

# **8th Grade Language Arts Vocabulary/Reading: Essential Skills**

## **Student Review Guide**

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# Homonyms and Confused Words

## Section 4.4 Similar Words

Some words are similar in spelling and can be easily confused even though they do not sound exactly alike. Take a close look at some similar words that are commonly confused.

### Accept versus Except

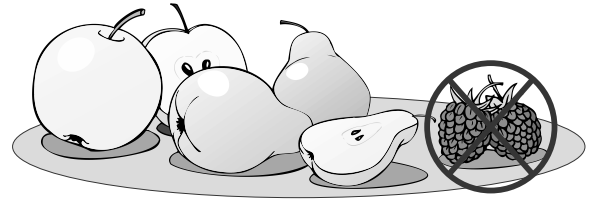


#### Accept

*Accept* is a verb meaning *to receive*.

You **accept** an award.

Hint: Remember “accept award” both start with *a*.



#### Except

*Except* is a verb meaning *to take or leave out*.

I like all fruit **except** blackberries.

Hint: Associate the *x* in *except* with “leave out.”

### All Ready versus Already

*All ready* means *prepared*.

We were **all ready** to go to summer camp.

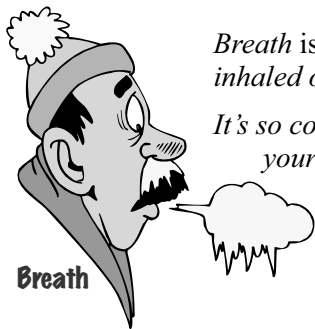
*Already* means *previously or so soon*.

Jeff was **already** on the bus.  
Are we there **already**?

If you are in doubt which word to use, take off the “all” and see if the sentence still means about the same. If it does, use *all ready*. If it doesn’t make sense or it changes the meaning of the sentence, use *already*.



### Breath versus Breathe

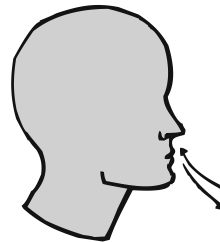


*Breath* is a noun meaning *air inhaled or exhaled*.

It’s so cold outside that you can see your **breath**.

Her beauty took my **breath** away.

**Breath**



**Breathe**

*Breathe* is a verb meaning *to inhale or exhale*.

Dogs **breathe** more rapidly than humans.

I try not to **breathe** in exhaust fumes.

Hint: Remember that *breathe* has the long *e* sound, so it has an *e* at the end.

## Section 4.4, continued

### Similar Words

#### Practice 1

Circle the correct word for each sentence.

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| 1. Did you ( accept / except ) the criticism?                         | 12. Her front tooth is ( loose / lose ).                       |
| 2. Everyone ( accept / except ) me was hungry.                        | 13. Did you ( loose / lose ) weight?                           |
| 3. Ford ( all ready / already ) spent his money.                      | 14. The cat turned the baby rabbit ( loose / lose ).           |
| 4. I am ( all ready / already ) to begin.                             | 15. Don't ( loose / lose ) your pride.                         |
| 5. We held our ( breath / breathe ) before it fell.                   | 16. I am taller ( than / then ) you are.                       |
| 6. Don't ( breath / breathe ) on it.                                  | 17. She made the sandwich and ( than / then ) ate it.          |
| 7. The ( desert / dessert ) covered many miles.                       | 18. Aaron played more video games ( than / then ) board games. |
| 8. ( Desert / Dessert ) was chocolate cake.                           | 19. She ( want / won't ) talk.                                 |
| 9. It was not unusual, but an<br>( every day / everyday ) occurrence. | 20. They ( want / won't ) to go skating.                       |
| 10. We practice ( every day / everyday ).                             | 21. ( Your / You're ) going where?                             |
| 11. ( Every day / Everyday ) was difficult.                           | 22. He wants ( your / you're ) address.                        |

#### Practice 2

One word in each sentence has been used incorrectly. Choose the answer choice that makes the sentence correct. Darken the circle that corresponds to your answer choice.

- (A) (B) (C) (D) 1. Every day they eat a salad, then baked chicken, but no desert except for fruit.  
A. Change Every day to Everyday  
B. Change then to than  
C. Change desert to dessert  
D. Change except to accept
- (A) (B) (C) (D) 2. Your sure that the harness is loose enough for you to breathe so you won't pass out?  
A. Change Your to You're  
B. Change loose to lose  
C. Change breathe to breath  
D. Change won't to want
- (A) (B) (C) (D) 3. I all ready planned to accept the job even though I will lose your help.  
A. Change all ready to already  
B. Change accept to except  
C. Change lose to loose  
D. Change your to you're

# Homonyms and Confused Words

## Section 4 Review

Answer the following questions about homonyms and confused words.

1. Which sentence below uses the word *your* correctly?

- A Your sure it is a mistake?
- B This is your special day.
- C You think your nervous?
- D Your wrong about the number.

(A) (B) (C) (D)

4. Which sentence below is written correctly?

- F She hit the brake and skidded.
- G He was board with the movie.
- H Did you by some bread?
- J Sense spring her allergies have bothered her.

(F) (G) (H) (J)

2. Which sentence below uses the word *its* correctly?

- F Its paw was cut.
- G Its the ultimate gift.
- H He knows its time to go.
- J Do you think its too cold?

