



## Practice Exercise 2 A

### *Facts and Details*

A.

- Scan the story quickly.
- Read the story carefully.
- Visualize the details
- Write down important details

*One warm Indian summer day, I wakened my young son, Jacob, early. I asked him if he would like to come on a morning deer hunt with me. His sleepy eyes quickly filled with excitement. It was not often that he was permitted to hunt with his father.*

*Things did not work out as we hoped. We did not see deer, but we did share the morning together, and my small curious son learned many things about the woods. That morning I taught my son that beautiful colours are not just for the pleasure they give; to many animals colour is necessary. It is a master weapon in the fight to stay alive.*

*In the woods, I found many living examples to prove this basic law of nature to my son. I told him that an animal that matches its background is safer from its enemies —like the spotted fawn in spring. The young helpless deer blends perfectly with the forest floor.*

*By this time we had come to a small pond. The morning light was warm and bright as we stood by the edge.*

*"Jacob," I said, "I can see two different animals near your feet. Can you find them and tell me what they are?"*

*He looked down. For several seconds he was silent.*

*"No father" he said, "I can not see anything but water and mud."*

*Then I showed him. "See by your left foot— Mr. Toad looks like the lump of earth he squats on. And see again on the water by your right foot—Mr. Frog is as green on top as the scum he floats on. Underneath, he is as pale as the light seen from below the surface. This is because his enemies come from above and below." I told him to look carefully at the reeds across the slough. "What do you see, Jacob?"*

*"Father, I see a bird. I do. I see a bird." Jacob was full of pride. He was a quick student of Nature. What he had seen was a bittern, a slim bird with striped feathers, standing perfectly still in the thin, striped reeds. The bird was so well hidden he even seemed to sway a little when a breeze ruffled the reeds.*

*We continued our walk, working our way back home. Jacob was alert and his small head was moving from side to side as he looked for examples to impress me with. He discovered a garter snake lying near the path, almost hidden because of the greenish brown pattern on its back. "It looks like dirt and dry leaves," said Jacob. I impressed him by showing him a brown moth to*

Reading Comprehension #14019

*make it move. Soon he discovered that the bark of the tree was alive with small insects which he had not seen with his first glance.*

*We did not have our deer meat for supper. But Jacob and I shared the summer morning. He learned that colour can be useful and beautiful. And as for me, I took pleasure in his learning.*

*Adapted from, Intermediate English Skills Development Series Book 3, 3B Recalling Details*

**Practice Exercise 2 B**

*Facts and Details*

B. Answer the questions.

1. Who are the characters?

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2. What animals did they see?

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3. Where were they going?

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4. Why are they going?

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5. When did they go?

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6. How did they go?

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## Sequencing?

People often think of numbers when they hear the word sequence. The numbers "1,2,3,4" are in sequence. Sentences and paragraphs are also placed in sequence.



## What is sequencing?

Sequence refers to the order that symbols appear. The sequence "1,2,3,4" is a logical sequence. There is pattern to the numbers. The numbers are arranged from smallest to largest. They could have been arranged in a different sequence. Likewise, there are a number of different ways to logically organize sentences.

Writers typically arrange sentences, paragraphs, and ideas in one of several; patterns. Common patterns include:

<b><i>Spatial order</i></b>	<i>(near to far)</i>
<b><i>Chronological order</i></b>	<i>(first to last)</i>
<b><i>Logical order</i></b>	<i>(first step to last step)</i>
<b><i>Specificity order</i></b>	<i>(general to specific)</i>
<b><i>Familiarity order</i></b>	<i>(known to unknown)</i>
<b><i>Comparative order</i></b>	<i>(alternating similarities)</i>
<b><i>Importance order</i></b>	<i>(least important to most important)</i>
<b><i>Cause and effect order</i></b>	<i>(alternating cause and effect)</i>

The comparative order and the cause and effect order can be further subdivided. Cause and effect order can be sequenced three different ways. First, a writer might list all of the causes and then the writer might list all of the effects. Second, a cause and its related effects may be grouped together. A new cause and effect group follows. Last, A cause may be followed by its effect which in turn is followed by a related cause and then an effect. The last sequence forms a chain where an effect is used as a cause for the following effect.

Comparative sequences may be organized by listing the details about one part, and then, listing the details of the second part. Alternatively, details for each part may be presented in pairs.

## How do I use sequencing?

Recognizing sequences is important. The sequence of details, facts, or events often reveals the relationships between the facts, details, and events. For example, if numbered horses finished a race in the sequence "3,1,2,4", the number three horse was faster than the other horses. If the sequence was "2,4,3,1", the number two horse was faster than the others. A person betting on these races would be very interested in the sequence.

Likewise, writers combine sentences and paragraphs in specific sequences. Recognizing these different patterns allows a reader to predict what will happen and to visualize the events and details. This helps a reader understand more and to remember more. Readers need to be able to recognize these patterns to be able to determine the main idea from inferred relationships.

## Reading Comprehension #14019

Writers use transition words to indicate how facts, details, and events are related. These words are called transition words. Examples of some transition words follow:

<b><i>Spatial order</i></b>	<i>on, in, above, below, beside, near</i>
<b><i>Chronological order</i></b>	<i>before, next, after, meanwhile, until</i>
<b><i>Logical order</i></b>	<i>first, second, third, next, lastly, finally</i>
<b><i>Specificity order</i></b>	<i>in general, specifically, typically</i>
<b><i>Familiarity order</i></b>	<i>commonly, usually, infrequently, unusually</i>
<b><i>Comparative order</i></b>	<i>on the other hand, on the contrary</i>
<b><i>Importance order</i></b>	<i>the main, the central, the basic, the least</i>
<b><i>Causation and effect</i></b>	<i>because, since, consequently</i>

**Practice Exercise 3 A**

*Sequencing*

A.

- Scan the story quickly.
- Read the story carefully.
- Visualize the details
- Remember the sequence of events

*The Rescue*

*After Dr. Grenfell climbed onto the floating ice with his dogs, he killed and skinned three of them. Their bloody fur kept him warm as he started to drift out to sea on the ice. At night he lay down to sleep with his arms around the biggest dog.*

*The next morning Dr. Grenfell tied the frozen bodies of his dead dogs together to make a pole. On the top of it, he tied his shirt. Then he waved the shirt in the air to attract the attention of the people on shore.*

*One of the hunters had climbed a cliff above the bay to look for seals with a telescope. He saw Dr. Grenfell on the ice. Quickly he called his friends to help row a boat out through the broken ice.*

*When the men finally reached the doctor, his feet and hands were frozen, but his first words were, "I'm sorry to put you to all this bother."*

*Adapted from, Intermediate English Skills Development Series Book 3, 3C Sequence of Events*

**Practice Exercise 3 B**

*Sequencing*

B. Answer the questions.

1. What type of essay is this (expository, descriptive, narrative)?

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2. What has the writer sequenced (facts, details, examples, events)?

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3. How has the writer organized the facts, details, examples, or events?

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4. List the transition words used by the writer to clarify the sequence?

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5. What was the first event?

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6. List and number five important events in the story.

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## Context Clues

Context is sometimes called “The Big Picture”. People live their lives in the context of the place and time they live. The meaning of events and experiences a person has is determined by the context of the situation—the Big Picture. The more experience people have, the better able they are to use the context of the situation to learn new things.



Perhaps you see a person yelling at another person the street. You might think there will be a fight. If you see a speeding car racing towards the person, the meaning behind the person yelling changes. Knowing all the facts and details helps to understand the “Big Picture”. It helps you understand the new events you experience.

### What are context clues?

Reading is similar to the above example. The more experience you have reading, and the greater the size of your vocabulary, the better you will be able to use the “Big Picture” to learn the meaning of new words or phrases. Without understanding the “Big Picture” or the general meaning of what you read, you will not be able to read as quickly, or understand as much.

You will need to rely on the dictionary more often to look up words. When you can’t guess the meaning or when you are unsure of your guess, use a dictionary to find the specific meaning of a new word. Using a dictionary too often means that your reading is interrupted. This makes it more difficult to understand and to remember what you read.

Unlike racing cars and yelling, the context clues writers use involve, words, phrases, clauses, and punctuation.

### How do I use context clues?

You can figure out the meaning words by using the context of what you are reading to help or guess. Writers leave context clues to help you discover the meaning of words or phrases. Writers often leave context clues in the following areas:

#### ***between commas***

Rosco, my dog, is seven years old.

#### ***between brackets***

Parlee Beach (my favourite spot) was crowded yesterday.

#### ***in definitions***

Sandra specializes in making ewer. Ewer refers to wide-mouthed pitchers or vases.

#### ***in examples***

The numbers 1, 3, 5, and 7 are examples of prime numbers.



***in footnotes marked by asterisks (\*) or numbers (<sup>12</sup>)***

***in comparisons beginning with "like" or "as"***

Learning to use the other basic reading skills will also help you to see the "Big Picture", or main idea, of what you read.

**Practice Exercise 4 A**

*Context Clues*

A.

- Scan the story quickly.
- Read the story carefully.
- Visualize the details.
- Guess at the meanings of the underlined words.

*If you have the inclination to watch animals instead of killing them, you should buy a pair of field glasses. Some people do not like to shoot any kind of game. Others may not even like to hold a gun or to fire it. I know one man who always jams the shells when he puts them in. In general, it is much easier to handle a pair of binoculars than a rifle.*

*Adapted from, Intermediate English Skills Development Series Book 3, 2C Meaning From Context*

**Practice Exercise 4 B**

*Context Clues*

B. Use context clues to help you pick the word or words that mean the same as the underlined words in the story.

- |                |   |
|----------------|---|
| 1. inclination | a. preference<br>b. slope                                   |
| 2. watch       | a. keeps time<br>b. view with your eyes                     |
| 3. glasses     | a. drinking container<br>b. binoculars                      |
| 4. shoot       | a. to kill<br>b. a young plant                              |
| 5. game        | a. to play<br>b. the hunted                                 |
| 6. hold        | a. grasp with hands<br>b. storage area in a boat            |
| 7. fire        | a. discharge a gun<br>b. to burn                            |
| 8. jam         | a. to stick<br>b. a fruit spread                            |
| 9. shell       | a. part of a bullet used in a gun<br>b. outer part of a nut |
| 10. handle     | a. the part grasped by your hand<br>b. to control           |

## Inferences

Writers sometimes expect readers to do more than understand and remember the meaning of what they have written. Writers expect readers to predict or to assume an unwritten message. For example, if a person you know arrives late for every class, you might be inclined to assume that the person is generally late for most other things. It is a logical based on other facts or details. Making inferences is like putting a puzzle together which is missing a few pieces. You can still recognize the picture.



In addition to fiction writers, advertisement writers also use this type of writing. For example, they might write about a specific automobile company: young people drive their car; their car is fast and powerful; their car is the latest design. The inference, or assumption, is that if you drive their car, you will be young, powerful, fast, and in style. The details about their car are stated. The inference they want to make is not stated. This type of inference is based on emotions and desires rather than logic. Making good inference is not only important to help you be able to understand and remember, but also to help you make good decisions.

### What are inferences?

Inferences are guesses or assumptions. Unlike context clues, where the meaning of written words or phrases are guessed from other written words, inferences are guesses, predictions or assumptions made about ideas which are not written. Making these types of assumptions is sometimes called "reading between the lines".

Writers may expect you to infer the main idea of a paragraph or a story. You may also need to infer what will happen next. Often a character's personality can be inferred from details the writers give. These types of inferences move from the known to the unknown, or they move from specific details to general qualities.

### How do I make inferences?

Inferences are logical predictions or assumptions. The best way to make inferences is to carefully read the facts and details presented. It is also important to understand the sequence in which the details are presented. Making notes, highlighting, numbering, and outlining can help you keep track of important details, facts, examples, and events.

Knowing all of the "important" details will help you predict the "the next step" or to make accurate generalizations. Important details are related. They may support a sentence stating the main idea. There may be unimportant details which make the story more enjoyable, yet they do contribute to making an inference. Once you have all of the facts and you know how they have been organized, you are ready to "read between the lines".

## Practice Exercise 5 A

### *Inferences*

A.

- Scan the story quickly.
- Read the story carefully.
- Visualize the details.
- Write down the “**most important**” facts or details.

#### The Search

*The Mounties had tried every method they knew, but they had not been able to find Rita. It was now late afternoon and the men had been searching the waterfalls for three hours.*

*Rita's friends had seen her walking along the rocks at the edge of the pool of water just above the falls. A few minutes later, she had disappeared. They had searched and called her name, but there had been no answer. While one of the friends went to town to get the R.C.M.P., the others continued looking.*

*The waterfalls were beautiful as they fell about fifty feet down over the rock cliff. The pool at the bottom of the falls was very deep, but some of the better swimmers from the town sometimes would swim there. Now the current was too fast, and the water from the falls made a terrible roar as it fell into the pool at the bottom.*

*The Mounties had found no trace of Rita anywhere. They stood around scratching their heads. Then one of the boys noticed a piece of Rita's pink bathing suit floating near the edge of the pool. There was new excitement and the men started to search again. This time they began exploring the rocky shelves that were hidden behind the falls.*

*It was very difficult because the force of the water falling was so great. They decided to get sand bags and logs to dam the water above the falls. Then they would be able to move more easily among the rocks behind the falls.*

*Adapted from, Intermediate English Skills Development Series Book 3, 4B Making Inferences*

**Practice Exercise 5 B**

*Inferences*

B. Answer the questions.

1. List **six "important"** facts or details from the story.

- 1. \_\_\_\_\_
- 2. \_\_\_\_\_
- 3. \_\_\_\_\_
- 4. \_\_\_\_\_
- 5. \_\_\_\_\_
- 6. \_\_\_\_\_

2. Based on the six facts or details, predict the ending of the story.

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

## Logical Conclusions

$$1 + 1 = 2$$

Making conclusions involves thinking. Thinking is a complex activity. It is sometimes difficult to define or to explain how a person should make logical conclusions. It is useful to break thinking into three parts. The first part of the thinking process is to gather information. The second step is to organize the information. Lastly, thinking involves making "good conclusions".

Part of making "good conclusions" is being able to evaluate whether the information you gathered was organized logically, and whether the conclusion made based on the information was logical. The evaluating part of the thinking process can be the most difficult part.

It is the most difficult part because the "thinker" needs to be aware of his or her thoughts. Often we make conclusion without being aware of our thoughts, evaluating our conclusions carefully, or avoiding the many barriers to making "good conclusions".

Being aware of our thoughts, and the many barriers to logical conclusions, will prevent faulty thinking and will prevent illogical actions based on illogical thinking.

### What are logical conclusions?

Logical conclusions are valid or true conclusions. They are based on careful and conscious thought. They are made by using facts and rules. They are free of slanted thinking, biased thinking, and faulty thinking.

Writers may use slanted expressions, biased expressions, or faulty expressions consciously or unconsciously. If a writer uses these on purpose, they are attempting to persuade a reader that their argument is logical when it is not. Slanted arguments are one-sided arguments. Writers present one side of a problem. A writer might present mostly negative facts or they might present mostly positive facts. Always ask yourself if the writer has left out facts and details, and what is their purpose for writing.

Biased writing is similar to slanted writing. Neither gives a full and objective account of the facts and details. Biased writing contains more of the writer's opinions rather than facts and details. Biased and slanted writing may be found anywhere. Letters to the editor, editorials, and advertisements commonly have slanted or biased writing. It is important to know who and why a person wrote the article or book you are reading.

Writers appeal to the reader's emotions by using words that have two meanings. These words have a basic meaning, and they have an emotional meaning. For example, the word 'purebred' refers to a horse. However, it does more than express this basic meaning. It gives the reader the sense or feeling that the horse is more valuable or important than other horses. It has a positive connotation. Words, such as 'slave', may also have negative connotative meanings. Be aware of the emotions you and others have when you hear words.

In your writing, try to use denotative words. These words have one meaning- the basic meaning. For example, you could change the word purebred to horse. Unless you are referring to slavery, you may want to use the word servant. Propaganda (persuasive writing intended to make people think, act or feel a certain way to control them) often uses connotative language.

Some writers produce slanted or biased work because they are not aware of their thinking, they choose words or phrases carelessly, or they require more practice to improve their writing skills. In addition to slanted or biased writing, writers may use faulty thinking to prove their

## Reading Comprehension #14019

arguments. Faulty thinking often appeals to the reader's emotions. In this way, the reader is distracted from carefully evaluating the facts, details, and conclusions in the writing.

"Faulty thinking" may be based in part on slanted or biased arguments or unreliable facts. The rules used to form logical conclusions may also be faulty or wrong. Read the definitions of different types of "faulty thinking". "Faulty conclusions" have been italicized.

1. **Hasty Generalizations** are made when few facts are known or the facts are not evaluated for their usefulness. Hasty generalizations lead to incorrect conclusions about events.

**Example** Greg, Roger, and Fred placed in the top three places for the math competition this year. *All boys must be good at math.*

2. **Mistaking the Cause** is done when all possible causes are not evaluated. It leads to incorrect conclusions about cause and effect relationships.

**Example** I got gas at the new gas station on the corner of King and Davidson Streets. My car broke down later that week. *The gas at the gas station caused my car trouble.*

3. **False Analogies** are made when things have few similarities. Conclusions based on this type of comparison are illogical and unsupported.

**Example** *All rock singers can sing opera music.*

4. **Ignoring the Question** means that a small, unimportant part of the question receives the writer's focus. Conclusions have little to do with the question or problem.

**Example** Tanya dropped an antique Grecian vase and it shattered. Tanya said that it was no problem because she saw a similar looking vase at Wal-Mart. She said it was on sale. She also said that she likes the feel of the vase at Wal-Mart better. It is smoother and it looks newer. Tanya said she enjoys buying new things. *It is no problem because Tanya can buy another vase.*

5. **Begging the question** involves making assumptions or skipping steps to solve a problem. Conclusions are not supported by facts.

**Example** During her employment in the sales division, the company reached its goal of six million dollars in sales. *Angel should be promoted to general manager.*

6. **Name Calling** involves drawing attention away from facts and details. Instead, emphasis is placed on criticizing a person. Emotion, slant, and bias often support name-calling.

**Example** That politician has a big mouth. He thinks that he should be the leader because he struts around in those expensive suits. He's never worked a full day in his life. *He should resign his position immediately.*

7. **Misusing Statistics** may be done intentionally or unintentionally. People who misuse statistics use them to prove something they do not prove.



**Example** Twenty percent of people surveyed said they did not want to rename their city. *Therefore, eighty percent of the people do want to rename their city.*

8. **"Jumping on the Bandwagon"** means assuming that the statements said to be held by a group of people must be correct without evaluating the facts or details.

**Example** All of Betty's friends said that her rock band was the best band they heard at the talent show. *We should hire them to play at the prom dance because they must be good.*

9. **Appeal to Authority** encourages readers to accept the opinions expressed by "experts" Testimonials about isolated experiences or opinions are used in place of detailed and balanced presentations of facts.

**Example** Sheila Roberts, world champion figure skater, uses Super White Teeth Whitener. Look at her teeth shine. *You can be like Sheila if you buy Super White Teeth Whitener, the number 1 teeth whitener.*

Study the tables on the following pages. They offer some tips on how to avoid "faulty thinking", as well as how to make logical conclusions.

