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Using This Book

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

Comprehension Skills At-a-Glance

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

Main Idea & Details

Understanding the main or key idea of a paragraph is crucial for a reader. The main idea is what the paragraph is about. The other parts of the paragraph help to explain more about this key idea. Sometimes, the main idea is in the first sentence of a paragraph.

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

Context Clues

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

Compare & Contrast

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


Passage 5

Name _____ Date _____

Read the paragraph. Then answer the questions.

Meet Mercury

Can you name the planets in our solar system? Mercury is one of them. Like the other planets, Mercury moves in a path around the Sun. Mercury travels faster than the other planets. It speeds along at about 107,000 miles an hour. Mercury is the planet closest to the Sun. Its days are very hot, and its nights are very cold. There is no water on Mercury.



1. The main idea of the paragraph is
☐ A. the lack of water on Mercury.
☐ B. the planets in the solar system.
☐ C. what the planet Mercury is like.
2. A detail that tells more about the main idea is
☐ A. the speed at which Mercury travels around the Sun.
☐ B. the names of the other planets in the solar system.
☐ C. how fast other planets in the solar system travel.
3. Write one way that Mercury differs from other planets.

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In this paragraph, students have to read the entire text and ask themselves, "What is this paragraph mainly about?" The main idea is supported by different facts about Mercury.


Passage 2

Name _____ Date _____

Read the paragraph. Then answer the questions.

A Gardener's Friend

What do ladybugs eat? Their main food is a tiny insect called an aphid. Most gardeners think of aphids as pests. These insects cause harm to plants by sucking out their juices. When people see ladybugs in their gardens, however, they are pleased.



1. Which sentence tells what most likely happens next?
☐ A. Gardeners will get rid of the ladybugs.
☐ B. The ladybugs will eat the aphids.
☐ C. The aphids will attack the ladybugs.
2. In this paragraph the word **pests** must mean
☐ A. troublemakers.
☐ B. plants.
☐ C. helpers.
3. How are ladybugs and aphids different?

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In this example, other words in the paragraph provide a context for comprehending the word *pests*.

Predict

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

Inference

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

Fact & Opinion

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

Tips

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

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

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


Passage 21

Name _____ Date _____

Read the paragraph. Then answer the questions.

Cara's Cat

Cara's cat didn't like to be left alone. Cara never knew what Honey would do when the family was out. Sometimes the cat just slept. But sometimes she was bad. One day Cara found a big mess in the bathroom. Honey had unrolled the toilet paper. It was in **shreds**. Bits of it were everywhere. It took a long time to clean up Honey's mess.



- In this paragraph, the word **shreds** must mean
 - ☐ A. rolls.
 - ☐ B. pieces.
 - ☐ C. squares.
- You can predict that when she saw the mess, Cara
 - ☐ A. hugged Honey.
 - ☐ B. was mad at Honey.
 - ☐ C. got a new cat.
- You can guess that Honey
 - ☐ A. didn't like Cara's family.
 - ☐ B. liked to have people around.
 - ☐ C. wanted to please Cara.

1. Comprehension 2. Prediction 3. Inference

The writer never says that the cat likes to have people around, but information in the paragraph plus what readers already know helps make it a likely guess.


Passage 14

Name _____ Date _____

Read the paragraph. Then answer the questions.

Nest Soup

Birds called swifts are **popular** in Thailand. People there welcome the birds into their homes. In one city the birds even live in a hotel. The reason the birds are in such demand is their nests. Bird's nest soup is a big treat in Thailand. I don't think I would care for it. Vegetable soup seems better to me!



- Write fact or opinion next to each sentence.
 - _____ A. Birds called swifts are popular in Thailand.
 - _____ B. I don't think I would care for it.
 - _____ C. In one city the birds even live in a hotel.
- In this paragraph, the word **popular** means
 - ☐ A. disliked.
 - ☐ B. useful.
 - ☐ C. liked.
- Write another opinion from the paragraph.

1. Fact & Opinion 2. Comprehension 3. Fact & Opinion

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

Name _____ Date _____

Read the paragraph. Then answer the questions.

Rob's Job

The Dells had a big fireplace. On snowy winter days they often lit a fire. Rob's job was to make sure there was plenty of wood to burn. He would take his sled to the woodshed. There he loaded logs onto the sled. Then he would **haul** the wood back to the house and bring it in to burn.



1. In this paragraph, the word **haul** must mean
 - ☐ A. chop.
 - ☐ B. pull.
 - ☐ C. burn.
2. The main idea of this paragraph is
 - ☐ A. why Rob had a sled.
 - ☐ B. snowy winter days.
 - ☐ C. getting wood for a fireplace.
3. How do you think the Dells feel about their fireplace?

Name _____ Date _____

Read the paragraph. Then answer the questions.

A Gardener's Friend

What do ladybugs eat? Their main food is a tiny insect called an aphid.

Most gardeners think of aphids as **pests**.

These insects cause harm to plants by sucking out their juices.

When people see ladybugs in their gardens, however, they are pleased.



1. Which sentence tells what most likely happens next?

- ☐ A. Gardeners will get rid of the ladybugs.
- ☐ B. The ladybugs will eat the aphids.
- ☐ C. The aphids will attack the ladybugs.