<b>Faulty Thinking</b>	<b>Do not</b>	<b>Do</b>
<b>1. Hasty Generalization</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>a. Make general statements about isolated events</li><li>b. Use all, none, some, most, everyone to describe isolated events</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>a. Make general statements frequent and common events</li><li>b. Use all, none, some, most, everyone to describe frequent and common events</li></ul>
<b>2. Mistaking the Cause</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>a. Assume a cause and effect relationship</li><li>b. Assume a cause and effect relationship based on one observation</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>a. Evaluate all possible causes of an effect</li><li>b. Determine cause and effect relationships based on many observations</li></ul>
<b>3. False Analogy</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>a. Make comparisons between things with few similarities</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>a. Make comparisons between things with many similarities</li></ul>
<b>4. Ignoring the Question</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>a. Only answer part of the total question</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>a. Answer all parts of the question</li></ul>
<b>5. Begging the Question</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>a. Assume or leave out important facts</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>a. Prove and include all needed facts</li></ul>
<b>6. Name Calling</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>a. Criticize the person</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>a. Evaluate the facts and the details</li></ul>

**Faulty Thinking**

**7. Misusing Statistics**

**Do not**

- a. Use averages to prove or support a point
- b. Compare unrelated statistics
- c. Use statistics based on small sample sizes

**Do**

- a. Use specific statistics to prove or support a point
- b. Compare related statistics
- c. Use statistics based on large sample sizes

**8. Bandwagon**

- a. Assume what "everyone else" believes is true

- a. Evaluate statistics and arguments for yourself

**9. Appeal to Authority**

- a. Assume famous people are "experts"
- b. Assume famous people make logical conclusions

- a. Evaluate facts and arguments for yourself
- b. Evaluate the reliability of an "expert"

## How do I make logical conclusions?

Logical conclusions are made from two types of thinking. Working on a puzzle is similar to the first type of thinking. When you connect the pieces of a puzzle together, you end up with a picture. Likewise, when you add the facts or details together, you get an answer or conclusion to a question or a problem. You get the "big picture". This type of thinking is called inductive reasoning.

One type of inductive thinking uses the "if-then" model. The "if- then" model of thinking involves combining facts and rules to form a conclusion. Be sure to include all the possible "ifs" (facts, details, and causes) or your conclusion may not be a logical conclusion.

**Example** *If you study, if you get good grades, if you get a job, if you save money from the job, if you pick a college, if you apply, and if you are accepted, then you will be able to go to any college you want to go to.*

The second type of thinking is called **deductive thinking**. Deductive thinking involves taking the "whole", a finished puzzle for example, and dividing it into its pieces. This allows a person to answer a question or to solve a problem about a specific part of a puzzle.

Syllogisms, a type of deductive thinking, has three parts. The parts are the **major premise** (a general truth or idea), the **minor premise** (a specific idea), and the **conclusion**. The conclusion is formed by relating the major premise to the minor premise to form a logical relationship. It is important to ensure that the major premise is true. If it is not true, any conclusion formed will not be logical.

<b>Example</b>	<b>Major premise</b>	All animals need food.
	<b>Minor premise</b>	Dogs are animals.
	<b>Conclusion</b>	<i>Therefore, dogs need food.</i>

**Practice Exercise 6 A**

*Slanted and Biased Language*

A. Rewrite these sentences. Eliminate or change words that communicate biased or slanted messages.

1. The brats played noisily and chaotically in the park.

\_\_\_\_\_

2. The self-proclaimed dictator called the meeting to order.

\_\_\_\_\_

3. Cities are sophisticated and alive with many more services than small, dying rural villages.

\_\_\_\_\_

4. Who is the geeky runt trying out for the hockey team?

\_\_\_\_\_

5. My Uncle Jed was thrifty his entire life.

\_\_\_\_\_

6. The crazy guy in shipping suggested another useless idea at the staff meeting yesterday.

\_\_\_\_\_

7. We should maintain the valued traditions of the club.

\_\_\_\_\_

8. Marsha always finds heirlooms at yard-sales.

\_\_\_\_\_

9. My kids softball team was massacred by the visiting team.

\_\_\_\_\_

10. That old-fashioned approach will doom the company to failure.

\_\_\_\_\_

**Practice Exercise 7 A**

***Logical Conclusions***

A. Read each section. Answer the questions.

**Example**

*Before your daughter left for school this morning, she told you her math test will be returned to her later today. She says she will be so excited if she receives a good grade. Later in the day, you see her walking toward your home with one of her friends. She is smiling. She and her friend are laughing. She is holding a paper in her hand, and she is waving it in the air. When she sees you outside, she starts to run toward you holding the papers in front of her and waving them. You conclude that she earned a good mark on her math test.*

**Answer:**

*Inductive thinking. Logic - it is logical to conclude that her daughter did well on the test because she is excited, she is focusing on the papers in her hand, and she appears to want to show the papers to you.*

1. Ben concluded he needed to enrol in a night course to increase his typing speed after his friend unsuccessfully participated in six job interviews for data entry jobs in fast-paced call centres.

a. Was inductive thinking or deductive thinking used?

\_\_\_\_\_

b. Why did Ben's decide to take a night course?

\_\_\_\_\_

c. Was it a logical conclusion? Why or why not?

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**Practice Exercise 7 A - continued**

*Logical Conclusions*

2. After her computer screen went blank, Paula decided to go to the basement, turn on the light, and look at the fuse box.
  - a. Will inductive thinking or deductive thinking used? \_\_\_\_\_
  - b. What will Paula's conclusion? \_\_\_\_\_
  - c. Will it be a logical conclusion? Why or why not? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
  
3. Sandra broke her fishing rod while fishing at a beaver dam this week. Sandra loves to go fishing with her brothers. Sandra's birthday is today. Her brother, Luke, wrapped her birthday present in a long, narrow box. Sandra makes the comment that the box is lightweight, and she thinks she knows what is in it.
  - a. Will inductive thinking or deductive thinking used? \_\_\_\_\_
  - b. What will Sandra's conclusion be? \_\_\_\_\_
  - c. Will it be a logical conclusion? Why or why not? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Practice Exercise 7 A - continued**

*Logical Conclusions*

4. Tommy arrives home at his apartment after working an overtime shift at the mill. When he opens the door, he discovers feathers all over the floor. The doors were locked and closed. The windows were locked and closed. He lives alone. He has two pets, a goldfish, and a German shepherd puppy. Tommy finds his dog hiding under his bed.

a. Will inductive thinking or deductive thinking be used? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

b. What will be Tommy's conclusion? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

c. Will it be a logical conclusion? Why or why not? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_



**Practice Exercise 8 A**

***Faulty Thinking***

- A. For each sentence, state whether the statement is logical or faulty. If it is a faulty statement, name the type of faulty thinking used and explain why.

***Example***

*Officer Reid gave me two speeding tickets this week for driving thirty kilometres above the speed limit in a school zone. Why did he do this? He must be doing it because he hates me.*

***Answer***

*Faulty thinking*

*"Ignoring the question"— Officer Reid's job is giving out tickets because it is his job and because you were speeding. The potential hazard to children is particularly high.*

1. Ben Knight, 2002 Olympic champion, uses Diamond watches on and off the track. For reliable and durable performance every time, wear a Diamond watch, and you will perform like Ben.
2. Berryville residents drink more Carbon Cola than any other community. Drink Carbon Cola, and enjoy the secret Berryville residents have known for years. A whole community can't be wrong.
3. Six out of seven dentists surveyed said they recommend Fresh White mouthwash to their patients. Use the number one mouthwash. Use Fresh White mouthwash.

**Practice Exercise 8 A - continued**

*Faulty Thinking*

4. Members of the CRU union are lazy, unskilled, Neanderthals. I cannot believe that such a bunch have the nerve to ask for a two percent raise over five years. The bunch of losers do not deserve what they are paid now. They do so little work that they should actually receive a pay cut.
5. Engineers study math in college and university. They also have to pass professional exams demonstrating their math abilities. All engineers must have at least a minimal level of ability in mathematics.
6. After the hockey game, I discovered my wallet missing from the locker room. Billy was in the change room before me after the game. He must have taken it.
7. Hugh's Botanical Guide to Deciduous Plants indicates that the Latin genus name for Maple trees is "Acer". Red Maples and Sugar Maples must have Acer as their genus names.
8. I ate oatmeal for breakfast on Tuesday. I wrote my history test on Tuesday. I received a mark of ninety percent. Oatmeal must help me get good grades on history tests.
9. Four hundred and ninety people out of one thousand people said they prefer Thick Peanut butter to Chalky peanut butter. About fifty percent of those surveyed prefer Chalky Peanut butter to Thick peanut butter.
10. Coffee has more caffeine than tea, so coffee keeps you more alert.

## Fact vs. Opinion

Making logical conclusions and making good decisions is partly related to having good information. Writers of expository writing usually support their statements or arguments by including facts and details. Advertisers often combine facts and opinions to encourage people to reach a specific conclusion about their projects. Beware sometimes the facts and the details a writer offers are unreliable. It is up to you, as the reader, to evaluate the information that a writer offers in support of a statement or an argument.



### What are facts and opinions?

Reliable facts are provable. Generally, they come from reliable sources, people who are knowledgeable and who avoid biased or slanted presentation of the facts. Facts may take the form of statements, statistics, examples, photographs, and more. Writers create believable, reliable statements or arguments by including many reliable facts from a variety of reliable sources.

#### **Example**

*Liz Huntley, staff writer with "The Antique Appraiser Magazine", reports that a 1902 five-cent collector's coin is worth seven dollars and thirty-two cents today.*

Opinions are statements of what a person believes. They are not provable. Sometimes opinions are mistaken as facts. Careful evaluation of statements will allow you to determine whether they are provable. Although, opinions are useful, they should not be used as the basis for making conclusions.

#### **Example**

*Todd said he figured the coin must be worth at least one hundred dollars by now.*

### How do I separate facts from opinion?

Facts provided in support of a statement or argument should be evaluated for their reliability and usefulness. Evaluate these elements when determining the reliability and usefulness of facts:

***Unbiased language used***

***Original source stated***

***Reliable sources used***

***Is provable***

***Recent information used***

***Information from several sources used***

***Facts and statements are related***

It is particularly important to evaluate the source of facts. People are a reliable source when they are recognized as being knowledgeable about a topic. They present information in a balanced way. This means they explain how their facts can be used properly as well as how they cannot be used. For example, a scientist who discovers a new drug would explain the positive effects of the drug and the negative effects of the drug. It is also important to evaluate the motive of the person presenting the information. If the scientist for the company that produced the drug, the scientist might be more inclined to focus on the positive effects of the drug.

Opinions are also useful because they allow us to share our beliefs and to experience how other people think. However, they should not be presented as being facts, and they should not be as the foundation for making conclusions or decisions. Predictions about future events are opinions. Opinions can be evaluated for their usefulness. The following factors should be considered:

***Unbiased language used***

***Use of opinions is indicated directly***

***Balanced approach used***

***Opinions and statements are related.***

**Practice Exercise 9 A**

*Facts vs. Opinion*

- A. Read each statement. Write "F" for facts beside factual statements. Write "O" for opinion beside opinions.
1. Twenty-two people out of thirty-two people in our class passed the mid-term exam.
  2. Canada became a country in 1867.
  3. Ham and cheese sandwiches are the best type of sandwich.
  4. I feel happy when I watch reruns of old comedy shows.
  5. Queens County received twelve millimetres of rain last month.
  6. Young people should seek employment in the technology sector.
  7. George, who was once the captain of his high school hockey team, said that The Montreal Canadiens will win this series.
  8. There are eleven people attending the academic upgrading class I attend.
  9. If more immigrants were encouraged to come to Canada, the economy would improve significantly.
  10. According to the President of Rocket Stationary Corporation, the new Rocket Stationary Saturn pens are the best in the world.

## Vocabulary

### What is vocabulary?

Vocabulary can be defined simply as a list of words. People use the knowledge they have of words to read, write, and speak. Without a basic vocabulary it is difficult to communicate. If you listed all of the words you know how to use, it would probably be a very long list. If your classmates did the same, you would discover that all of the lists are different. Why do you think that would be the situation?

People read different books, do different jobs, listen to different types of music, and do different hobbies. Books, jobs, music, and hobbies require people to use different words. For example, a person working in the produce section of a grocery store would know much more about words related to fruits and vegetables than a person working in an electronics store. You can increase your vocabulary by purposely looking for new words. Reading, writing, and talking are good ways of adding vocabulary to your word lists.

Before you can add a new word to your vocabulary list, you need to be able to say the word, recognize it, know its meaning, know how it is used, and use it. This takes time and effort. You could open a dictionary and start learning each word, but the best approach is to learn the new words which you will need on a daily basis. Even when you narrow the types of new words you want to learn, it can still be a challenge. Thankfully, there are some strategies and tools you can use to make learning new vocabulary easier.

Learning strategies fall into one of three categories. They are structural strategies, contextual strategies, and phonetic strategies. All words have a structure. Using what you know about word structure (structural strategies) can help you discover the meaning and use of a new word.

Words express complete ideas when they are combined with other words. Using your knowledge of how words are combined to create sentences and paragraphs can help you discover the meaning and the use of new words.

Finally, letters are associated with specific sounds. The last set of strategies involves using what you know about letters and sounds to discover how to say new words. You could ask another person how to say a new word, or you could look in a dictionary; but using phonetic strategies can make this task easier.

Structural, contextual, and phonetic strategies can help you discover the general definition about a word, and a thesaurus is helpful for finding words with similar meanings. Still, it is sometimes not possible to guess the meaning and use of a new word. There are many words that sound and look similar, but are spelled differently and have different meanings. Some phrases, groups of words, express a different meaning than their individual words. These expressions may be unique to the English language, and can be confusing. For challenging words and phrases, the dictionary is the best tool for determining their exact meaning and use.

### Homonyms and Idioms

Homonyms and idioms can be confusing. The words "two", "to", and "too" sound the same, but they have different spellings, meanings, and uses. The word "two" refers to the number 2. The word "to" is used as a preposition, and the word "too" is used to replace the word also, or it is used to mean an excessive degree (too fast). These words are called homonyms. Dictionaries may list homonyms for words that are frequently confused.

## Reading Comprehension #14019

Idioms are phrases. They have specific meanings that are often different from the meanings of the individual words. For example, the idiom "a chip off the old block" means that a child is similar to his or her parent. It has nothing to do with a piece of a wood block. Looking in the dictionary is the best way to discover their meaning.

You may want to try some of the following strategies to help you remember these words, so you can add them to your vocabulary list.

- Guess at the word's/phrase's meaning and use.
- Check a dictionary for the exact meaning and use.
- Read the word/phrase aloud.
- Check to see if the word/phrase has more than one meaning.
- Check for words! phrases with similar meanings.
- Practice writing the word/phrase correctly on paper.
- Find a way to remember the word or phrase (mnemonic device).
- Keep a record of the word/phrase.
- Practice using the word/phrase in reading, writing, or speaking.

Look carefully at the following examples of homonyms and idioms. Use some or the above strategies to help you learn these new words and phrases.

### ***Homonyms***

**air** (*a gas*)

**dyeing** (*colouring*)

**plain** (*knock*)

**aisle** (*passageway*)

**earn** (*deserve*)

**pray** (*to implore*)

**aloud** (*out loud*)

**find** (*discover*)

**principal** (*main person*)

**altar** (*place of prayer*)

**fir** (*tree*)

**profit** (*gain*)

**band** (*group*)

**flour** (*ground meal*)

**rain** (*water*)

**heir** (*one who inherits*)

**dying** (*loss of life*)

**plane** (*airplane*)

**isle** (*an island*)

**urn** (*large vessel*)

**prey** (*animal caught for food*)

**allowed** (*permitted*)

**fined** (*penalized*)

**principle** (*theory*)

**alter** (*change*)

**fur** (*animal hair*)

**prophet** (*a person*)

**banned** (*forbidden*)

**flower** (*blossom*)

**reign** (*rule*)

**Practice Exercise 10 A**

***Homonyms***

A. What is a homonym? Write a complete definition and give one example.

---

---

---

B. Pick the word that best completes the sentences

1. Prince Edward is the (air, heir) to the crown.
2. When did you start (dyeing, dying) your shoes?
3. The marshmallows are in (aisle, isle) seven.
4. The congregation raised enough money to build a new(altar, alter).
5. Religious books often make references to (profits, prophets).
6. The park has (band, banned) all camp fires.
7. Poetry is meant to be read (aloud, allowed).
8. Mountain lions (prey, pray) on sheep.
9. Mrs. Thibidault bought a new (fir, fur) coat.
10. You must understand the (principal, principle), before you can apply it to you work.

C. Write one sentence with each word. Use the word correctly.

1. flour \_\_\_\_\_
2. fined \_\_\_\_\_
3. urn \_\_\_\_\_
4. plain \_\_\_\_\_
5. reign \_\_\_\_\_



**Idioms**

**"bird in the hand"**  
**"birds of a feather"**  
**"kill two birds with one stone"**  
**"bird brain"**  
**"bird of ill omen"**  
**"bird's eye view"**  
**"bet your boots"**  
**"die with one's boots on"**  
**"have one's heart in one's boots"**  
**"lick the boots of"**

**Meaning**

something certain  
people of the same kind  
two things are done by one action  
foolish  
unlucky person  
to have a general or total understanding  
depend on  
to die trying very hard  
discouraged  
obey another person

**Practice Exercise 11 A**

*Idioms*

A. What is an idiom? Write a complete definition and give one example.

---

---

B. Rewrite these sentences. Replace idioms with clear language.

1. Here comes the bird of ill omen now.

---

---

2. I will bet my boots that the new team will do well this season.

---

---

3. If we drive to the meeting, we can briefly stop in Fredericton and kill two birds with one stone.

---

---

4. Greg said he will die with his boots on before giving into the committees demands.

---

---

5. Susan seems to have a bird's eye view of the situation.

---

---

## How can word structure help?

The main part of any word is called the "root word". The meaning of many root words can be changed simply by adding or removing parts of words. These parts of words are called prefixes and suffixes. Prefixes are added to the beginning of a root word, while suffixes are added to the end of a root word. Look at how the root word relate can be changed.

**Prefix**

*un-*

**Root Word**

relate

**Suffix**

**-ed**

***unrelated***

Knowing the meaning, spelling, and pronunciation of frequently used prefixes and suffixes will allow you to discover meanings, to say correctly, and to spell many new words correctly. One of the easiest ways of making an antonym, a word with the opposite meaning, is to add a prefix. Some common antonym forming prefixes include: de-, dis-, in-, im-, il-, and ir-. Study the meaning and spelling of prefixes and suffixes on the following pages.

Reading Comprehension #14019

<b>Prefixes</b>	
ante-	before
anti-	against
auto-	self
bene-	well
bi-	two
circum-	around
cent-	hundred
contra-	against
de-	away, down
dis-	not, apart

<b>Suffixes</b>	
-able	worthy of
-ible	worthy of
-age	process of
-al	relating
-ance	action of
-ence	action of
-ant	one who
-ent	one who
-ary	related to or engaged in
-craft	skill

**Practice Exercise 12 A, B**

*Prefixes and Suffixes*

A. Add a root word to each **prefix**. Use the word in a sentence. Underline the word.

1. ante-

\_\_\_\_\_

2. auto-

\_\_\_\_\_

3. bi-

\_\_\_\_\_

4. contra-

\_\_\_\_\_

5. dis-

\_\_\_\_\_

B. Add a root word to each **suffix**. Use the word in a sentence. Underline the word.

1. -able

\_\_\_\_\_

2. -age

\_\_\_\_\_

3. -al

\_\_\_\_\_

4. -ance

\_\_\_\_\_

5. -ary

\_\_\_\_\_

## How can context clues help?

Writers often leave clues for readers to find. These clues help readers understand the meaning of new words or concepts. Using these clues will give you a general idea about the meaning of new words. Looking in the dictionary is still the best way to discover the exact meaning and use of a word.

Writers will leave clues in specific parts of sentences and paragraphs. Look for context clues in the following places:

### 1. **Immediately after a new word**

Writers may rename a person, a thing, or an idea immediately after a new word. This information is often found between commas. Read these examples.

*The coach, **Mr. Roberts**, was nominated for Coach of the Year*

*Ferrous oxide, **rust**, was found on the equipment.*

### 2. **Before or after a new word**

Writers may include additional information in phrases or clauses. This information may come before or after the new word. It is usually separated from the main sentence by a comma or semicolon. Read these sentences.

*Some animals rely on anaerobic metabolism to survive, so they are able to **get the energy** they need despite living in a place with little or **no oxygen**.*

### 3. **In the following sentence**

Writers may give a definition for a new word in a following sentence. Look at the example.

*There are several ways that a species may become extinct. Loss of habitat, natural disaster, and predation are only a few examples. **Predation is a natural process where one living thing kills another living thing and uses it for food.***

**Practice Exercise 13 A**

*Context Clues*

- A. Read the paragraph. Use context clues to write a general definition for each underlined word. Use a dictionary to write an exact definition.

*Within a lake, which is an example of an ecosystem, there may be populations of frogs, bass, insects (called water striders), and water lilies. Each species of organism has its own place in the habitat in the pond; the frogs in the shallow region, the bass in the deep water, the water strider on the surface, and the water lilies in the shallow region near the shore.*

*Adapted from the "Intermediate Academic Upgrading-Science" learning packages; IA U-S 4.1*

1. ecosystem

- a. general definition —

---

---

- b. specific definition —

---

---

2. habitat

- a. general definition —

---

---

- b. specific definition —

---

---

## How can phonics help?

The letters in words are organized to give each word its unique structure. Most of the time the organization of letters in words follow regular patterns. Recognizing these patterns will help you to pronounce new words. Being able to break words into their sound parts takes practice.

Words can be divided into smaller parts or groups of letters based on the sound they make. All words have at least one vowel (a, e, i, o, u, or y), so they have at least one syllable. Many words with more than one vowel have more than one syllable.

A syllable is part of a word with at least one vowel sound. If a vowel is silent, it usually does not count as a syllable. The following words are examples of words which have a silent "e": bike, save, hike, and rake. Each word has one syllable. Now, look at the word "modest". It has two syllables because it has two vowel sounds. The dot separates the word into two syllables. The "o" makes a vowel sound and the "e" makes a vowel sound.

modest

mod • est

There are six basic guidelines to dividing words into syllables. Although the guidelines are useful, there are always exceptions to the guidelines. Consult a good dictionary when in doubt. Look at the following tables. **V** means vowel. **C** means a consonant (a letter that is not a vowel). "r" means the letter "r", while "le" means the letters "le".



**Guidelines for Dividing Words Into Syllables**

<b>Pattern</b>	<b>Example</b>	<b>Divided Words</b>	<b>Syllables</b>
<b>VC•CV</b>	murder whisper	mur•der whis•per	2 2
<b>prefix•root</b>	undo preview	un•do pre•view	2 2
<b>or</b>			
<b>root•suffix</b>			
<b>V•CV</b> (Sometimes before a consonant, consonant blend, or digraph if the first vowel is long)	reply hotel	re•ply ho•tel	2 2
<b>or</b>			
<b>VC•V</b> (Sometimes after a consonant, consonant blend, or consonant digraph if the first vowel is short)	modest polish	mod•est pol•ish	2 2
<b>VR•</b>	forest sterile	for•est ster•ile	2 2
<b>C•Cle</b>	twinkle marble	twin•kle mar•ble	2 2

**Practice Exercise 14 A**

*Syllables*

- A. Read each word aloud three times. Break the word into syllables. Write the dictionary way of breaking the word into syllables.

<b>Word</b>	<b><i>Syllables</i></b>	<b>Dictionary</b>
	<b>Guess</b>	
before	_____	_____
against	_____	_____
autobiography	_____	_____
benefactor	_____	_____
bicycle	_____	_____
circumnavigate	_____	_____
century	_____	_____
contradict	_____	_____
disobey	_____	_____

## Reading Literature

You have learned and practiced using eight basic reading skills. Although we talked about each skill one at a time, they all work together. Your reading speed and reading comprehension will continue to improve as you regularly apply these skills to your reading, and as you increase your vocabulary. You have already had some practice using these basic reading skills by reading parts of books, articles, novels, short stories, poems, and more.

It is important to read a variety of types of literature. Literature may include narrative writing, descriptive writing, or expository writing. Each type of writing has a unique organization and a unique vocabulary. Although one definition of the word literature refers to all written materials, literature can also be used with a more narrow meaning. The second meaning for literature includes writing which is recognized as being of very high quality.

Books, articles, essays, poems, short stories, novels, and biographies may fit into the category of high quality literature. You can recognize this category of literature because they tend to have the following qualities:

***Represents high quality writing***

***Talks about familiar human problems***

***Highlights truths about the "human experience"***

***Clarifies our position in the world***

Reading quality literature will not only improve your reading skills, but it will also help you improve your writing. Reading carefully and evaluating skilled writers' works will guide you in developing your own writing style.

As you study this section on reading literature, pay attention to the differences between the types of literature. Read carefully to find differences in how each type of literature is structured, how words are used, the author's message, the effectiveness of the type of literature in communicating the author's message. You will also find similarities. Literature from a specific time in history, region, or culture will often have similarities in topics, style, structure, or other aspects of writing.

## Figures of Speech and Literary Devices

Writers use figures of speech and literary devices to make their writing more interesting, more concise, more musical, and more emotional. Some of the more commonly used forms of figures of speech and literary devices are mentioned here.

### **Anecdote**

Anecdotes are brief, often humorous, stories about a person's feelings and thoughts about a specific situation. Writers use anecdotes to make their writing feel more personal and to interject some humour.

### **Metaphor**

Metaphors are comparisons between two things. The words "like" or "as" are not used. Writers use metaphors to create a detailed image for the reader. Readers are able to get vivid mental images without having to read a long description.

#### **Excerpt from *MacBeth***

**William Shakespeare**

*Tomorrow, and tomorrow, and tomorrow  
Creeps in this petty pace from day to day  
To the last syllable of recorded time;  
And all our yesterdays have lighted fools  
the way to dusty death. Out, out brief candle!  
Life's but a walking shadow, a poor player,  
That struts and frets his hour upon the stage  
And then is heard no more. It is a tale  
Told by an idiot, full of sound and fury,  
Signifying nothing.*

### **Similes**

Similes are comparisons between two things. The words like or as are used. Writers use metaphors to create a detailed image for the reader. Readers are able to get vivid mental images without having to read a long description.

#### **The Bat**

**D. H. Lawrence**

*"A twitch, a twitter, an elastic shudder in flight"  
And serrated wings against the sky,"  
Like a glove, a black, thrown up at the light"  
And falling back."*

*Float like a butterfly, sting like a bee."  
Mohammed Ali*

## **Personification**

Personification is giving human-like thoughts, feelings, and behaviours to objects or ideas. The writer makes the association of powerful human emotions to objects, situations, and ideas. Writers use this technique to stir the emotions of the reader.

### **Margaret Harriman**

*Old teacups sleeping  
On the shelf  
From generations past  
Cry no more from broken limbs  
Antiques, at peace,  
At last*

## **Alliteration**

Alliteration is the repetition of similar beginning consonant sounds of several words. Writers use this technique to highlight elements of their writing and to make their writing musical.

### **Four Little Foxes**

#### **Lew Sarett**

*Speak gently, **S**pring, and make no **s**udden sound;  
For in my windy valley, yesterday I found  
New-born foxes squirming on the ground-  
**S**peak gently*

## **Assonance**

Assonance is the repetition of similar vowel sounds of several words. Writers use this technique to highlight elements of their writing and to make their writing musical.

*Twinkle, twinkle, little star,  
How **I** wonder what you are!  
Up above the world so **h**igh.  
**L**ike a diamond in the **sk**y.*

*Who had lain **i**n the **th**in **sh**ips  
All night long on the cold ocean.*

## **Consonance**

Consonance is the repetition of similar **ending** consonant sounds of several words. Writers use this technique to highlight elements of their writing and to make their writing musical.

Humming**g** and Hammering**g** at your ear  
The city hymning**g** sound

And all is seared**d** with trade;  
bleare**d**, smeare**d** with toil.

## **Onomatopoeia**

Onomatopoeia is the careful selection and use of words which sound similar to the objects or the events they name.

The **drip, drip, drip** of the water droplets caused George to nod off to sleep.

The snow went **kur-splat** as it landed on the pavement.

## **Hyperboles**

Hyperbole is the use of words and phrases to exaggerate a thought, feeling, object, or event. Writers use this technique to create humour or sarcasm.

### **To His Coy Mistress**

**Andrew Marvell**

*My vegetable love should grow  
Vaster than empires, and more slow,  
A hundred years should go to praise  
Thine eyes, and on thy forehead gaze,  
Two hundred years to adore each breast,  
But thirty thousand to the rest,  
An age at least to every part.*

## **Symbolism**

Symbolism is the use of symbols, often objects, that have strong associations with well-known events or experiences.

*A jack-o-lantern reminds us of Halloween*

*A cupid reminds us of Valentine's Day, or love*

*A shamrock reminds us of St. Patrick's Day.*

## **Pun**

Pun is the use of similar sounding words with quite different meanings to create humour.

*A flea and a fly in the flue  
Were caught, so what could they do?  
Said the fly, "Let us flee."  
"Let us fly," said the flea.  
So they **flew** through a **flaw** in the **flue**.*

## **Irony**

Irony can be observed when a writer's intended message is clearly the opposite of what is written. Events are ironic when the outcome is different from what normally would be expected. Limericks, a type of poetry, often use irony to create humour.

*There was a young lady named Ruth,  
Who had a great passion for truth,  
She said she would die  
Before she would lie,  
And she died in the prime of her youth.*

*Ogden Nash*

## **Flashback**

Flashbacks are descriptions of previous events during the present time in a narrative. Writers will describe previous events to provide background or to help explain more recent events.

## **Foreshadowing**

Foreshadowing is the use of words, phrases, or actions as signals that readers can use to infer future events in a narrative.

## **Poetry**

### **What is poetry?**

People have communicated through poetry for centuries. The first forms of poetry were spoken. People have used poetry to tell stories and to pass on information because poetry is easier to remember than prose. It is easier to remember because of its musical quality. Even today, people use songs and poems to remember stories and information. Poetry is musical because it has rhythm.

There are a variety of poetic forms with their own unique structures, styles, and topics. Most poetry, however, deals with topics of an emotional or philosophical nature. Words and literary devices are selected carefully. Generally, poets use as few words as possible to convey their messages.

Modern poets tend to rely less on rigid use of rhythm, rhyme, and form to create their poems. Modern poets still use some of these conventions, especially rhythm, but in a less rigid way. This type of poetry is called free verse.

Poetry is structured differently than prose, everyday writing. Poetry involves joining words to make a line of poetry (also called a verse) and joining lines of poetry to form stanzas. Several lines of poetry may be needed to create what is equivalent to a sentence in prose. Each line of a poem is usually capitalized. Stanzas are roughly equivalent to paragraphs in prose. Stanzas may be organized into larger sections.

Differences in structure, word choice, literary devices, and style can make reading some poetry challenging. Poetry is written in such a way the reader may need to infer the main idea or theme. Readers often need to consult a dictionary to learn the meaning of new words. The larger your vocabulary, the more you know about the author, and the more you know about the time and place a poem was written, the easier it will be to discover the poem's meaning.

## What is rhythm?

When we speak, we tend to emphasize some parts of words more than other parts. We are putting more energy into making some syllables. Rhythm refers to the pattern of stressed syllables and unstressed syllables, and it is sometimes referred to as "meter". Dictionaries are valuable tools when reading poetry. In addition to revealing the meanings of new words, dictionaries can be used to discover how words are broken into syllables, how the syllables are stressed, and how words are pronounced. Dictionaries use marks called accents to indicate stressed and unstressed syllables.

These marks are placed over each syllable of a word. Stressed syllables are indicated by a "/", while unstressed syllables are indicated by a "u". Patterns of stressed syllables and unstressed syllables are separated by "|". One pattern of stressed and unstressed syllables is called a foot. Look at the table below to learn the names of common stress patterns.

<b>Rhythm</b>	<b>Stress Pattern</b>	<b>Example</b>
Iambic	u /	u / to day
Trochaic	/ u	/ u Mon day
Anapestic	u u /	u u / in ter rupt
Dactylic	/ u u	/ u u Sa tur day

Most lines of a poem have several feet. The number of feet found in a line of poetry is given a name. A prefix is added to the word "meter" to tell you how many feet are present. Look at the tables below to learn the names of common feet patterns.

### **Feet Patterns**

*monometer* (One foot)

*dimeter* (Two foot)

*trimeter* (Three foot)

*tetrameter* (Four foot)

*pentameter* (Five foot)

*hexameter* (Six foot)



The names for the stress pattern and name for the number of feet in a line can be combined to name a line of poetry. Some examples include:

***iambic tetrameter***

u / u / u / u /  
 |And I | was wan | dering | in a trice. |

***iambic pentameter***

u / u / u / u / u /  
 |They al | so serve | who on | ly stand | and wait |

Notice that the syllables of a single foot may consist of one word or extend over more than one word. The word "only", for example, is divided between two feet.

**What is rhyme?**

Rhyme is not the same as rhythm. Rhyme refers to patterns of common sounds, while rhythm refers to the pattern of stressed and unstressed syllables. There are different types of rhyme. The most common type of rhyme involves patterns of similar sounds at the end of a line. The pattern of rhyming sounds in a poem is called the "rhyme scheme". Rhyme schemes are indicated with letters. The letter A is written beside the first line. All lines of the poem that rhyme with the first line also receive the letter A. The next line not rhyming with the first line is given the letter B. All sentences rhyming with this line are also given the letter B. The process continues until all of the lines receive a letter. Look at the example below.

Excerpt from ***The Ancient Mariner***  
 by Samuel Coleridge

<i>In Xanadu did Kubla Khan</i>	<b>A</b>
<i>A stately pleasure-dome decree:</i>	<b>B</b>
<i>Where Alph, the sacred river, ran</i>	<b>A</b>
<i>Through caverns measureless to man</i>	<b>A</b>
<i>Down to a sunless sea.</i>	<b>B</b>

Not all poems rhyme perfectly. Some poetry only has parts that rhyme. This is called imperfect rhyme. Other poetry does not rhyme at all. This is called free verse.

**A Season In Hell**

by Arthur Rimbaud

*My eternal soul,  
 Redeem your promise,  
 In spite of the night alone  
 And the day on fire.*

## How to read poetry

There are many types of poetry. Some forms of poetry are easier to read than others. You should follow the reading process. Most people will need to read a poem three or more times. Generally, poems are best read aloud. This is particularly important for poetry that relies on rhyme or rhythm to convey its message.

The first time you read a poem, you should read it to get a sense of its main idea. Next, you will want to read it to get a greater sense of the main idea, as well as to understand the form and techniques the poet used. Finally, you will want to read carefully to understand the details included in the poem, and to evaluate the effectiveness of the poet's techniques.

As you read, highlight unfamiliar words or phrases. Look for the meanings of these words in a dictionary or an encyclopaedia. You will also want to do some research about the author and the period the writer was living in. Poets often use words with more than one meaning. It is worthwhile asking yourself whether other interpretations are available.

Look carefully for the figures of speech the author uses. Ask your self whether they are used effectively to create images or to express emotions. You will also want to discover the point of view the poem has been written from. This means who is speaking in the poem, and who is listening to the speaker. Ask yourself how the poet from this poem spoke and why he wrote it the way he did. What is the main idea?

## What types of poetry are there?

### Narrative

Narrative poems tell stories. They may vary in style, use of rhyme, and rhythm. Epic poems tend to be longer poems with emphasis on the plot of the story. Epic poems often deal with adventures and heroes. The story centers around the heroes ability to reach a major achievement. The Ballad also tells a story and is a narrative poem.

Ballads, most of which are anonymous, are poems that tell stories about people who experience dramatic events such as murder, war, revenge, love, and jealousy. Originally, ballads were songs that were shared and changed by many people. The stories often included elements of magic or superstition as part of their stories. Dialogue is a key element in most ballads. Although it takes many forms, the traditional ballad has four line stanzas with a rhyme scheme of AABB. Parts of the ballad are repeated to give it its musical quality.

**The Two Ravens**  
*(The Twa Corbies)*

**Anonymous**

*As I was walking all alone* **A**  
*I heard two corbies making a moan* **A**  
*The one unto the other did say,* **B**  
*Where shall we go to dine today?* **B**

*In behind yon old turf dike*  
*I know there lies a new-slain knight*  
*And nobody knows that he lies there*  
*But his hawk, his hound, and his lady fair.*

*His hound is to the hunting gone,*  
*His hawk to fetch the wild-fowl home,*  
*His lady's taken another mate,*  
*So we may make our dinner sweet.*

*You'll sit on his white neck-bone,*  
*And I'll pick out his bonny blue eyes*  
*With one lock of his golden hair,*  
*We'll thatch our nest when it grows bare.*

*Many a one for him makes moan,*  
*But none shall know where he is gone*  
*o'er his white bones, when they are bare,*  
*The wind shall blow forevermore.*

**Practice Exercise 15 A, B**

*Narrative Poetry*

A. The first part and the last part of a long narrative poem follows. Use the reading process to guide you in your reading.

- Skim the title and poem quickly
- Predict what the poem is about
- Think of questions to answer while you read
- Read the poem twice aloud without stopping
- Read the poem again carefully
- Answer the questions

B. Write a complete definition for each word as it is used in the poem.

1. scarlet

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2. wistfully

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3. casque

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---

4. gloats

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---

5. Caiaphas

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## The Ballad Of Reading Gaol

Oscar Wilde

### Part I

*He did not wear his scarlet coat  
For blood and wine are red,  
And blood and wine were on his hands  
When they found him with the dead,  
The poor dead woman whom he loved,  
And murdered in her bed.*

*He walked amongst the Trial Men  
In a suit of shabby gray;  
A cricket cap was on his head,  
And his step seemed light and gay;  
But I never saw a man who looked  
So wistfully at the day.*

*I never saw a man who looked  
With such a wistful eye  
Upon that little tent of blue  
Which prisoners call the sky,  
And at every drifting cloud that went  
With sails of silver by.*

*I walked, with other souls in pain,  
Within another ring,  
And was wondering if the man had done  
A great or little thing,  
When a voice behind me whispered low,  
"That fellow's got to swing."*

*Dear Christ! the very prison walls  
Suddenly seemed to reel,  
And the sky above my head became  
Like a casque of scorching steel,  
And, though I was a soul in pain,  
My pain I could not feel.*

*I only knew what hunted thought  
Quickened his step, and why  
He looked upon the garish day  
With such a wistful eye;  
The man had killed the thing he loved,  
And so he had to die.*

*Yet each man kills the thing he loves,  
By each let this be heard,  
Some do it with a bitter look,  
Some with a flattering word,*

Reading Comprehension #14019

*The coward does it with a kiss,  
The brave man with a sword!*

*Some kill their love when they are young,  
And some when they are old;  
Some strangle with the hands of Lust,  
Some with the hands of Gold;  
The kindest use a knife, because  
The dead so soon grow cold.*

*Some love too little, some too long,  
Some sell, and others buy,  
Some do the deed with many tears,  
And some without a sigh;  
For each man kills the thing he loves,  
Yet each man does not die.*

*He does not die a death of shame  
On a day of dark disgrace,  
Nor have a noose about his neck,  
Nor a cloth upon his face,  
Nor drop feet foremost through the floor  
Into an empty space.*

*He does not sit with silent men  
Who watch him night and day,  
Who watch him when he tries to weep,  
And when he tries to pray,  
Who watch him lest himself should rob  
The prison of its prey.*

*He does not wake at dawn to see  
Dread figures throng his room,  
The shivering Chaplain robed in white,  
The Sheriff stern with gloom,  
And the Governor all in shiny black,  
With the yellow face of Doom.*

*He does not rise in piteous haste  
To put on convict-clothes,  
While some coarse-mouthed Doctor gloats, and notes  
Each new and nerve-twitched pose,  
Fingering a watch whose little ticks  
Are like horrible hammer-blows.*

*He does not know that sickening thirst  
That sands one's throat, before  
The hangman with his gardener's gloves  
Slips through the padded door,  
And binds one with three leathern thongs,  
That the throat may thirst no more.*

## Reading Comprehension #14019

*He does not bend his head to hear  
The Burial Office read,  
Nor while the terror of his soul  
Tells him he is not dead,  
Cross his own coffin, as he moves  
Into the hideous shed.*

*He does not stare upon the air  
Through a little roof of glass  
He does not pray with lips of clay  
For his agony to pass,  
Nor feel upon his shuddering cheek  
The kiss of Caiaphas.*

### **Part VI**

*In Reading Gaol by Reading town  
There is a pit of shame,  
And in it lies a wretched man  
Eaten by teeth of flame,  
In a burning winding-sheet he lies,  
And his grave has got no name.*

*And there, till Christ call forth the dead,  
In silence let him lie:  
No need to waste the foolish tear,  
Or heave the windy sigh:  
The man had killed the thing he loved,  
And so he had to die.*

*And all men kill the thing they love,  
By all let this be heard,  
Some do it with a bitter look,  
Some with a flattering word,  
The coward does it with a kiss,  
The brave man with a sword.*

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**Practice Exercise 15 C**

*Narrative Poetry*

C. Answer the questions.

1. Write the rhyme scheme beside the following stanza.

\_\_\_\_ *He did not wear his scarlet coat*  
\_\_\_\_ *For blood and wine are red,*  
\_\_\_\_ *And blood and wine were on his hands*  
\_\_\_\_ *When they found him with the dead,*  
\_\_\_\_ *The poor dead woman whom he loved,*  
\_\_\_\_ *And murdered in her bed.*

2. Name the rhythm and meter (i.e. Iambic hexameter). \_\_\_\_\_

3. What is the main idea or theme of the poem?

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

4. Who are the characters?

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

5. What is the setting of the poem?

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

6. List the characters mentioned in the poem.

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_



## Sonnet

Although less common today, the sonnet is still used as a form of poetry. Typical themes deal with the spiritual or emotional. There are two major forms of the sonnet. They are Italian and Elizabethan. Both forms consist of fourteen lines.