2. In this paragraph the word **pests** must mean

- ☐ A. troublemakers.
- ☐ B. plants.
- ☐ C. helpers.

3. How are ladybugs and aphids different?

Name _____ Date _____

Read the paragraph. Then answer the questions.

A Tale of Tails

Pigs are known for having curly tails.

They're so cute! Experts say that you can tell how healthy a pig is by the curl of his tail.

A pig with a curly tail is in good health.

But a pig with a straight tail is not. Poor pig.

A straight tail on a pig is a sign of illness.

Farmers should take good care of their pigs so they don't get sick.



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

_____ A. They're so cute!

_____ B. Experts say that you can tell how healthy a pig is by the curl of its tail.

_____ C. A straight tail on a pig is a sign of illness.

2. Which sentence is most likely true?

☐ A. Pigs like to wag their tails.

☐ B. Pigs always get sick.

☐ C. Farmers check their pigs' tails often.

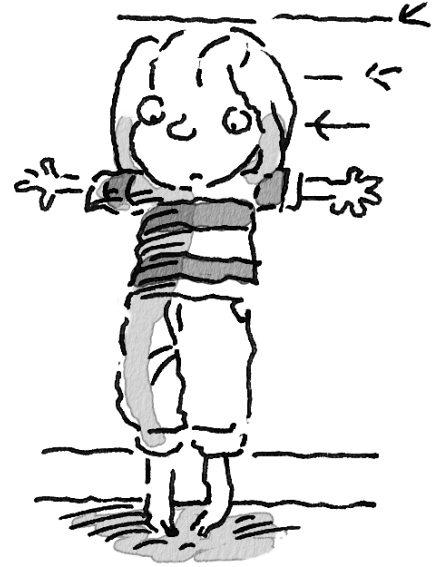
3. What will a farmer most likely do if a pig's tail is straight?

Name _____ Date _____

Read the paragraph. Then answer the questions.

A Mark on the Wall

Anna took off her shoes. She stood straight with her back against the wall. Anna's mother put the ruler on Anna's head and made a little mark on the wall. It was two inches above another mark. Next to the new mark, Anna's mother wrote the date. "Wow!" she said. "No wonder your jeans are too short."



1. Which sentence is most likely true?
 - ☐ A. Anna's mother is measuring Anna's head.
 - ☐ B. Anna's mother is mad at Anna.
 - ☐ C. Anna has grown two inches taller.

2. You can guess that the next mark will be
 - ☐ A. the same.
 - ☐ B. lower.
 - ☐ C. higher.

3. Most likely Anna's mother will
 - ☐ A. buy Anna new jeans.
 - ☐ B. give Anna old jeans.
 - ☐ C. make Anna stop growing.

Name _____ Date _____

Read the paragraph. Then answer the questions.

Meet Mercury

Can you name the planets in our solar system? Mercury is one of them. Like the other planets, Mercury moves in a path around the Sun. Mercury travels faster than the other planets. It speeds along at about 107,000 miles an hour. Mercury is the planet closest to the Sun. Its days are very hot, and its nights are very cold. There is no water on Mercury.



- 1.** The main idea of the paragraph is
 - ☐ A. the lack of water on Mercury.
 - ☐ B. the planets in the solar system.
 - ☐ C. what the planet Mercury is like.
- 2.** A detail that tells more about the main idea is
 - ☐ A. the speed at which Mercury travels around the Sun.
 - ☐ B. the names of the other planets in the solar system.
 - ☐ C. how fast other planets in the solar system travel.
- 3.** Write one way that Mercury differs from other planets.

Name _____ Date _____

Read the paragraph. Then answer the questions.

Ellen's Saturday

When Ellen wakes up on Saturday,
there is snow on the ground.
Ellen **races** through her breakfast.
Then she pulls on a hat, jacket, and gloves.
Her boots are not in the closet,
so she runs outside in her sneakers.
She joins her friends to go sledding.



1. Which sentence tells what most likely happens next?

- ☐ A. Ellen's feet will get cold and wet.
- ☐ B. Ellen will lose her sled on the hill.
- ☐ C. Ellen's friends will take off their boots.

2. You can tell that Ellen loves

- ☐ A. breakfast.
- ☐ B. snow.
- ☐ C. boots.

3. In this paragraph, the word **races** means

- ☐ A. rushes.
- ☐ B. drags.
- ☐ C. runs.

Name _____ Date _____

Read the paragraph. Then answer the questions.

School Zoo

Many classrooms have pets. This is the best way for students to learn about animals. But classroom pets need a place to go during the summer. In Plano, Texas, the schools have a mini-zoo. Teachers can **borrow** pets for the school months. When summer comes, they return the pets to the zoo. Schools in other towns should follow this example.



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

- _____ A. This is the best way for students to learn about animals.
 _____ B. In Plano, Texas, the schools have a mini-zoo.
 _____ C. Schools in other towns should follow this example.

2. You can guess that

- ☐ A. the pets dislike being in the classroom.
☐ B. there is no school in the summer.
☐ C. the zoo closes in the summer.

3. In this paragraph, the word **borrow** means

- ☐ A. have forever.
☐ B. have for awhile.
☐ C. pay money for.