The Italian sonnet is divided into an eight line stanza (named an octave) and a six-line stanza (named a sestet). The first eight lines were used to present a problem. The following six lines are used to present a solution to the problem. The Italian sonnet also has a predictable rhyme scheme. The octave has a rhyme scheme of **ABBAABBA**. The sestet one of the following rhyme schemes: **CDECDE**, **CDCCDC**, or **CDEDCE**. Each line typically has iambic pentameter meter.

The Elizabethan sonnet is divided into four parts. The first three parts consist of four lines each (called quatrains). The last part consists of two lines (called a rhyming couplet). The rhyming couplet provides the conclusion to the theme presented in the three quatrains. The Elizabethan (also called the Shakespearean sonnet) uses iambic pentameter meter, and it has a rhyme scheme of **ABAB CDCD EFEF GG**.

**Practice Exercise 16 A, B**

*Narrative Poetry*

A. Use the reading process to guide you in your reading of the following sonnet.

- Skim the title and poem quickly
- Predict what the poem is about
- Think of questions to answer while you read
- Read the poem twice aloud without stopping
- Read the poem again carefully
- Answer the questions

B. Write a complete definition for each word as it is used in the poem.

1. thou

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2. lease

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3. complexion

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4. eternal

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5. possession

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## SONNETS XVIII:

### Shall I Compare Thee to a Summer's Day?

**William Shakespeare**

*Shall I compare thee to a summer's day?  
Thou art more lovely and more temperate.  
Rough winds do shake the darling buds of May,  
And summer's lease hath all too short a date.  
Sometime too hot the eye of heaven shines,  
And often is his gold complexion dimm'd,  
And every fair from fair sometime declines,  
By chance or nature's changing course untrimm'd;  
But thy eternal summer shall not fade  
Nor lose possession of that fair thou ow'st,  
Nor shall Death brag thou wander'st in his shade,  
When in eternal lines to time thou grow'st  
So long as men can breathe or eyes can see,  
So long lives this, and this gives life to thee.*

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**Practice Exercise 16 C**

*Sonnets*

C. Answer the questions.

1. What is the complete rhyme scheme for the poem?

\_\_\_\_\_

2. What is the main idea or theme of the sonnet?

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

3. This poem is an example of a metaphor. What are the two things being compared?

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

4. Is this an example of an Italian or an Elizabethan sonnet? Explain your answer in a paragraph.

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

5. What is the name of the literary device found in the following line the poem?

"Nor shall Death brag thou wander'st in his shade," \_\_\_\_\_

## Limerick

Limericks are fun poems. Their main purpose is to entertain the reader. The topics are usually absurd. The poet often changes the spellings of words or uses pun, a play on words, to create the desired effect. The ending of a limerick often presents a twist. Limericks have a specific structure.

Although there are variations, most limericks are made of five lines. The meter usually consists of three lines of anapestic trimeter and two lines of anapestic dimeter. The rhyme scheme is usually **AABBA**.

u    u / u / u u /	
<i>There was a   young la   dy of Niger</i>	<b>A</b>
u    u / u u / uu /	
<i>Who smiled as   she rode on   a tiger;</i>	<b>A</b>
u    u /    u u /	
<i>They came back   from the ride</i>	<b>B</b>
u    u / u u /	
<i>With the la   dy inside</i>	<b>B</b>
u    u / u u / uu /	
<i>The smile's on   the face of   the tiger.</i>	<b>A</b>

Read these limericks for fun. Notice the rhyme scheme. Lines are indented. Look carefully at the length of each line.

<i>There was an old man with a beard</i>	<b>A</b>
<i>Who said, "It's just as I feared!</i>	<b>A</b>
<i>Two owls and a hen,</i>	<b>B</b>
<i>Four larks and a wren</i>	<b>B</b>
<i>Have all built their nests in my beard.</i>	<b>A</b>

*Edward Lear*

<i>Young Frankenstein's robot invention</i>	<b>A</b>
<i>Caused trouble too awful to mention.</i>	<b>A</b>
<i>Its actions were ghoulish,</i>	<b>B</b>
<i>Which proves it is foolish</i>	<b>B</b>
<i>To monkey with Nature's intention.</i>	<b>A</b>

*Berton Braley*

**Practice Exercise 17 A, B**

*Limericks*

A. Use the reading process to guide you in your reading the following limerick.

- Skim the title and poem quickly
- Predict what the poem is about
- Think of questions to answer while you read
- Read the poem twice aloud without stopping
- Read the poem again carefully
- Answer the questions

*A diner while dinning at Crewe,  
Found quite a large mouse in his stew.  
Said the waiter, "Don't shout,  
And wave it about,  
Or the rest will be wanting one, too."*

*Anonymous*

B. Answer the questions.

1. What is the rhyme scheme for this limerick?

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2. Define irony in your own words.

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3. Explain the irony in this poem.

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## Haiku

The haiku was traditionally a Japanese form of poetry. Its purpose is to create an image while encouraging deep thought. Topics usually deal with nature themes.

Haiku is one of the shortest forms of poetry. The last line is sometimes unfinished, requiring the reader to complete the poem. It usually has three lines with no rhyme scheme. Its structure comes from the fact that the first line has five syllables, the second line has seven syllables, and the last line has five syllables. Only the first letter of the first word is capitalized, unlike other familiar forms of poetry, where each line is capitalized.

*I | know | the | geese | do  
eat | the | grain | greed | i | ly: | but  
when | they | go | a | way*

*A bitter morning rain  
sparrows sitting together  
huddled without any necks.*

**Practice Exercise 18 A, B**

*Haiku*

A. Use the reading process to guide you in your reading the following haiku.

- Skim the title and poem quickly
- Predict what the poem is about
- Think of questions to answer while you read
- Read the poem twice aloud without stopping
- Read the poem again carefully
- Answer the questions

*A single tulip!  
Hopelessly waving at me.  
I passed on to work.*

B. Answer the questions.

1. In your own words, describe what image you see after reading this poem.

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2. Describe the tone or feeling of the poem.

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3. What does the poem mean to you?

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## Concrete

Concrete poems take many different forms. Concrete poetry is sometimes called shape or form poetry. Concrete poetry relies on the placement of words on paper rather than rhyme or rhythm. This form of poetry has become more popular in recent times as poets moved away from rigid structure and rhyme.

Enjoy the following concrete poem.

I  
wish  
I were a  
kite on high  
I could fly up to the sky  
Up to the blue sky  
High as a cloud  
I wish I were  
A kite  
Up  
Up  
Up  
Up  
+  
+  
+  
+  
+

## Short Stories

### What are short stories?

Short stories have been used to tell stories to entertain, to pass on information, history, or traditions, or to provide moral lessons. Forms of short stories, such as fables, myths, and legends have long histories. Many of these stories have actually travelled to new cultures where they have been changed and claimed as their own. *Cinderella*, a fairytale, has both European and Asia forms. Each culture has changed the details of the story to fit their own beliefs, languages, and traditions.

The modern short story has a strong connection to changes in North America. It has a unified plot structure, limited character development, limited setting development, and unified narration. Each writer focuses on a different element of the story development. Compared to novels, modern short stories are limited to a single unified plot with few characters and limited description of the setting. Most short stories are less than 15000 words in length.

Short stories may be fictional, or they may be based on fact and fiction. Ghost stories and science fiction are examples of short stories, which may have elements of fact and fiction. Ghost stories have existed much longer than science fiction. The developments in science and in technology have offered new settings and characters to present familiar conflicts and plots. The short story will continue to be a desirable form for writers because of its flexibility.

### How to read short stories?

When reading short stories, evaluate whether the writer has produced a unified plot. One or two main characters work to resolve one problem or situation. Look for a beginning, middle, and an ending. The narrator's presentation should also be unified.

Check to see who the narrator is, and what is the narrator's point of view. Remember there are three types of points of view. There is first person (narrator knows only what he/she experiences), third person limited (narrator knows more than what a single person experiences), and third person omniscient (the narrator knows everything). Look carefully at the pronouns used in the story to give you clues about the point of view. For example, first person point of view is indicated by the use of pronouns such as I, me, or mine. Read carefully how the narrator uses them to develop the conflict.

There may be more than one level of conflict. Clues to the type of conflict are revealed through events, dialogue, and description. The conflict is centred on the main character. The character may need to deal with conflict involving.

***character vs. character***

***character vs. self***

***character vs. nature***

***character vs. fate***

Short story writers often provide an ironic twist at the end of the plot. An ironic twist involves an event or outcome which contradicts the predicted outcome. Read carefully, and you will discover the clues the writer leaves to help you anticipate the outcome.

The qualities of each character can be revealed through dialogue, action, character comments, narrator comments, and inferences. Look for these details so you will be able to create a mental picture of each character. Main characters are round characters; writers present both positive and negative characteristics of the main character. Writers may only reveal specific traits of minor characters. Minor characters are referred to as flat characters. Try to distinguish round characters from flat characters. Also, try to list adjectives that describe each character.

The mood of many short stories is usually established after the first two or three paragraphs. You should be able to describe the mood. It helps to be aware of how the writer creates the mood. Is it the setting that contributes mostly to the mood?

Short stories usually express only one theme. It may be stated or you may need to infer it. Look for repetition of words, phrases, or events to help you infer the theme.

## What literary devices are used in short stories?

Many authors use a variety of literary devices to create the mood. Some of the more common literary devices to watch for include: allusion, irony, foreshadowing, mystery, sarcasm, stereotyping, understatement, humour, satire, and dialogue. There are more devices than the ones listed here. Try to find these devices in the short stories you are about to read. Look for them in other types of narrative also.

**Allusion** is a reference made to an event, object, or time. Unless the reader is aware of the reference, they will miss out on the hidden meaning. Researching the author's background and the setting of the story may help you catch these references.

**Irony** refers to the discrepancy between an expected outcome from an action or actions and the actual outcome. It would be ironic that a person purposely tries to get fired and ends up with a promotion.

**Foreshadowing** is hints at the future. Writers leave clues that can help you predict the outcome of a story.

**Mystery** is created in a number of ways. Writers present isolated or incomplete observations. The reader naturally responds by asking a question such as "Why?" or "How?". The only way to answer the question is to continue reading.

**Sarcasm** is often found in the dialogue between characters or comments made by the narrator. A character makes a statement but he or she clearly means the opposite of the statement. The reader knows this by paying attention to the tone of the character.

**Stereotyping** creates flat characters. Specific generalized traits are attributed to a character or characters. These characteristics may be either negative or positive.

**Understatement** is to highlight important or extra ordinary events by treating them as unimportant, expected events. Writers use understatement as another way of highlighting an event. It also provides insights into the values and perceptions of the characters.

**Humour** can be created using different techniques. It is to entertain the reader. It is also a way for the writer to develop the tone or mood of the story. Satire is a form of humour which mocks or criticizes people. Writers may use jokes, irony, dialogue, satire, or hyperbole to create humour.

**Satire** is a form of writing which mocks or makes fun of a person, group, or other target. The writer seems to say one thing, but the writer makes it clear the opposite message is intended.

**Dialogue** is conversation. It takes the form of direct quotes. Each time a new speaker talks a new paragraph is started. Dialogue is used to reveal details about a character's personality. Writers also use dialogue to fill in blanks in information in the plot.

When you discover that a writer uses one or more of these devices, try to determine why the writer used them and decide if they were used effectively.

## What types of short stories are there?

Traditional forms of short narratives are still popular today. Fables, myths, legends, and tales continue to delight readers. Writers have added the modern short story, tall tales, science fiction, and horror stories to the material available to readers. Each form has the typical elements of a narrative—plot, character, setting, and narrator.

Although they all have similar elements, they also have differences.

## Fables

Fables come from the oral tradition of story telling. Local tribes created and passed on fables as a form of moral education. Many fables directly state the moral it communicates at the end of its story. Animals with human qualities serve as characters. Each character symbolizes a specific aspect of human nature. The message being communicated was more important than character development, setting development, or plot development.

**Practice Exercise 19 A, B**

*Fables*

A. Use the reading process to guide you in your reading of the following story.

- Skim the title and story quickly
- Predict what the story is about
- Think of questions to answer while you read
- Read the story once without stopping
- Read the story again carefully
- Answer the questions

B. Write a complete definition for each word as it is used in the story.

1. chameleon

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2. route

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3. nimbly

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4. stretch

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## The Race

One day a chameleon invited an elephant to run a race with him the next day. The elephant accepted the challenge. During the night the chameleon hid several of his brothers at short distances along the route to be covered. At dawn, the elephant appeared, greeted the chameleon, and started running. Meanwhile, the chameleon had nimbly taken a place on the elephant's tail, without being noticed. Each time the elephant met one of the chameleon's brothers on the way, the elephant asked him, "Aren't you tired yet?" "No," was always the answer, until, at the place where the last of his brothers was waiting, the chameleon dropped from the elephant's tail and set off to cover the last stretch of the road by himself.

By this time, the elephant was completely exhausted, and declared the chameleon the winner of the race.

**Practice Exercise 19 C**

*Fables*

C. Answer the following questions.

1. What human qualities does the elephant display?

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2. What human qualities does the chameleon display?

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3. What is the moral or theme of this fable?

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4. What characteristics make this story a fable? Write your answer in a paragraph.

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## **Myths**

Myths were written to explain how creation came about and how people should lead "moral" lives. Myths have their origins in oral story telling. The characters are normally gods or goddesses. Although the characters have special abilities, they still behave as humans with both negative and positive characteristics.

Greek authors have written many of the myths that still exist today. These writers, most of whose names are unknown, appealed to people's emotions by placing the characters in fantastic situations.



**Practice Exercise 20 A, B**

*Myths*

A. Use the reading process to guide you in your reading of the following story.

- Skim the title and story quickly
- Predict what the story is about
- Think of questions to answer while you read
- Read the story once without stopping
- Read the story again carefully
- Answer the questions

B. Write a complete definition for each word as it is used in the story.

1. brooded

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2. chasm

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3. chariot

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4. crevice

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5. pomegranate

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## Demeter and Persephone

Persephone was the beautiful daughter of Demeter, goddess of all that springs from the soil. Hades, lord of the underworld, had long been in love with Persephone, but he realized that no woman would ever want to share his dark, hot land of the dead. Deep in his kingdom he brooded over his love problem.

One day Demeter was picking flowers when she wandered from the path to collect some particularly beautiful blossoms. Hades came bursting from a deep chasm. Grabbing Persephone, he sped away in his flashing chariot drawn by fierce black horses. Together they withdrew into the black crevice and the earth closed over them.

When Persephone found out what happened, she was enraged. In her grief she forbade the earth to give forth its fruit. Soon all mankind was on the verge of starving to death.

Wise Zeus, the king of the gods, thought of a compromise. He told Demeter that her daughter would be restored to her only if the girl had not eaten any of the food of the dead. Unfortunately, Persephone had eaten seven red pomegranate seeds. Zeus, in his wisdom, declared that Persephone must stay with Hades one month for each seed she had eaten; however, she might return to Demeter for the remaining five months. For the time Persephone was reunited with her mother, the earth was green and bountiful with food. When Persephone returned to Hades, Demeter, in her sorrow, made the land barren and grey.

**Practice Exercise 20 C**

*Myths*

C. Answer the questions.

1. What characteristics of a myth can be found in the story?

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2. What human characteristics does Persephone display?

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3. Write a paragraph (5-6 sentences) summarizing the events of the story.

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## **Legends**

Unlike myths and fables, legends have human characters. As with myths the characters often have special abilities or strengths. They use these characteristics to solve a problem or to win a challenge. The characters or events of legends are based on some fact. Many popular legends originated from Greek literature where characters were thrust into heroic battles or adventurous quests.

As with most narratives, legends have characters, plots, and settings. Legends tend to have more characters and greater plot development than do myths and fables. The language used to describe characters and events is direct; yet, it is also more descriptive and lofty. Many of today's tales come from the legend tradition.

**Practice Exercise 21 A, B**

*Legends*

A. Use the reading process to guide you in your reading of the following story.

- Skim the title and story quickly
- Predict what the story is about
- Think of questions to answer while you read
- Read the story once without stopping
- Read the story again carefully
- Answer the questions

B. Write a complete definition for each word as it is used in the story.

1. whole

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2. celebrate

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3. daintily

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4. poking

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## **Twist-Mouth Family**

### **An Appalachian Folktale**

Once there was a family of people who lived in the back country far off from any town. The whole family had very funny mouths. The father's lower lip and lower jaw stuck out, way out. The mother's upper lip was incredibly long and hung down over the lower. The oldest girl's mouth was twisted to the right, so that she had to talk, eat, and sing out the right side of her mouth. The brother's mouth was twisted to the left, so that he had to eat, talk, and laugh out of the left side of his mouth. The youngest boy had a mouth just like anyone, but in this family that, too, was different. When the children grew up, and it came time for them to go to college, the two oldest said "No", they'd rather stay at home with their own kin than have to go out in the world with all those straight-faced people. But the youngest boy said "Yes", he'd like to go to college. So he went. Time went by, and then the youngest boy came home for Christmas vacation. Everybody looked forward to seeing him and hearing the news of the world. And the mother baked a big cake to celebrate. That night the family sat around the table eating cake and listening to the adventures of the youngest brother who had been so far from home. The cake was very good. The father had to hold his piece way up and push it down into his mouth. The mother had to shove her piece up under her upper lip to get it into her mouth. The oldest girl ate daintily, poking one small piece after another into the right side of her mouth. The brother jammed big hunks into the left side of his. The youngest brother ate just like anyone. It grew late and the time came to go to bed. "Father, will you blow out the light," said the mother. "Yes, I will," said the father. So the man leaned over the lamp and blew. But his under lip was so big that he could only blow up — this way — and he could not blow out the light. "Mother, you do it," said the man. "All right, I will." "Well, do." "Well, I will." So the woman blew and blew. She blew this way — and could not blow out the lamp. "Daughter, you do it," said the mother. "All right, I will." "Well, do." "Well, I will." So the daughter tried to blow the light out. She blew this way — and could not blow out the light. "Here — you do it," said the girl to the brother. "All right," said the boy, "I'll do it." "Well, do." "Well, I will." So the brother tried. He blew this way — and could not blow out the light. "You do it," said the brother to the youngest boy. "Sure!" said the youngest boy. "Wh---ff" he went (like that), and the light was out. Everybody was delighted. Now they could all go to bed. "Wonderful thing — a college education," said the father.

**Practice Exercise 21 C**

*Legends*

C. Answer the questions.

1. What characteristics of a legend are present in the story?

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2. Explain how the writer of the legend creates humour. Give at least two examples.

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## **Tales and Tall Tales**

Tales are similar to legends. Human characters encounter unique situations. Many tales have moral lessons that are stated directly or indirectly. Fairytales are included in this category of narratives. They often begin with phrases such as, "Once upon a time..."

Tall tales, like legends, have human characters performing super human acts. Tall tales are a more recent form than the legend. They were developed in North America during rapid growth and settlement by immigrants. They stories entertained workers, and they were a unifying force showing people's pride in their work and their nationalities. The characters are often presented as being much bigger than the average person. The characters or events of many tall tales are based on some fact.

The characters and events in tall tales typically take place in frontier North America and in lumber and mining camps. The character uses extraordinary skills or strength to overcome a challenge or problem. Some tall tales tell a single story, while other tall tales have been extended over a period of time. The same character is presented with new challenges to overcome in each adventure.



**Practice Exercise 22 A, B**

*Tales*

A. Use the reading process to guide you in your reading of the following story.

- Skim the title and story quickly
- Predict what the story is about
- Think of questions to answer while you read
- Read the story once without stopping
- Read the story again carefully
- Answer the questions

B. Write a complete definition for each word as it is used in the story.

1. accustomed

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2. avail

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3. annoyed

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4. absurd

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5. nocturnal

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## The Toad-Bride Groom

Long ago there lived a poor fisherman in a certain village. One day he went fishing in the lake as usual, but found he could not catch as many fish as he was accustomed to. And on each of the following days he found his catch growing smaller and smaller. He tried new baits, and bought new hooks, but all to no avail. At last even the water of the lake began to disappear, until in the end it became too shallow for fishing. One afternoon in the late summer the bottom of the lake was exposed to view, and a big toad came out from it. The fisherman immediately thought that it must have eaten up all the fish and angrily cursed the samzog, or three families of the frog, its parents, brothers, wife and children, for it is popularly believed that the toad is a relative of the frog. Then the toad spoke to him gently, rolling its eyes, "Do not be angry, for one day I shall bring you good fortune. I wish to live in your house, so please let me go with you." But the fisherman was annoyed that a toad should make such a request and hastened home without it.

That evening the toad came to his house. His wife, who had already heard about it from her husband, received it kindly, and made a bed for it in a corner of the kitchen. Then she brought it worms and scraps to eat. The couple had no children of their own and decided to keep the toad as a pet. It grew to be as big as a boy, and they came to love it as if it were their son.

Nearby, there lived a rich man who had three daughters. One day the toad told the fisherman and his wife that it would like to marry one of the three daughters. They were most alarmed at this most unreasonable request and earnestly advised it to forget such an impossible ambition. "It is utterly absurd" they said. "How can poor people like us propose marriage to such a great family? And you are not even a human being."

So the toad replied, "I don't care what the rank of the family is. The parents may object, but yet one of the daughters may be willing to accept me. Who knows? Please go and ask, and let me know what answer you receive."

So the fisherman's wife went and called on the mistress of the rich man's house and told her what her toad-son had asked. The lady was greatly displeased and went and told her husband. He was furiously angry at such a preposterous suggestion and ordered his servant to beat the toad's foster-mother. So the poor woman returned home and told the toad of her painful experience.

"I'm very sorry that you have been treated like that, Mother," the toad said to her, "but don't let it worry you too much. Just wait and see what will happen." Then he went out and caught a hawk and brought it home. Late that night he tied a lighted lantern to its foot, and crept stealthily to the rich man's house. He tied a long string to the hawk's foot and then climbed a tall persimmon tree, which stood by the house. Then he held the end of the string in his hand and released the hawk to fly over the house. As it flew into the air he solemnly declared in a loud voice, "The master of this house shall listen to my words, for I have been dispatched by the Heavenly King. Today you rejected a proposal of marriage, and now you shall be punished for your arrogance. I shall give you one day to reconsider your decision. I advise you to accept the toad's proposal, for if you do not, you, your brothers, and your children shall be utterly destroyed."

The people in the house were startled by this nocturnal proclamation from the sky, and they opened the windows to see what was going on. When they looked up into the sky they saw a dim light hovering overhead. The master of the house went out into the garden and knelt humbly on the ground looking up into the sky. Then the toad let go of the string he held in his hand, and the hawk soared skywards with the lantern still tied to its foot. The man was now convinced that what he had heard was spoken by a messenger from Heaven, and at once resolved to consent to the toad's marriage to one of his daughters.

## Reading Comprehension #14019

*Next morning the rich man went and called on the toad's foster-parents, and apologized humbly for his discourteous refusal on the previous day. He said now that he would gladly accept the toad as his son-in-law. Then he returned home and asked his eldest daughter to marry the toad, but she rushed from the room in fury and humiliation. Then he called his second daughter, and suggested that she be the toad's wife, but she too rushed from the room without a word. So he called his youngest daughter and explained to her that if she refused she would place the whole family in a most difficult position indeed, so stern had been the warning from Heaven. But the youngest daughter agreed to marry the toad without the slightest hesitation.*

*The wedding took place on the following day, and a great crowd of guests attended consumed by curiosity at such an unusual happening. That night, when they retired, the toad asked his bride to bring him a pair of scissors. She went and got a pair, and then he asked her to cut the skin off his back. This strange request startled her greatly, but he insisted that she do so without delay, and so she made a long cut in his back. Then, low and behold, there stepped forth from the skin a handsome young man.*

*In the morning the bridegroom put on his toad skin again, so that nobody noticed any difference. Her two sisters sneered contemptuously at the bride with her repulsive husband, but she took no notice of them. At noon all the men of the household went out on horseback with bows and arrows to hunt. The toad accompanied them on foot and unarmed. But the party had no success in the hunt and had to return empty-handed. The bridegroom stripped off his toad skin and became a man when they had gone, and waved his hand in the air. Then a white haired old man appeared and he bade him bring one hundred deer. When the deer came he drove them homeward, once more wearing his toad skin. Everyone was most surprised to see all the deer, and then he suddenly stripped off the toad skin and revealed himself as a handsome young man, at which their astonishment knew no bounds. Then he released all the deer and rose up to Heaven, carrying his bride on his back and his parents on his arms.*

*From Folk Tales from Korea collected and translated by Zong In-Sob London Routledge & Kegan Paul Ltd., 1952, pp. 175-78.*

**Practice Exercise 22 C**

*Tales*

C. Answer the questions.

1. What characteristics of a tale are present in this story?

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2. Place these quotations in the correct sequence.

\_\_\_\_\_ "I'm very sorry that you have been treated like that, Mother,"

\_\_\_\_\_ Then, low and behold, there stepped forth from the skin a handsome young man.

\_\_\_\_\_ "I advise you to accept the toad's proposal, for if you do not, you, your brothers, and your children shall be utterly destroyed."

\_\_\_\_\_ "Do not be angry, for one day I shall bring you good fortune. I wish to live in your house, so please let me go with you."

\_\_\_\_\_ "It is utterly absurd," they said

\_\_\_\_\_ Then he released all the deer and rose up to Heaven, carrying his bride on his back and his parents on his arms.

3. What is the theme or moral of this story?

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**Practice Exercise 23 A, B**

*Tall Tales*

A. Use the reading process to guide you in your reading of the following story.

- Skim the title and story quickly
- Predict what the story is about
- Think of questions to answer while you read
- Read the story once without stopping
- Read the story again carefully
- Answer the questions

B. Write a complete definition for each word as it is used in the story.

1. colic

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2. commotion

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3. victuals

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4. prodigious

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5. mischief

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## The Young Paul

by Wallace Wadsworth

*Many, many years have passed since Paul Bunyan was born. In fact, so long ago has it been that no one knows just who his parents were, though it is said that his father was a fine, upstanding man of great strength and his mother a sturdy lass from one of the French-Canadian provinces. Whoever they were, they must have been very proud of their lusty son, as well they might be. His birthplace is said to have been somewhere along the northern coast of Maine, and the time was long ago, before the Revolutionary War, while England still ruled the Thirteen Colonies.*

*Paul grew so fast that he was the wonder of people for miles around. When he was only a few weeks old his mother had to fix his bed out of doors, for he had grown so big by that time that he could no longer be taken through the door of his parents' cabin. The out-of-doors air seemed to agree with him, however, and he continued to thrive, until one night he got the colic! Being such a big youngster, there was a very great deal of him to have the colic, as one may well believe, and his pain must have been fully in keeping with his size from the tremendous commotion which he stirred up. All the neighbours for miles around thought they were hearing the roar of a terrific storm and hid in their cellars until it should blow over.*

*Perhaps his breaking into his father's smoke-house that day had something to do with his illness. The family's winter supply of smoked hams, bacon and salt pork were stored there, but when Paul was discovered, sound asleep in the centre of the smokehouse floor, there was not a single ham or side of bacon left in sight. The grease on his hands and face showed pretty surely what had happened to the missing victuals, and as the youngster had only one tooth at the time, he most likely did not give the rich meats the thorough chewing they should have had. At any rate, whether this was the cause of his colic or not, he rolled and kicked and tossed about that night at a prodigious rate, and when morning came it was found that he had destroyed four square miles of standing timber.*

*As all the trees were fine large ones, which his father had been intending to cut and sell to the sawmill, as soon as it should be built nearby, he was very angry over the destruction his infant son had caused. "We'll have to do something with that youngster," he said to the child's mother. "Unless we can manage to keep him out of further mischief in another two or three weeks there won't be a standing tree left in all Maine," and then remembering the disappearance of his hams and bacon the day before, he added, "No, nor a piece of smoked meat, either."*

*"If we only had a cradle for him," his mother suggested, "then we could tie him in and rock him when he gets restless. Perhaps that would keep him quiet."*

*"A cradle, eh!" and Paul's father roared with laughter at the very thought. "A cradle! Where could we ever get a cradle for a child that has outgrown a house?"*

*"Well, I've been thinking about a cradle for him," retorted the mother, "and it seems to me that perhaps you could build him something like a boat. Then we could tie him in it and anchor it out in the water in a safe place, and as long as he is there we needn't worry about his getting into any more mischief"*

*"Not a bad idea, at all!" her husband exclaimed, really very much pleased with the suggestion. So he called in all of his neighbours to help him cut the timbers and haul them from the forest to the biggest shipyard in Eastport. There, all the shipbuilders and carpenters along the coast worked as hard and as fast as ever they could at building the cradle, and before very long the great log affair was launched from the ways and anchored out in the sea. Everyone was very*

## Reading Comprehension #14019

*glad when the task was finished, for all were fearful that some night Paul might get an even worse attack than the one he had suffered before and roll about until he destroyed everything in that part of the country.*

*So there was the big log cradle at last, floating near the shore like a big ship at anchor. Great crowds of people came to see it, for it was the biggest craft that was ever built in Maine, and everyone willingly gave a hand toward getting Paul safely put to bed in it. Even with so many working together at the task, it took them three full days to get the husky youngster into his new cradle and tied there with cables so that he could not fall out. It was very fortunate for everyone that the child was feeling well and in the best of humour, for otherwise he might have resented all the tugging and pulling which he had to undergo, and no one knows what fearful calamity might then have resulted.*

*At last in the place fixed for him, Paul began to like the sensation of being rocked by the waves so well that he gave no further trouble for a while, and his parents congratulated themselves upon the excellent arrangement they had made for their lusty son. His father hired a crew of men who were kept busy all the time rowing back and forth between the cradle and the shore, carrying boatloads of food to him, and altogether Paul was as well satisfied as any child could expect to be.*

*All went well until one night he got the colic again. It is not known what caused his illness this time, but anyway, he rolled and tossed about so much that he stirred up the sea at a fearful rate. In fact, such a shaking-up did his rolling cradle give the waters that a seventy-foot tide drove up the Bay of Fundy, doing a tremendous lot of damage and even washing away several towns and villages. So high were the waves that they came near to rolling clear across the land and making an island of Nova Scotia!*

*As a result of this disturbance, the waters have never entirely gone down, and even yet, the tide, which flows twice each day in the Bay of Fundy is seventy feet high. Anyone, by looking at a map of that part of the Atlantic coast, can easily find where Maine joins Canada and locate the Bay of Fundy, which will prove the truth of the story and show what a mighty child Paul really was.*

*Naturally, the people who had their homes and property washed away by the great waves which Paul had made, were very angry, and they sent a committee to the Governor to make a complaint.*

*"Ahem!" said the Governor, who considered himself a very wise man. "More trouble, eh?" and he frowned gloomily at them. "As if I don't already have enough to worry me, what with the reports I have to make on this and that, the Indians I must guard against, and all the very important details I have to take care of in getting ready for the ball I am giving to-morrow night. Hrr-r-rump! Tides, is it? And tides are a part of the sea, aren't they? So I'll just pass this little matter over to the Admiral, who is well trained in all sea affairs. Doubtless he'll be able to stop the tides, if any man can, and locate whatever is causing them."*

*So it happened, that very same day, that the Admiral got his fleet together, frigates, and brigantines, and sloops-of-war, and set sail to see what it was all about. He was in a very ill humour, indeed, being greatly displeased at having to miss the Governor's ball, and he swore to be revenged on whatever or whoever was causing him all this trouble.*

*He cruised about in his flagship, his fleet following him, but never a cause of the disturbance could he find. And the longer he searched, the angrier he became. At last one of the lookouts up in the rigging of the flagship called down that he saw something suspicious off the starboard bow.*

Reading Comprehension #14019

"What is it?" roared the Admiral.

"I don't know, sir," called back the lookout. "It looks like a big log barge or scow of some kind, Sir. She's anchored near shore, Sir, and she's rolling about and kicking up some big waves in a mighty strange manner, Sir."

The Admiral ordered the fleet to proceed in the direction the lookout had given, and he seized his spyglass to take a look for himself

"Why, it's a baby!" he shouted in surprise when the fleet had come nearer. "And sound asleep, too!" he muttered to himself a moment or two later. His mouth dropped open in amazement, for such a baby surely had never been seen by man before. He almost refused to believe his own eyes.

But though Paul was sleeping rather quietly —for him — he still was rocking his cradle about a little. As the ships drew quite near, the Admiral could feel beneath him the force of the waves, which the child was stirring up as he moved about in his slumber.

He suddenly began to get quite angry again. The idea! Sending him traipsing off over the sea and making him miss the Governor's ball just to find a sleeping youngster! "Asleep, is he?" he growled. "I'll soon wake him up, all right!" and he called his chief gunner to him. "Fire a broadside over his head," he ordered. "We'll see if that won't make him open his eyes."

The gunners took their places, trained their pieces, and at the word, the thirty-six cannon of the frigate's broadside roared out. But Paul was in a very sound slumber, indeed, and the tremendous crash of sound did not so much as make him flutter an eyelid.

"Give him a broadside from all the fleet!" screeched the Admiral, purple with rage at the very thought of such an absurdity. So the guns of all the fleet bellowed and thundered, sending their solid shot whistling close over the floating cradle, and frightening the people on shore so badly that they all ran into the woods to hide, thinking that an enemy was attacking them.

Roar after roar burst from the guns, as broadside followed broadside, but it was almost seven hours before the noise so much as made Paul stir. Then, calmly, just as the sound of the last broadside died out, he sat up, rubbed his eyes with chubby fists and yawned.

The red-faced Admiral, in a greater rage than ever by this time, gave the command to fire again. With a great flare of sound, the cannon-balls again whistled over Paul's head. Being asleep, he hadn't noticed them before, and now hearing the terrific crash of the guns for the first time he was startled almost out of his wits. Making a great lunge and snapping the heavy cables, which held him in his cradle, he leaped out towards shore, stirring up the water mightily in doing so.

The Admiral's red face suddenly paled with terror. "Bout ship! Port your helm!" he screamed frantically, and then had no time for further orders. The great waves which Paul had stirred up as he broke loose from his cradle was a manner fearful to behold. When at last the waters quieted down somewhat, it was found that eight ships had been sunk and much damage wrought upon those that remained.

The Admiral, however, seized the floating cradle as spoils of war and towed it back to port, where eight more warships were built from it. Thus the British Navy was just as well off as it was before, but the Admiral never did forgive Paul for making him miss the Governor's ball.



Reading Comprehension #14019

*As for Paul, he reached the shore in safety and vanished into the woods. There he was found by his parents, who had fled thither into hiding as soon as the guns had first begun to roar. Being fearful of punishment for the trouble their infant son had caused, they did not go back to their former home, but slipped quietly away without a word to anyone.*

*"This boy of ours needs a lot of room," Paul's father growled. "He was never made to live among neighbours."*

*"Yes," agreed the child's mother. "We'll find a place back in the wilderness, far away from anyone else, where he can play and romp about as he pleases without endangering the lives or property of others." So through the woods they went, just where has never been learned, and deep in virgin country they picked the spot for their new home.*

**Practice Exercise 23 C**

*Tall Tales*

C. Answer the questions.

1. What characteristics of a tall tale are present in this story?

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2. Who was Paul's Father? \_\_\_\_\_
3. Who was Paul's Mother? \_\_\_\_\_
4. Where was Paul born? \_\_\_\_\_
5. When did Paul start sleeping outside? \_\_\_\_\_
6. Where was Paul's cradle built? \_\_\_\_\_
7. Who shot cannon balls at Paul? \_\_\_\_\_
8. What body of water was affected by Paul's rocking? \_\_\_\_\_
9. Which province almost became an island as a result of Paul's rocking?  
\_\_\_\_\_
10. How many warships were made from Paul's cradle? \_\_\_\_\_

## **Modern Short Story**

Modern short stories deal with ordinary people. The plots and settings may vary considerably. Some stories are set in the past or the present, while others are set in the future. The length of this form of literature still limits the plot and the setting. Modern writers tend to focus more on character development. Often readers are left to infer from clues the qualities of the characters or setting. Many short stories offer a moral lesson or philosophical statement about humans and the human experience.

**Practice Exercise 24 A, B**

*Modern Short Story*

A. Use the reading process to guide you in your reading of the following story.

B. Write a complete definition for each word as it is used in the story.

1. morass

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2. contemporary

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3. reticent

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4. adroitly

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5. mused

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6. tentative

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7. chortle

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## Excerpt from The Magic Christian

Terry Southern

Out of the grey granite morass of Wall Street rises one building like a heron of fire, soaring up in blue-white astonishment — Number 18 Wall — a rocket of glass and blinding copper. It is the Grand Investment Building, perhaps the most contemporary business structure in our country, known in circles of high finance simply as Grand's.

Offices of Grand's are occupied by companies, which deal in mutual funds — giant and fantastic corporations whose policies define the shape of nations.

August Guy Grand himself was a billionaire. He had 180 million cash deposit in New York banks, and this ready capital was, of course, a part of his gross holdings.

In the beginning, Grand's associates, wealthy men themselves, saw nothing extraordinary about him, a reticent man of simple tastes, they thought, a man who had inherited most of his money and had preserved it through large safe investments in steel, rubber, and oil. What his associates managed to see in Grand was usually a reflection of their own dullness: a club member, a dinner guest, a possibility, a threat — a man whose holdings represented a prospect and a danger. But this was to do injustice to Grand's private life, because his private life was atypical. For one thing, he was the last of the big spenders; and for another, he had a very unusual attitude towards people — he spent about ten million a year in, as he expressed it himself "making it hot for them.

At fifty-three, Grand had a thick trunk and a large balding bullet-head; his face was quite pink, so that in certain half-lights he looked like a fat radish man - though not displeasingly so, for he always sported well-cut clothes and, near the throat, a diamond the size of a nickel... a diamond now that caught the late afternoon sun in a soft spangle of burning colour when Guy stepped through the soundless doors of Grand's and into the blue haze of the almost empty street, past the huge doorman appearing larger than life in gigantic livery, he who touched his cap with quick but easy reverence.

"Cab, Mr. Grand?"

"Thank you no, Jason," said Guy, "I have the car today." And with a pleasant smile for the man, he turned adroitly on his heel, north towards Worth Street.

Guy Grand's gait was brisk indeed — small sharp steps, rising on the toes. It was the gait of a man who appears to be snapping his fingers as he walks.

Half a block on he reached the car, though he seemed to have a momentary difficulty in recognizing it; beneath the windshield wiper laid a big parking ticket which Grand slowly withdrew, regarding it curiously.

"Looks like you've got a ticket, bub!" said a voice somewhere behind him.

Out of the corner of his eye Grand perceived the man, in a dark summer suit, leaning idly against the side of the building nearest the car. There was something terse and smug in the tone of his remark, a sort of nasal piousness.

"Yes, so it seems," mused Grand, without looking up, continuing to study the ticket in his hand.

"How much will you eat it for?" he asked then, raising a piercing smile at the man.

"How's that, mister?" demanded the latter with a nasty frown, pushing himself forward a bit from the building.

Grand cleared his throat and slowly took out his wallet — a long slender wallet of such fine leather it would have been limp as silk had it not been so chock-full of thousands.

"I asked what would you take to eat it? You know..." Wide-eyed, he made a great chewing motion with his mouth holding the ticket up near it.

The man, glaring, took a tentative step forward.

"Say, I don't get you, mister!"

"Well," drawled Grand, chuckling down at his fat wallet, browsing about in it, "simple enough really..." And he took out a few thousand. "I have this ticket, as you know, and I was just wondering if you would care to eat it for, say" — a quick glance to ascertain — "six thousand dollars?"

"What do you mean, eat it?" demanded the dark-suited man in a kind of a snarl. "Say, what're you anyway, bub, a wise-guy?"

"Wise-guy or grand guy — call me anything you like., as long as you don't call me 'late-for-chow!' Eh? Ho- ho." Grand rounded it off with a jolly chortle, but was quick to add unsmiling, "How 'bout it, pal — got a taste for the easy green?"

The man, who now appeared to be openly angry, took another step forward.

"Listen, mister..." he began in a threatening tone, half-clenching his fists.

"I think I should warn you," said Grand quietly, raising one hand to his breast, "that I am armed."

"Huh?" The man seemed momentarily dumfounded, staring down in dull rage at the six bills in Grand 's hand; then he partially recovered, and cocking his head to one side, regarded Grand narrowly in an attempt at shrewd skepticism, still heavily flavoured with indignation.

"Just who do you think you are, Mister! Just what is your game?"

"Grand's the name, easy-green's the game," said Guy with a twinkle.

"Play along?" He brusquely flicked the corners of the six crisp bills, and they crackled with a brittle, compelling sound.

"Listen..." muttered the man, tight-lipped, flexing his fingers and exhaling several times in angry exasperation, "...are you trying...are you trying to tell ME that you'll give me six thousand dollars... to... to EAT that?" — he pointed stiffly at the ticket in Guy's hand — "to eat that TICKET?!?"

"That about the size of it," said Grand; he glanced at his watch. "It's what you might call a 'limited offer' — expiring in, let's say, one minute."

"Listen, mister," said the man between clenched teeth, "if this is a gag, so help me..." He shook his head to show how serious he was.

"No threats," Guy cautioned, "or I'll shoot you in the temple—well, what say? Forty-eight seconds remaining?" "Let's see that goddamn money!" exclaimed the man, quite beside himself now, grabbing at the bills.

Grand allowed him to examine them as he continued to regard his watch. "Thirty-nine seconds remaining," he announced solemnly. "Shall I start the big count down?"

Without waiting for the latter's reply, he stepped back and, cupping his hands like a megaphone, began dramatically intoning, "Twenty-eight... twenty-seven . . . twenty-six..." while the man made several wildly gesticulated and incoherent remarks before seizing the ticket, ripping off a quarter of it with his teeth and beginning to chew, eyes blazing.

"Stout fellow!" cried Grand warmly, breaking off the count down to step forward and give the chap a hearty clap on the shoulder and hand him the six thousand.

"You needn't actually eat the ticket," he explained. "I was just curious to see if you had your price." He gave a wink and a tolerant chuckle. "Most of us have, I suppose. Eh? Ho-ho."

And with a grand wave of his hand, he stepped inside his car and sped away, leaving the man in the dark summer suit standing on the sidewalk staring after him, fairly agog.

**Practice Exercise 24 C**

*Modern Short Story*

C. Answer the questions.

1. What part of speech is used in the following quotation?

*"Out of the grey granite morass of Wall Street rises one building like a heron of fire."*

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2. What characteristics of a short story are present in this story?

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3. Write a paragraph describing August Guy Grand's personality and appearance. Include specific examples from the story.

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**Practice Exercise 24 C - continued**

*Modern Short Story*

4. What was Grand's "attitude" toward people? Include specific examples in your answers.

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## **Science fiction**

Science fiction has many of the qualities of non-science fiction short stories. Its distinguishing quality is its setting. Characters may be humans, androids, robots, or other characters. The events of the story take place somewhere in the future. The plot may be influenced not only by the time the story takes place, but also, it may be influenced by the place. Many science fiction stories occur in outer space or on other planets. The writer provide sufficient detail about the characters, the time, and the location of the action to make the reader see and believe the setting as being possible.

**Practice Exercise 26 A, B**

*Science Fiction*

A. Use the reading process to guide you in your reading of the following story.

B. Write a complete definition for each word as it is used in the story.

1. fluttered

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2. dynamos

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3. temperately

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4. delicatessen

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5. succulent

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6. disconsolately

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7. pallid

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## December 2005 The Silent Towns

by Ray Bradbury

*There was a little white silent town on the edge of the dead Martian sea. The town was empty. No one moved in it. Lonely lights burned in the stores all day. The shop doors were wide, as if people had run off without using their keys. Magazines brought from Earth on the silver rocket a month before, fluttered untouched, burning brown, on wire racks fronting the silent drugstores. The town was dead. Its beds were empty and cold. The only sound was the power hum of electric lines and dynamos, still alive, all by themselves. Water ran in forgotten bathtubs, poured out into living rooms, onto porches, and down through little garden plots to feed neglected flowers. In the dark theatres, gum under the many seats began to harden with tooth impressions still in it.*

*Across town was a rocket port. You could still smell the hard, scorched smell where the last rocket blasted off when it went back to Earth. If you dropped a dime in the telescope and pointed it at Earth, perhaps you could see the big war happening there. Perhaps you could see New York explode. Maybe London could be seen, covered with a new kind of fog. Perhaps then it might be understood why this small Martian town is abandoned. How quick was the evacuation? Walk in any store, bang the NO SALE key. Cash drawers jump out, all bright and jingly with coins. That war on Earth must be very bad...*

*Along the empty avenues of this town now, whistling softly, kicking a tin can ahead of him in deepest concentration, came a tall, thin man. His eyes glowed with a dark, quiet look of loneliness. He moved his bony hands in his pockets, which were tinkling with new dimes. Occasionally he tossed a dime to the ground. He laughed temperately doing this, and walked on, sprinkling bright dimes everywhere.*

*His name was Walter Gripp. He had a placer mine and remote shack far up in the blue Martian hills and he walked to town once every two weeks to see if he could marry a quiet and intelligent woman. Over the years he had always returned to his shack, alone and disappointed. A week ago, arriving in town, he had found it this way.*

*That day he had been so surprised that he rushed to a delicatessen, flung wide a case, and ordered a triple-decker beef sandwich.*

*"Coming up!" he cried, a towel on his arm.*

*He flourished meats and bread baked the day before, dusted a table, invited himself to sit, and ate until he had to go find a soda fountain, where he ordered a bicarbonate. The druggist, being one Walter Gripp, was astoundingly polite and fizzed one right up for him.*

*He stuffed his jeans with money, all he could find. He loaded a boy's wagon with ten-dollar bills and ran lickety-split through town. Reaching the suburbs, he suddenly realized how shamefully silly he was. He didn't need money. He rode the ten-dollar bills back to where he'd found them, counted a dollar from his own wallet to pay for the sandwiches, dropped it in the delicatessen till, and added a quarter tip.*

*That night he enjoyed a hot Turkish bath, a succulent filet carpeted with delicate mushrooms, imported dry sherry, and strawberries in wine. He fitted himself for a new blue flannel suit, and a rich grey Homburg, which balanced oddly atop his gaunt head. He slid money into a juke box, which played "That Old Gang of Mine." He dropped nickels in twenty boxes all over the town. The lonely streets and the night were full of the sad music of "That Old Gang of Mine" as he walked, tall and thin and alone, his new shoes clumping softly, his cold hands in his pockets.*

*But that was a week past. He slept in a good house on Mars Avenue, rose mornings at nine, bathed, and idled to town for ham and eggs. No morning passed that he didn't freeze a ton of meats, vegetables, and lemon cream pies, enough to last ten years, until the rockets came back from Earth, if they ever came.*

*Now, tonight, he drifted up and down, seeing the wax women in every colourful shop window, pink and beautiful. For the first time he knew how dead the town was. He drew a glass of beer and sobbed gently.*

*"Why," he said, "I'm all alone."*

*He entered the Elite Theatre to show himself a film, to distract his mind from his isolation. The*

Reading Comprehension #14019

*theatre was hollow, empty, like a tomb with phantoms crawling grey and black on the vast screen. Shivering, he hurried from the haunted place.*

*Having decided to return home, he was striking down the middle of a side street, almost running, when he heard the phone.*

*He listened.*

*"Phone ringing in someone's house."*

*He proceeded briskly.*

*"Someone should answer that phone," he mused.*

*He sat on a curb to pick a rock from his shoe, idly.*

*"Someone!" he screamed, leaping. "Me! Good lord, what's wrong with me!" he shrieked. He whirled. Which house? That one!*

*He raced over the lawn, up the steps, into the house, down a dark hall.*

*He yanked up the receiver.*

*"Hello!" he cried*

*Buzzzzzzzzzz.*

*"Hello, hello!"*

*They had hung up.*

*"Hello!" he shouted, and banged the phone. "You stupid idiot!" he cried to himself. "Sitting on that curb, you fool! Oh, you damned and awful fool!" He squeezed the phone. "Come on, ring again! Come on!"*

*He had never thought there might be others left on Mars. In the entire week he had seen no one. He had figured that all other towns were as empty as this one.*

*Now, staring at this terrible little black phone, he trembled. Interlocking dial systems connected every town on Mars. From which of thirty cities had the call come?*

*He didn't know.*

*He waited. He wandered to the strange kitchen, thawed some iced huckleberries, and ate them disconsolately. "There wasn't anyone on the other end of that call," he murmured. "Maybe a pole blew down somewhere and the phone rang by itself."*

*But hadn't he heard a click, which meant someone had hung up far away?*

*He stood in the hall the rest of the night. "Not because of the phone," he told himself. "I just haven't anything else to do."*

*He listened to his watch tick.*

*"She won't phone back," he said. "She won't ever call a number that didn't answer. She's probably dialing other houses in town right now! And here I sit — Wait a minute!" He laughed.*

*"Why do I keep saying 'she'?"*

*He walked out of the house and stood in the centre of the early, dim morning street.*

*He listened. Not a sound. No birds. No cars. Only his heart beating. Beat and pause and beat again. His face ached with strain. The wind blew gently, oh so gently, flapping his coat.*

*"Sh," he whispered. "Listen."*

*He swayed in a slow circle, turning his head from one silent house to another.*

*She'll phone more and more numbers, he thought. It must be a woman. Why? Only a woman would call and call. A man wouldn't. A man's independent. Did I phone anyone? No! Never thought of it. It must be a woman. It has to be, by God!*

*Listen.*

*Far away, under the stars, a phone rang.*

*He ran. He stopped to listen. The ringing, soft. He ran a few more steps. Louder. He raced down an alley. Louder still! He passed six houses, six more. Much louder! He chose a house and its door was locked.*

*The phone rang inside.*

*"Damn you!" He jerked the doorknob.*

*The phone screamed.*

*He heaved a porch chair through the parlour window, leaped in after it.*

*Before he even touched the phone, it was silent.*

*He stalked through the house then and broke mirrors, tore down drapes, and kicked in the kitchen stove.*

*Finally, exhausted, he picked up the thin directory, which listed every phone on Mars. Fifty*

Reading Comprehension #14019

thousand names.

He started with number one.

Amelia Ames. He dialed her number in New Chicago, one hundred miles over the Dead Sea.

No answer.

Number two lived in New York, five thousand miles across the blue mountains.

No answer.

He called three, four, five, six, seven, eight, his fingers jerking, unable to grip the receiver.

A woman voice answered, "Hello?"

Walter cried back at her, "Hello, oh lord, hello!"

"This is a recording," recited the woman's voice.

"Miss Helen Arasumian is not home. Will you leave a message on the wire spool so she may call you when she returns? Hello? This is a recording. Miss Arasumian is not home. Will you leave a message-?"

He hung up.

He sat with his mouth twitching.

On second thought he redialed that number.

"When Miss Helen Arasumian comes home," he said, "tell her to go to hell."

He phoned Mars Junction, New Boston, Arcadia, and Roosevelt City exchanges, theorizing that they would be logical places for persons to dial from, after that he contacted local city halls and other public institutions in each town. He phoned the best hotels. Leave it to a woman to put herself up in luxury.

Suddenly he stopped, clapped his hands sharply together, and laughed. Of course! He checked the directory and dialed a long-distance call through to the biggest beauty parlour in New Texas City. If ever there were a place where a woman would putter around, patting mudpacks on her face and sitting under a drier, it would be a velvet-soft, diamond-gem beauty parlour.

The phone rang. Someone at the other end lifted the receiver.

A woman's voice said, "Hello?"

"If this is a recording," announced Walter Gripp, "I'll come over and blow the place up."

"This isn't a record," said the woman's voice. "Hello! Oh, hello, there is someone alive! Where are you?" She gave a delighted scream.

Walter almost collapsed. "You!" He stood up jerkily, eyes wild. "Good lord, what luck, what's your name?"

"Genevieve Selsor!" She wept into the receiver. "Oh, I'm so glad to hear from you, whoever you are!"

"Walter Gripp!"

"Walter, hello, Walter!"

"Hello, Genevieve!"

"Walter. It's such a nice name. Walter, Walter!"

"Thank you."

"Walter, where are you?"

Her voice was so kind and sweet and fine. He held the phone tight to his ear so she could whisper sweetly into it. He felt his feet drift off the floor. His cheeks burned.

"I'm in Marlin Village," he said. "I-"

Buzz.

"Hello?" he said.

Buzz.

He jiggled the hook. Nothing.

Somewhere a wind had blown down a pole. As quickly as she had come, Genevieve Selsor was gone.

He dialled, but the line was dead.

"I know where she is, anyway." He ran out of the house. The sun was rising as he backed a beetle-car from the stranger's garage, filled its back seat with food from the house, and set out at eighty miles an hour down the highway, heading for New Texas City.

A thousand miles, he thought. Genevieve Selsor, sit tight, you'll hear from me!

He honked his horn on every turn out of town.

At sunset, after an impossible day of driving, he pulled to the roadside kicked off his tight shoes,

Reading Comprehension #14019

laid himself out in the seat and slid the grey Homburg over his weary eyes. His breathing became slow and regular. The wind blew and the stars shone gently upon him in the new dusk. The Martian mountains lay all around, millions of years old. Starlight glittered on the spires of a little Martian town, no bigger than a game of chess, in the blue hills.

He lay in the half-place between awake ness and dreams. He whispered. Genevieve, Oh, Genevieve, sweet Genevieve, he sang softly, the years may come, the years may go. But Genevieve, sweet Genevieve... There was a warmth in him. He heard her sweet cool voice sighing. Hello, oh, hello, Walter! This is no record. Where are you, Walter, where are you? He sighed, putting up a hand to touch her in the moonlight. Long dark hair shaking in the wind; beautiful, it was. And her lips like red peppermints. And her cheeks like fresh-cut wet roses. And her body like a clear vaporous mist, while her soft cool sweet voice crooned to him once more the words to the old sad song, Oh, Genevieve, sweet Genevieve, the years may come, the years may go...

He slept.

He reached New Texas City at midnight.

He halted before the Deluxe Beauty Salon, yelling.

He expected her to rush out, all perfume, all laughter.

Nothing happened.

"She's asleep." He walked to the door. "Here I am!" he called. "Hello, Genevieve!"

The town lay in double moonlit silence. Somewhere a wind flapped a canvas awning.

He swung the glass door wide and stepped in.

"Hey!" He laughed uneasily. "Don't hide! I know you 're here!"

He searched every booth.

He found a tiny handkerchief on the floor. It smelled so good he almost lost his balance.

"Genevieve," he said.

He drove the car through the empty streets but saw nothing. "If this is a practical joke ..."

He slowed the car. "Wait a minute. We were cut off Maybe she drove to Marlin Village while I was driving here! She probably took the old Sea Road. We missed each other during the day. How'd she know I'd come get her? I didn't say I would. And she was so afraid when the phone died that she rushed to Marlin Village to find me! And here I am, by God, what a fool I am!"

Giving the horn a blow, he shot out of town.

He drove all night. He thought, What if she isn't in Marlin Village waiting, when I arrive?

He wouldn't think of that. She must be there. And he would run up and hold her and perhaps even kiss her, once, on the lips.

Genevieve, sweet Genevieve, he whistled, stepping it up to one hundred miles an hour.

Marlin Village was quiet at dawn. Yellow lights were still burning in several stores, and a jukebox that had played steadily for one hundred hours finally, with a crackle of electricity, ceased, making the silence complete. The sun warmed the streets and warmed the cold and vacant sky. Walter turned down Main Street, the car lights still on, honking the horn a double toot, six times at one corner, six times at another. He peered at the stores' names. His face was white and tired, and his hands slid off the sweaty steering wheel.

"Genevieve!" he called in the empty street.

The door to a beauty salon opened.

"Genevieve!" He stopped the car.

Genevieve Selsor stood in the open door of the salon as he ran across the street. A box of cream chocolates lay open in her arms. Her fingers, cuddling it, were plump and pallid. Her face, as she stepped into the light, was round and thick, and her eyes were like two immense eggs stuck into a white mess of bread dough. Her legs were as big around as the stumps of trees, and she moved with an ungainly shuffle. Her hair was an indiscriminate shade of brown that had been made and remade, it appeared, as a nest for birds. She had no lips at all and compensated this by stencilling on a large red, greasy mouth that now popped open in delight, now shut in sudden alarm. She had plucked her brows to thin antenna lines.

Walter stopped. His smile dissolved. He stood looking at her.

She dropped her candy box to the sidewalk.

"Are you — Genevieve Selsor?" His ears rang.

"Are you Walter Griff?" she asked.

"Gripp."

"Gripp," she corrected herself

"How do you do?" he said with a restrained voice.

"How do you do?" She shook his hand.

Her fingers were sticky with chocolate.

"Well," said Walter Gripp.

"What?" asked Genevieve Selsor.

"I just said, 'Well,'" said Walter.

"Oh."

It was nine o'clock at night. They had spent the day picnicking, and for supper he had prepared a filet mignon, which she didn't like because it was too rare, so he broiled it some more and it was too much broiled or fried or something. He laughed and said, "We'll see a movie!" She said okay and put her chocolaty fingers on his elbow. But all she wanted to see was a fifty-year-old film of Clark Gable. "Doesn't he just kill you?" She giggled. "Doesn't he kill you, now?" The film ended.

"Run it off again," she commanded.

"Again?" he asked. "Again," she said. And when he returned she snuggled up and put her paws all over him. "You're not quite what I expected, but you're nice," she admitted. "Thanks," he said, swallowing. "Oh, that Gable," she said, and pinched his leg. "Ouch," he said.

After the film they went shopping down the silent streets. She broke a window and put on the brightest dress she could find. Dumping a perfume bottle on her hair, she resembled a drowned sheep dog. "How old are you?" he inquired. "Guess." "Dripping, she led him down the street. "Oh, thirty," he said. "Well," she announced stiffly, "I'm only twenty-seven, so there!"

"Here's another candy store!" she said. "Honest, I've led the life of Reilly since everything exploded. I never liked my folks, they were fools. They left for Earth two months ago. I was supposed to follow in the last rocket, but I stayed on; you know why?"

"Why?"

"Because everyone picked on me. So I stayed where I could throw perfume on myself all day and drink ten thousand malts and eat candy without people saying, 'Oh, that's full of calories!' So here I am!"

"Here you are." Walter shut his eyes.

"It's getting late," she said, looking at him.

"Yes."

"I'm tired," she said.

"Funny. I'm wide awake."

"Oh," she said

"I feel like staying up all night," he said. "Say, there's a good record at Mike's. Come on, I'll play it for you."

"I'm tired," she glanced up at him with sly, bright eyes.

"I'm very alert," he said. "Strange."

"Come back to the beauty shop," she said. "I want to show you something."

She took him in through the glass door and walked him over to a large white box. "When I drove from Texas City," she said, "I brought this with me." She untied the pink ribbon. "I thought: Well here I am, the only lady on Mars, and here is the only man, and, well..." She lifted the lid and folded back crisp layers of whispery pink tissue paper. She gave it a pat. "There."

Walter Gripp stared.

"What is it?" he asked, beginning to tremble.

"Don't you know, silly? It's all lace and all white and all fine and everything."

"No, I don't know what it is."

"It's a wedding dress, silly!"

"Is it?" His voice cracked.

He shut his eyes. Her voice was still soft and cool and sweet, as it had been on the phone. But when he opened his eyes and looked at her...

He backed up. "How nice," he said.

"Isn't it?"

"Genevieve." He glanced at the door.

"Yes?"

Reading Comprehension #14019

*"Good-bye!"*

*And he was out the door and into his car before she could scream.*

*She ran and stood on the curb as he swung the car about.*

*"Walter Griff come back here!" she wailed, flinging up her arms.*

*"Gripp," he corrected her.*

*"Gripp!" she shouted.*

*The car whirled away down the silent street, regardless of her stomping and shrieking. The exhaust from it fluttered the white dress she crumpled in her plump hands, and the stars shone bright, and the car vanished out onto the desert and away into blackness.*

*He drove all night and all day for three nights and days. Once he thought he saw a car following, and he broke into a shivering sweat and took another highway, cutting off across the lonely Martian world, past little dead cities, and he drove and drove for a week and a day, until he had put ten thousand miles between himself and Marlin Village. Then he pulled into a small town named Holtville Springs, where there were some tiny stores he could light up at night and restaurants to sit in, ordering meals. And he's lived there ever since, with two deep freezers packed with food to last him one hundred years, and enough cigars to last ten thousand days, and a good bed with a soft mattress.*

*And when once in a while over the long years the phone rings — he doesn't answer.*



**Practice Exercise 26 C**

*Science Fiction*

C. Answer the questions.

1. What tone is created by the writer's choice of words in the following quotation?

*The theatre was hollow, empty, like a tomb with phantoms crawling grey and black on the vast screen.*

2. How does the writer use dialogue to reveal the personalities of Walter Gripp and Genevieve Selsor? Give specific examples.

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3. Describe the setting for this story.

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## **Novels**

### **What are novels?**

The novel is distinguished from the other forms of narrative literature by its length and by the development of its parts. Like other narratives it has a plot, setting, and characters. Plots tend to be well developed, in fact, a novel may have one or more sub-plots, smaller stories. Each plot or sub-plot has a beginning, a middle, and an ending. Sub-plots may serve to develop the main plot, or they may be used as a distraction from the main plot. The distraction may offer humour to distract from a serious main plot. The events of the plot and sub-plot are developed in a number of places and times.

A novel's setting is greatly expanded compared to the short story. The novel may take place over an extended period of time. The events of the novel may also take place in several places. Each time and place requires that the author add details specific to each time and place. The changes in time and place in a novel may impact the characters and the other events in small or large ways. A more developed setting allows us to get to know the characters better. We also get to see how characters act in different times and places.

Novels tend to have a greater number of characters than other forms of literature. Some characters may be involved in the main plot while other characters may only appear in sub-plots. There may be more than one main character. We get to know the main characters well because the writer shows us most of the characters' qualities, positive and negative. We also get to see changes in the main characters.

### **What types of novels are there?**

There thousands of novels available to read. All novels have the basic parts of a narrative. They may differ in several ways. Some novels are used to entertain and to instruct. These novels have serious themes and offer advice on moral behaviour. Other novels specialize in a specific type of setting or plot. For example, there are historic novels, science fiction novels, mystery novels, Western novels, adventure novels, romance novels, and more.

### **How do I read novels?**

Part of the pre-reading process includes researching information about the author, the author's time period, and the setting of the novel. Some of this information may be included with the novel. You may want to consult a dictionary, encyclopaedia, or the internet to find more information. This part of the pre-reading process will give you the context for the novel.

As part of the reading process you should gather information about the setting of the novel. The setting includes both the time and the place of the novel. Look for changes in the setting. Determine what techniques or literary devices the writer uses to develop a believable setting. Determine to what extent the setting influences the characters and the plot. The setting usually contributes to the development of the mood of the novel.

Look for the overall mood of the novel. Is it happy, sad, cold, violent, passionate?. Determine how the writer creates the mood. Does the writer use dialogue to develop the mood? Is the description of the setting important to establishing the mood? Is there a narrator, and how does the narrator contribute to the mood? Perhaps the narrator uses words or phrases in a humorous way.

## Reading Comprehension #14019

The point of view of the narrator will impact mood development differently. First person point of view may be appropriate to develop intense personal feelings or moods. Third person narration might be used to create a critical or satirical mood. The development of the plot is also an important factor in mood development.

Many novels contain a main plot with several sub-plots. Ask yourself whether the writer uses the sub plots to enhance the main plot or to distract from the main plot. What parts of plot development are emphasized? For example, is there a short or a long conclusion? Is there one conflict, or are there several conflicts? Are the characters introduced early in the plot development, or does the writer slowly reveal the qualities of the characters?

After establishing who are the main characters , and who are the minor characters, you should determine how the writer develops and uses each character. Does the author rely on direct statements about the characters, or does the writer use dialogue and action to infer character qualities? You will also want to read carefully to see how other aspects of the novel, such as the setting, impact the characters. Do the characters change significantly, or do they change only slightly? The amount of change a character undergoes may hint at the theme or themes of the novel.

If a character changes little in attitude and ability, the author may be suggesting that, after a point, humans are not capable of change. This inability to change may lead to the characters' down falls. Where sub plots exist, the author may have included theme also. How do the main themes and the themes from the sub-plots interact? Are the themes related, or are they different? Lastly, do you agree with the theme?

As part of the post-reading process, it is important to evaluate how reading the novel affected you as a reader. Did you enjoy reading the novel? Why or why not? Are there specific events, settings, or characters that stand out? Why? What techniques or literary devices did the writer use to make the event, setting, or character to stand out? Was the novel a challenge to read because of the writer's style and choice of words? Finally, would you read another novel from the same author?

Finding the answers to these questions can be challenging. You may need to reread the novel to answer some questions. When you answer these questions, it is important to be able to offer details or quotes from the novel to support your answers. This may mean using your scanning or skimming skills to find examples. For instance, it is not enough to say that the mood is sombre and hopeless. You need to support the statement with examples such as the description of the setting or the thoughts and feelings of the characters.

**Practice Exercise 27 A, B**

*Modern Short Story*

A. Use the reading process to guide you in your reading of the following story.

B. Write a complete definition for each word as it is used in the story.

1. lay-over

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2. carcass

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3. whittling

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4. irresolutely

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5. impending

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6. convulsed

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7. doom

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## **The Call of the Wild (Excerpt)**

by Jack London

"They told us up above that the bottom was dropping out of the trail and that the best thing for us to do was to lay-over," Hal said in response to Thornton's warning to take no more chances on the rotten ice. "They told us we couldn't make White River, and here we are." This last with a sneering ring of triumph in it.

"And they told you true," John Thornton answered. "The bottom's likely to drop out at any moment. Only fools, with the blind luck of fools, could have made it. I tell you straight, I wouldn't risk my carcass on that ice for all the gold in Alaska."

"That's because you're not a fool, I suppose," said Hal. "All the same, we'll go on to Dawson." He uncoiled his whip. "Get up here, Buck! Hi! Get up there! Mush on!"

Thornton went on whittling. It was idle, he knew, to get between a fool and his folly; while two or three fools, more or less, would not alter the scheme of things.

But the team did not get up at the command. It had long since passed into the stage where blows were required to rouse it. The whip flashed out, here and there, on its merciless errands. John Thornton compressed his lips. Solleks was the first to crawl to his feet. Teek followed. Joe came next, yelping with pain. Pike made painful efforts. Twice he fell over, when half up, and on the third attempt managed to rise. Buck made no effort. He lay quietly where he had fallen. The lash bit into him again and again, but he neither whined nor struggled. Several times Thornton started, as though to speak, but changed his mind. A moisture came into his eyes, and, as the whipping continued, he arose and walked irresolutely up and down.

This was the first time Buck had failed, in itself a sufficient reason to drive Hal into a rage. He exchanged the whip for the customary club. Buck refused to move under the rain of heavier blows, which now fell upon him. Like his mates, he was barely able to get up, but, unlike them, he had made up his mind not to get up. He had a vague feeling of impending doom. This had been strong upon him when he pulled into the bank, and it had not departed from him. What of the thin and rotten ice he had felt under his feet all day; it seemed that he sensed disaster close at hand, out there ahead on the ice where his master was trying to drive him. He refused to stir. So greatly had he suffered, and so far gone was he, that the blows did not hurt much. And as they continued to fall upon him, the spark of life within flickered and went down. It was nearly out. He felt strangely numb. As though from a great distance, he was aware that he was being beaten. The last sensations of pain left him. He no longer felt anything, though very faintly he could hear the impact of the club upon his body. But it was no longer his body; it seemed so far away.

And then, suddenly, without warning, uttering a cry that was inarticulate and more like the cry of an animal, John Thornton sprang upon the man who wielded his club. Hal was hurled backward, as though struck by a falling tree. Mercedes screamed. Charles looked on wistfully, wiped his watery eyes, but did not get up because of his stiffness.

John Thornton stood over Buck, struggling to control himself too convulsed with rage to speak.

"If you strike that dog again, I'll kill you," he at last managed to say in a choking voice.

**Practice Exercise 27 C**

*Novel*

C. Answer the questions.

1. What point-of-view is used to tell this story?

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2. Name and give examples for each type of conflict found in the story.

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3. Write a paragraph about what you expect will happen next. Explain why.

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## **Non Fiction**

### **What is non-fiction?**

Non-fiction includes essays, biographies, autobiographies, diaries, and journals. Occasionally, fiction writers will use one of these forms to create fictional stories. The main purpose of these forms of writing is to present facts. Authors may have additional reasons for writing non-fiction.

Essays are used to explore a range of topics. Essay topics range from explaining complex relationships between facts, to encouraging discussion about controversial topics. Biographies and auto-biographies, especially modern forms, focus on revealing the thoughts, feelings, and actions of a person. Diaries keep records of the personal thoughts, feelings, or observations of one person. Journals, like diaries, record events or observations on a regular basis, often daily.

Many forms of non-fiction require research or thought on the part of the writer. This research is found in these types of literature in the form of quotes, references, or bibliographies. Writers use a variety of styles. Some writers use a concise, direct style, while others use longer, less formal style.

### **What types of non-fiction are there?**

#### **Biography and Autobiography**

Biographies and autobiographies are the stories about individuals and their experiences. Biography writers choose a person, complete research, and write about the person. Autobiographies, however, are written by the person being described. Modern biographies tend to focus on trying to understand the person's motivations and to understand their "inner thoughts".

Biographies and auto biographies are written about many famous people. They are also written about ordinary people. Some biographies and autobiographies focus on specific events or personality traits. This type of writing is often seen in "Hollywood biographies" of famous people. Often these are written quickly and are sold quickly. The best literature presents a well balanced account of a person's personalities and abilities. "Good" biographies are recognized by their balanced approach and evidence of comprehensive research. Evidence of research include a number of quotes from a variety of sources as well as a bibliography outlining the written sources used.

### **How to read biographies and autobiographies**

When reading biographies and autobiographies, it is important to read critically. You will need to distinguish fact from opinion. You will also need to evaluate the evidences and the sources. Are the sources reliable? How well do the sources know the person being described? How much access did the biographer have with the person being described? Lastly, is the writer's style appropriate?

Some biographers present every detail about a person while others provide only as much detail as needed to support the statement. A balanced style of including positive and negative qualities of a person is preferred to a slanted or a biased account of a person. Finally, does the writer use facts, quotes, anecdotes, and other research effectively?

**Practice Exercise 28 A, B**

***Biographies and Autobiographies***

A. Use the reading process to guide you in your reading of the following story.

B. Write a complete definition for each word as it is used in the story.

1. apocalyptic

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2. missionary

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3. retrospect

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4. radiant

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5. accouterments

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6. siege

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7. impasse

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## **Some Dreamers of the Golden Dream (Excerpt)**

### **Lucille Maria Maxwell Miller**

by Joan Didion

*Of course she came from somewhere else, came off the prairie in search of something she had seen in a movie or heard on the radio, for this is a Southern California story. She was born on January 17, 1930, in Winnipeg, Manitoba, the only child of Gordon and Lily Maxwell, both school teachers and both dedicated to the Seventh-Day Adventist Church, whose members observe the Sabbath on Saturday, believe in an apocalyptic Second Coming, have a strong missionary tendency, and, if they are strict, do not smoke, drink, eat meat, use makeup, or wear jewellery, including wedding rings. By the time Lucille Maxwell enrolled at Walla Walla College in College Place, Washington, the Adventist school where her parents then taught, she was an eighteen-year-old possessed of unremarkable good looks and remarkable high spirits. "Lucille wanted to see the world," her father would say in retrospect, "and I guess she found it."*

*The high spirits did not seem to lend themselves to an extended course of study at Walla Walla College, and in the spring of 1949 Lucille Maxwell met and married Gordon ("Cork ") Miller, a twenty-four-year-old graduate of Walla Walla and of the University of Oregon dental school, then stationed at Fort Lewis as a medical officer. "Maybe you could say it was love at first sight," Mr. Maxwell recalls. "Before they were ever formally introduced, he sent Lucille a dozen and a half roses with a card that said even if she didn't come out on a date with him, he hoped she'd find the roses pretty anyway." The Maxwells remember their daughter as a radiant bride.*

*Unhappy marriages so resemble one another that we do not need to know too much about the course of this one. There may or may not have been trouble on Guam, where Cork and Lucille Miller lived while he finished his Army duty. There may or may not have been problems in the small Oregon town where he first set up private practice. There appears to have been some disappointment about their move to California. Cork Miller had told friends that he wanted to become a doctor, that he was unhappy as a dentist and planned to enter the Seventh-Day Adventist College of Medical Evangelists at Loma Linda, a few miles south of San Bernardino County, and the family settled there, in a modest house on the kind of street where there are always tricycles and revolving credit and dreams about bigger houses, better streets. That was 1957. By the summer of 1964 they had achieved the bigger house on the better street and the familiar accouterments of a family on its way up: the \$30,000 a year, the three children for the Christmas card, the picture window, the family room, the newspaper photographs that showed "Mrs. Gordon Miller, Ontario Heart Fund Chairman..." They were paying the familiar price for it. And they had reached the familiar season of divorce.*

*It might have been anyone's bad summer, anyone's siege of heat and nerves and migraine and money worries, but this one began particularly early and particularly badly. On April 24 an old friend, Elaine Hayton, died suddenly, Lucille Miler had seen her only the night before. During the month of May, Cork Miller was hospitalized briefly with a bleeding ulcer, and his usual reserve deepened into depression. He told his accountant that he was "sick of looking at open mouths," and threatened suicide. By July 8, the conventional tensions of love and money had reached the conventional impasse in the new house on the acre lot at 8488 Bella Vista, and Lucille Miller filed for divorce. They saw a marriage counsellor. They talked about a fourth child. It seemed that the marriage had reached the traditional truce, the point at which so many resign themselves to cutting both their losses and their hopes.*

**Practice Exercise 28 C**

***Biographies and Autobiographies***

C. Answer the questions.

1. Place these events in the correct sequence.
  - a. \_\_\_ Lucille Maxwell met and married Gordon ("Cork") Miller
  - b. \_\_\_ On April 24 an old friend, Elaine Hayton, died suddenly; Lucille Miler had seen her only the night before.
  - c. \_\_\_ There may or may not have been trouble on Guam, where Cork and Lucille Miller lived while he finished his Army duty.
  - d. \_\_\_ She was born on January 17, 1930
  - e. \_\_\_ They saw a marriage counsellor.
  - f. \_\_\_ By the summer of 1964 they had achieved the bigger house on the better street and the familiar accouterments of a family on its way up.
2. List three decisions made by Lucille Maxwell that greatly affected her life. Explain how each decision affected her life

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## **Journals and Diaries**

Journals and diaries are first person accounts of personal events or experiences. Journals may be found more often detailing the daily events that take place at work or in society. Ship's Captains, for example, would record the daily events of a voyage. Diaries tend to cover more personal experiences and reactions to the experiences.

### **How to read journals and diaries?**

It is important to do some research about the time period, geographic location, and societal structure to be able to put journals and diaries in context. Depending on the setting for a journal or a diary, a reader may need to look up unfamiliar vocabulary in a dictionary.

Readers must also keep in mind that diaries, in particular present an individual's thoughts, feelings, and opinions. The language may be unedited and informal. Focus on understanding the person's feelings and thoughts rather than the quality of the prose.

**Practice Exercise 29 A, B**

*Diaries and Journals*

A. Use the reading process to guide you in your reading of the following story.

B. Write a complete definition for each word as it is used in the story.

1. immune

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2. implement

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3. optimism

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4. campaign

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5. respirator

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6. aggravated

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7. equity

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## **Diaries From the Drought (Excerpt)**

by Rebecca MacDonald and David Hear

*I traded hospital work for [daughter] Julie and the pigs, and have never regretted it. There is a special freedom on the farm being your own boss, working as a team with your husband, being close to God and His creation, serving your community and church. We are not typical of a lot of farmers in that we have been successful throughout some poor years, but my family has not been immune to adversity. In 1984 my father became a statistic when he committed suicide. Dad, Mom and my younger brother farmed 1,200 acres. It had been a drought year in 1983, and 1984 started with a wet spring, but [then] there wasn't rain until after Dad's funeral in mid-August. I also have a cousin who lost his farm and an uncle in the farm implement business who has fought bank closings. And many of our friends have lost their farms or gone bankrupt.*

*Still overcast this morning and with a few sprinkles. We drove to Kirksville, Mo., and headed up northeast through farming country. The crops got progressively worse. The corn is only five feet tall when it should be seven to eight feet tall.*

*One of Dennis's uncles said that as 1988 dawned, he had such optimism that this would be a great year. The crops went into the ground so good. He then looked away and said, "And now this."*

*I always find myself looking into farmers' eyes to see if that spark of life is still there. It was gone in my dad's eyes before he died.*

*have been up making campaign posters, as I am running for county commissioner from my District. Dennis baled the hay he cut yesterday, and Dave, our hired man, did the hog chores. The temperature was to get to 98 degrees today. We had planned on building a new house before the drought came. Another reason our house got put on hold was because Dennis became allergic to the hog dust. It was scary, because he couldn't breathe at night. Dennis wears a "space helmet" respirator that purifies the air. He looks funny, but it does work.*

*We sold one-and-a-half loads of hogs today. It will be good to get them out, because 200-pound hogs eat a lot of feed, and hogs don't grow as fast in hot weather. Dennis and I loaded them together. He was a bit sharp with me, and his language wasn't the best. I really think Dennis is aggravated because of the temperature changes (hot, humid days and cooler nights), and some of the hogs came down with pneumonia.*

*We have received only about 33 percent of our normal rainfall since April. It is a wonder there is anything growing. I feel guilty at times because so many families have lost their farms and we increased our equity. I asked Dennis what he thought, and he said that he doesn't, because we have worked hard, sacrificed and paid our dues by using second-hand equipment, paying for things as we had the money, etc. He says people need to know some success stories of small family farms so others will take the risk of farming.*

*We are weaning the pigs now and have a weaning rate of 10.15 pigs per mother. The national average is about eight per mother, so I'm happy. My bonus is getting extra hogs sold and paying off the feed bill. Maybe someday my new house will become a reality.*

**Practice Exercise 29 C**

*Diaries and Journals*

C. Answer the questions.

1. What is Rebecca's attitude about farm life? Give specific examples.

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2. How would you describe Rebecca's personality? Give specific examples.

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3. Does Rebecca use formal or informal language? Explain.

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## **Essays**

The essay has its origins in French literature. Modern essays may be formal or informal. Most essays can be placed in one of three categories (expository, descriptive, and persuasive). Expository essays explain information. Descriptive essays attempt to describe the sights, sounds, smell, feel, and sounds of an experience. Persuasive essays attempt to persuade the reader to think or act a specific way. Essay may highlight relationships between facts, comment on current events or issues, or persuade people to think or act on controversial issues.

### **How to read essays?**

Essays must be read carefully by determining the readers purpose for writing. Readers should focus on separating facts from opinions. Readers also need to evaluate the logic used to reach any conclusions. Recognize the techniques some writers use to persuade readers to think or act based on opinions. Don't allow faulty logic and emotional appeals to cloud your judgement of the facts.

**Practice Exercise 30 A, B**

*Essays*

A. Use the reading process to guide you in your reading of the following story.

B. Write a complete definition for each word as it is used in the story.

1. statistic

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2. occurrence

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3. incorporated

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4. thoroughfares

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5. incompatibility

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6. desensitizes

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7. monstrously

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## **"Risk-Taking on the Road"**

**George Will**

*Thinking he heard thunder, my neighbour went to close his car windows. Actually, he had heard a commonplace tragedy, the making of a statistic. A woman died and a man nearly died in the occurrence shocking our routine, an automobile accident.*

*The car veered out of control on Connecticut Avenue, hit trees, fragmented, and broke in half. Three of us arrived immediately. Emergency equipment arrived quickly. Cleaning up took hours.*

*In 1900, this "village", six miles from the White House, was where Washingtonians came for summer breezes. Today, it is a small incorporated area near the centre of a sprawling metropolis, adjacent to Washington's city line. It is divided by Connecticut Avenue, which passes around a traffic circle as it enters Maryland. Trees on the circle are heavily scarred from crashes. Crumpling steel and crying sirens are common sounds here as on many urban thoroughfares.*

*Increasingly, American driving reflects, I think, the sublimated fury of persons heading for infuriating jobs, the animal spirits of persons whose lives allow little scope for such spirits. As Daniel P. Moynihan wrote years ago, the automobile is "both a symbol of aggression and a vehicle thereof...It is a prime agent of risk-taking in a society that still values risk-taking, but does not provide many outlets."*

*The endless epidemic of accidents is one of the nation's gravest public health problems. Automobile deaths and injuries have costs beyond counting and are a special plague to the young. Of every 100,000 males age fifteen, about 1,100 will die in accidents, most involving automobiles, before age twenty-five—a death rate twenty times worse than polio at its worst.*

*As Moynihan notes, the social life of most Americans "now primarily takes the form of driving to a place where alcohol is consumed". And because traffic laws are widely ignored, almost everyone is a lawbreaker, and the incident of arrest in America may be the highest of any nation in history. Repairing and replacing wrecked cars may provide 20 percent of business for the automobile industry, the nation's most important.*

*Such statistics are as lifeless as the woman who lay beneath blankets on the Connecticut Avenue median strip. But they describe a river of sorrow flowing monstrously irrational behaviour.*

*Most drivers frequently exceed speed limits; only 25 percent use seatbelts; only 4 percent use harnesses. Because slaughter behind the wheel is deeply rooted in aggression and other irrationality, it is very difficult to substantially reduce accidents by reforming drivers. So government has tried to reduce the severity of injuries received in accidents.*

*The public disliked, and the government quickly disconnected, the ignition "interlock" system that prevented cars from starting when safety belts were unfastened. Today, new cars just make a brief buzz of disapproval.*

*Government may yet require "passive restraints"—air bags that instantly inflate to cushion passengers in collisions. There is evidence that they would save many thousands of lives annually and may be one answer to what Moynihan has called "the seeming incompatibility of safe driving and mass driving". That is a considerable problem in a nation where more people drive than pay taxes or vote.*

Reading Comprehension #14019

*Air bags require no forethought by drivers, so they are suited to the American driving public. The air bags would probably cost manufacturers less than \$100, a fraction of what car buyers exuberantly spend when loading their cars with snappy wheel covers and other options.*

*Long before the most recent Connecticut Avenue death, I regretted having once argued that government has no business requiring drivers to buy and use inexpensive devices, like seat belts, that might save them from self destruction. There is a pitiless abstractness, and disrespect for life, in such dogmatic respect for the right of consenting adults to behave in ways disastrous to themselves. Besides, too many passengers are sacrificed on the altar. And a large part of the bill for irrationality of individual drivers is paid by society.*

*Most important, society desensitizes itself by passively accepting so much carnage.*

*On Connecticut Avenue that evening, the police operated with the weary patience normal to those who paid to look unblinkingly at what people do to themselves. "Go home," a policeman finally said, with barely noticeable disgust, to people milling around the debris. "Go home and watch television." After a while, we did.*

**Practice Exercise 30 C**

*Essays*

C. Answer the questions.

1. What type of essay is this (expository, descriptive, persuasive)?

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2. Does the writer effectively use statistics? Explain.

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3. Does the writer effectively use examples? Explain.

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4. What is the writers message?

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5. Do you agree with the writers message? Why or why not?

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## Journalism

### What is journalism?

Journalism refers to the writing of material specifically for the purpose of being published in a newspaper, magazine, or similar type of reading material. Newspapers and magazine are really businesses. Because they are businesses, there are factors that affect the content and style of their publications.

One important factor is that advertisements, a major source of money for the operation of a newspaper, is included as part of the "content" of the publication. This may be in the form of a small advertisement, a full page advertisement, or an insert. There are other factors that influence the content of a publication. Some factors that affect the content of a publication include: editorial policy, wishes of the advertisers, availability of information, and interests of readers. Editorial policy may mean that some stories are emphasized while other stories are de-emphasized. Some stories may also be presented in a slanted or biased way. Advertisers may make requests about the content, or treatment of content, which might affect their companies.

Content also varies with the availability of information, and it varies with the publication's focus. Some publishers may not be able to access some information because they can't afford to hire staff, or they can't afford to buy finished stories from companies specializing in writing stories and then selling them to news organizations. These companies are called wire services. Some publications offer local, provincial, national, and international news while other publications offer more local or more national news. Ultimately, the content of a publication depends on the decisions made by its editor or editors.

Stories may be include or excluded based on the interests and desires of the readers. For example, local news stories may be of more interest to a group of readers than international news. Magazines tend to focus on specific groups of readers. Craft magazines, for instance, target people who enjoy specific crafts. The challenge for publishers is to interest as many people as possible. There are two ways of getting buyers interested in a publication.

One easy way of keeping people interested in a publication is to keep the content and style current. The other way is to use techniques that catch the reader's attention. The presentation of the content can be objective or subjective. Readers want news that is objective, reliable, and understandable. Objective and reliable reporting of stories is based on balanced presentation of the facts from reliable sources. We have already said that there are barriers to receiving consistent reporting of objective stories.

People also respond to subjective content. Subjective content contains opinions. Subjective content is found in columns, editorials, letters-to-the-editor, and editorial cartoons. Subjective content often includes accounts of personal experiences.

"Human interest" stories cause readers to become emotionally involved with a story. Taken to the extreme, these stories become sensationalized "human interest" stories called "tabloid stories." The emphasis in these stories is on details about the people involved. This means the physical and emotional details of the events and the people involved. Regardless of whether the content is presented in an objective or a subjective way, people expect details. This means writers need to provide details about the who, what, where, when, why, and how.

Writers recognize the need to present this information quickly and clearly. Titles are written to allude to the content of the article as well as to capture the reader's attention. Most of the details are presented in the first sentence of the article. The first sentences of an article is called the

lead. Less important details follow. This organization of the facts is sometimes referred to as the inverted pyramid form of organization. The use of photographs and the placement of content are also considered.

## What types of journalism are there?

Newspapers and magazines (periodicals) are the most common types of publications. Despite their differences, they have many similarities. Look at the tables outlining the parts, content, and purpose of each section.

<b>Magazines</b>		
<b>Part</b>	<b>Content</b>	<b>Purpose</b>
<b>Cover</b>	Name of magazine Graphics Highlights of magazine's content	Identify magazine Catch reader's attention
<b>Table of Contents</b>	Lists contents	Assist reader
<b>Editorial</b>	Editorial Letters to the editor	Persuade Inform Entertain
<b>Feature Articles</b>	Longer high interest articles	Entertain Inform
<b>Columns</b>	Shorter, regular expository or persuasive articles	Entertain Inform Persuade
<b>Advertisements (Ads)</b>	Paid ads	Sell Persuade

## **Newspapers**

<b>Part</b>	<b>Content</b>	<b>Purpose</b>
<b>Masthead</b>	Name of newspaper Editorial information Subscription information	Identify newspaper Catch reader's attention Give contact information
<b>Index</b>	Listing of parts	Assist readers
<b>Front Page</b>	Important news Human interest stories	Capture attention
<b>Editorial Page</b>	Editorial Letters to the editor Political cartoons Opinion columns	Persuade Inform Entertain
<b>Section: Sports</b>	News Scores Profiles Schedules	Entertain Inform
<b>Section: Finance &amp; Business</b>	Stock Market report Business news Profiles Projections	Inform Entertain
<b>Section: Classified</b>	Paid Ads Obituaries Announcements	Sell Inform
<b>Section: Arts &amp; Leisure</b>	Schedules & reviews Advice Columns Comics Fashion Health Travel	Entertain Inform
<b>Section: Weather</b>	Forecasts Related articles	Inform
<b>Advertisements (Ads)</b>	Paid ads	Sell Persuade
<b>Other</b>	Other news articles	Entertain and Inform

## How to read newspapers and periodicals

Read newspaper and magazines critically. The first step to reading this type of material critically is to be aware of how and why newspapers and magazines exist. Newspapers and magazines are businesses with varying levels of dependence on advertisers for their existence.

A reader should not assume that all they read is objective or reliable reporting of facts. You will need to use your basic reading skills to recognize fact from opinion. You will need to be able to recognize slanted or biased presentation of arguments. You will also need to be able to recognize faulty logic in both the articles and the advertisements. The following is a list of specific questions you should try to answer:

- **Who are the major advertisers in the publication?**
- **Does the publication routinely emphasize or exclude specific groups, topics, or issues?**
- **Where are the most important stories placed in a publication?**
- **Does the publication emphasize or sensationalize less important stories?**
- **Does the publication omit important facts creating an unbalanced account of the fact?**
- **Does the publication rely on faulty logic to prove a point- specifically:**

*Compare unlike issues, facts, or examples (**False analogy**)*

*Emphasise a person's characteristics rather than the facts (**Name calling**)*

*Focus on a small unimportant aspect of an issue at the expense of the real issue (**Ignore the question**)*

*Use statistics to prove points they don't prove (**Misuse statistics**)*

*Imply an argument is correct simply because other people believe the argument (**Bandwagon**)*

*Represent knowledgeable famous people as experts (**Appeal to authority**)*

**Practice Exercise 31 A, B**

*Objective Article*

A. Find an objective article in your local or provincial newspaper.

B. Answer the questions.

1. Name the newspaper.

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2. Write the title of the article. Is the title appropriate?

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3. Summarize the story in a paragraph.

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4. Does the article use biased language or a slanted approach? Give examples.

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**Practice Exercise 31 B - continued**

*Objective Article*

B.

5. Does the story deserve the attention the newspaper has given it? Why or why not?

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6. What are your thoughts and feelings about the article?

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**Practice Exercise 32 A, B**

*Human Interest Article*

A. Find an human interest article in your local or provincial newspaper.

B. Answer the questions.

1. Name the newspaper.

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2. Write the title of the article. Is the title appropriate?

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3. Summarize the story in a paragraph.

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4. Does the article use biased language or a slanted approach? Give examples.

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**Practice Exercise 32 B - continued**

*Human Interest Article*

B.

5. Does the story deserve the attention the newspaper has given it? Why or why not?

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6. What are your thoughts and feelings about the article?

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**Practice Exercise 33 A, B**

*Editorial Article*

A. Find an editorial article in your local or provincial newspaper.

B. Answer the questions.

1. Name the newspaper.

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2. Write the title of the article. Is the title appropriate?

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3. Summarize the story in a paragraph.

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4. Does the article use biased language or a slanted approach? Give examples.

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**Practice Exercise 33 B - continued**

*Editorial Article*

B.

5. Does the story deserve the attention the newspaper has given it? Why or why not?

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6. What are your thoughts and feelings about the article?

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## **Drama**

### **What is drama?**

Drama refers to plays. Plays may be read at home or they may be viewed in a theatre. Each experience offers different things to the reader or to the viewer. Some people enjoy following a play while listening to sound recordings of the authors performances. This allows a person to focus on the dialogue.

Unlike other forms of literature, plays depend on the use of dialogue to communicate the plot, characters, and setting. In addition to the written or spoken dialogue, readers can use the written directions included in the play to learn more about the plot, character, and setting. Viewers of plays have the advantage of seeing the characters, props, and set to learn more about the elements of the play. Another advantage of viewing a play is sound is used to communicate information. The "way" actors deliver and speak, their lines reveals information about the plot and characters. Music or other sound effects, may also be used to help bring the plot and characters to life.

Plays have a unique structure compared to other forms of literature. Scenes are the basic unit of action in a play. They deal with a specific conflict. A number of scenes are organized into an act. A play may have one act or more. Modern plays typically contain three to five acts. Acts signal a major change in the play.

### **How to read drama?**

Whether reading or watching a play, you should try to attend to specifics details and to try and answer some basic questions to understand the play. You may need to read the play several times out loud to truly understand a play. You will want to pay careful attention to the stage directions as well as the dialogue. For performances, you will want to listen to the dialogue carefully. You will also need to watch and listen carefully to picture how the stage directions are acted out on the stage. The simplest and easiest part to determine is the plays structure. For example, you will want to know, "How many acts are there?" and "How many scenes are in each act?"

The next set of questions deal with the characters. How many and who are the characters? Has the playwright included any stereotypical characters? How does the playwright reveal the personalities of the characters? Once you have determined the structure of the play and the characters, it is time to consider the setting.

The setting involves the setting the playwright places his characters in as well as the actual stage and props used by the actors. How is the setting of the story represented on stage? Are elaborate and colourful props used for the setting, or are few props used. For live (or stage) performances, how are light and music used to create the stories setting? Is a narrator used to clarify aspects of the setting by simply stating the place and the time? Finally, does the stage allow the actors the freedom they need to act out the events of the plot?

The plot is obviously plot to the structure, setting, and characters in the play. How do these elements influence the plot? Where do the main conflicts appear in the play? Who is involved in the conflicts? Are lights, music, or other devices used to signal or foreshadow conflicts? Most importantly, what is the theme or the message of the play?

## **What types of drama are there?**

Plays can be categorized based on the number of characters or the number of acts. For example, some plays have only one character while others have several characters. Plays may consist of one act, however they usually consist of three to five acts. Plays can be categorized by the way their themes are presented.

Plays may fall into one of the following categories. They may be: comedies, tragedies, historical, or contemporary. Comedies rely on humour and other literary devices to communicate their messages in a funny way. Tragedies often end with death or destruction of characters. Historical plays attempt to re-enact past events or characters of significance, such as kings or queens. Contemporary plays portray modern characters dealing with modern issues. These plays often allow playwrights to offer their perceptions and thoughts on significant human issues.

**Practice Exercise 34 A, B**

*Drama*

A. Use the reading process to guide you in your reading of the following story.

B. Write a complete definition for each word as it is used in the story.

1. pouting

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2. Affirmatively

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3. prospects

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4. irritated

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5. groomed

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6. viciously

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7. contemplative

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**Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf (Excerpt)**

by Edward Albee

- GEORGE** Your father has tiny red eyes...like a white mouse. In fact, he *is* a white mouse.
- MARTHA** You wouldn't dare say a thing like that if he was here! You're a coward!
- GEORGE** (*to HONEY and NICK*)- You know ... that great shock of white hair, and those little beady red eyes ... a great big white mouse.
- MARTHA** George hates Daddy ... not for anything Daddy's done to him, but for his own...
- GEORGE** (*nodding ... finishing it for her*) - inadequacies.
- MARTHA** (*offended*) — You think I'm kidding? You think I'm joking? I never joke ... I don't have a sense of humour. (*Almost pouting.*) I have a fine sense of the ridiculous, but no sense of humour. (*Affirmatively.*) I have no sense of humour! After I got done with college and stuff, I came back here and sort of... sat around, for a while. I wasn't married or anything ... and I came back here and sort of sat around for a while. I was hostess for Daddy and I took care of him ... and it was ... nice. It was very nice. And I got the idea, about then, that I'd marry into the college ... Why don't you come over here and sit by me?
- NICK** (*indicating HONEY, who is barely with it*) — I ... don't think I ... should ... I ...
- MARTHA** Suit yourself. So, I was sort of on the lookout, for prospects with the new men. And a lot of the new men were married. (*With a strange smile.*) Like you, baby. But then along came George. WHO was young ... intelligent and ... bushy-tailed, and ... sort of cute ... if you can imagine it ...
- GEORGE** and younger than you ...
- MARTHA** and younger than me ...
- GEORGE** by six years ...
- MARTHA** ... by six years ... It doesn't bother me, George ... And along he came, bright-eyed, into the History Department. And you know what I did, dumb cluck that I am? You know what I did? I fell for him. And the match seemed practical, too. You know, Daddy was looking for someone to ...
- GEORGE** Just a minute, Martha ...
- MARTHA** ... take over, some time, when he was ready to ...
- GEORGE** (*stony*)- Just a minute, Martha ...
- MARTHA** ... retire, and so I thought ...
- GEORGE** STOP IT, MARTHA!
- MARTHA** (*irritated*)- Whadda you want?
- GEORGE** (*too patiently*)- I thought you were telling the story of our courtship, Martha ... I didn't know you were going to start in on the other business.

Reading Comprehension #14019

**MARTHA** (*so-thereish*)- Well, I am.

**GEORGE** I wouldn't, if I were you.

**MARTHA** Oh ... you wouldn't. Well, you're not!

**GEORGE** Now, you've already sprung a leak about you-know-what...

**MARTHA** (*a duck*)- What? What?

**GEORGE** about the apple of your eye ... the sprout ... the little bugger (*Spits it out.*) ... our son ... and if you start in on this other business, I warn you, Martha, it's going to make me angry.

**MARTHA** I stand warned! (*Pause ... then, to HONEY and NICK*). I had it all planned out ... He was the groom ... he was going to be groomed. He'd take over some day ... first, he'd take over the History Department, and then, when Daddy retired, he'd take over the college ... you know? That's the way it was supposed to be. (*To GEORGE.*) You getting angry, baby? Hunh? (*Now back.*) Daddy seemed to think it was a pretty good idea, too. For a while. Until he watched for a couple of years! (*To GEORGE again.*) You getting angrier? (*Now back.*) Until he watched for a couple of years and started thinking that maybe Georgie-boy didn't have the stuff... that he didn't have it in him!

**GEORGE** Stop it, Martha!

**MARTHA** (*viciously triumphant*)- The hell I will! You see, George didn't have much ... push ... he wasn't particularly aggressive. In fact he was sort of a ... (*Spits the word at GEORGE'S back.*) ... a **FLOP!** A great ... big ... fat **FLOP!** (**CRASH!** *Immediately after FLOP! GEORGE breaks a bottle against the portable bar and stands there, still.*