(F) (G) (H) (J)

5. Which sentence below is written correctly?

- A The sent of roses was strong.
- B I wood like to learn rock climbing.
- C My deer aunt gave it to me.
- D She would dye her hair every month.

(A) (B) (C) (D)

3. Which sentence below uses the word *everyday* correctly?

- A Everyday for a week it rained.
- B Yes, everyday was exciting.
- C It was his everyday exercise routine.
- D Everyday we ate peaches.

(A) (B) (C) (D)

6. In which sentence below is the underlined word used correctly?

- F I always great the carrots.
- G I need to alter my thinking.
- H We new the song was old.
- J She road the pony in a circle.

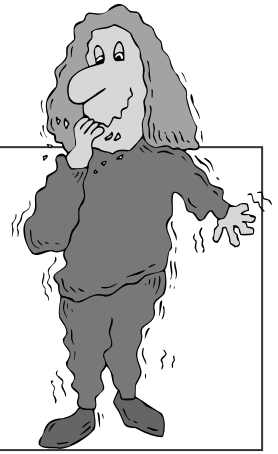
(F) (G) (H) (J)

# Reading Skills

## Section 5.1 Main Idea and Details

### Key Terms

- **Main idea** – the central message or point of a paragraph
- **Details** – facts or additional information that supports the main idea
- **Implied main idea** – a main idea that is not stated word-for-word in the sentences of a paragraph
- **Infer** – determine by using the information given



### Main Idea and Details

When you read a passage, the **main idea** is the message or point that the author wants you to understand. The entire passage or paragraph should be written to support the main idea.

**Details** are the ideas that the author includes to support the main idea. Details may be used to prove that the message is true and important or just to give more information about the main idea. Illustrations, descriptions, facts, reasons, statements, and examples can all be used as supporting details.

A well-written paragraph should have a main idea and several sentences to support it. Knowing the main idea of a paragraph will make it much easier to understand the author's message or to decide if you believe what is written. Details, or supporting sentences, should always "back up" the message.

The main idea of a paragraph or passage will contain the topic and the author's general idea or focus about the topic. It can be stated directly in one or more of the sentences, or it can be implied. A stated main idea can usually be found in either the first or last sentence of a paragraph although it can appear anywhere in the paragraph. If the passage or paragraph has a title, it will usually provide a clue to help you determine the main idea.

### Stated Main Idea

To identify a stated main idea in a paragraph, remember that the first or last sentence often contains the main idea. Read the entire paragraph, and ask yourself, "What message is the author trying to share?" If either the first or the last sentence directly states that same message, it is the main idea. If not, read the other sentences to see if the message is stated directly anywhere in the paragraph. Remember that the main idea sums up what the entire paragraph is about.

#### Example 1:

#### The Nerves

Maria had a bad case of the nerves. She'd spent the night before tossing and turning and getting almost no sleep. When she did finally get out of bed, her stomach hurt. Now her stomach was doing somersaults. Her palms were clammy with sweat. She would be so glad when the whole ordeal was over. For now, she had to focus on making herself step through the curtain and onto the stage.

#### What is the main idea of this paragraph?

First, identify the topic. The general topic of nerves is given in the title, but the more specific topic is Maria's nerves. Next, ask yourself what the author is saying about the topic. She is specifically explaining Maria's extreme state of nervousness. You should be able to see that the first sentence, "Maria had a bad case of the nerves," is the main idea. The rest of the sentences in the paragraph give details about her nervousness.

## Section 5.1, continued

### Main Idea and Details

#### Example 2:

#### Quail Habitats

Dan plants lots of food plots on his farm. He has found that Egyptian wheat, partridge peas, and sesbania are all great plants for attracting bobwhite quail. He also plants two different kinds of corn — southern quail corn and Georgia dwarf corn — to keep the quail fed. People are amazed at the numbers of wild bobwhite quail that live on and around Dan's farm. They know that the wild quail population in the rest of the state has decreased in recent years due to animal predators and changes in planting methods. Yet Dan's food plots provide the ground cover and food the quail need to survive.



#### Can you pick out the main idea from this paragraph?

Again, what is the topic of the paragraph? The title gives you a hint. The topic of the paragraph is quail habitats. What is the author saying about quail habitats? He is explaining how Dan creates an ideal habitat for quail by using certain plants. Part of the main idea is stated in the first sentence, “Dan plants lots of food plots on his farm,” but it isn’t a complete main idea because it doesn’t really give the topic of the paragraph, which is quail habitats. A more complete main idea is well-stated in the last sentence, “Yet Dan’s food plots provide the ground cover and food the quail need to survive.”

#### What do the details in this paragraph tell the reader?

The other sentences in the paragraph are detail sentences that explain and give details about the author’s main idea. The details answer the following questions.

1. *What kind of plants does Dan plant on his farm to attract quail?* The second sentence tells the reader that Dan plants Egyptian wheat, partridge peas, and sesbania. The third sentence says that he also plants two different kinds of corn.
2. *Why does Dan plant corn?* The third sentence tells us that Dan plants the corn as food for the quail.
3. *Why has the wild quail population decreased in the state?* The fifth sentence tells us that animal predators and changes in planting methods have caused the quail population to decrease in the rest of the state.
4. *Which sentence supports the idea that Dan’s farm has a large number of wild quail?* The sentence “People are amazed at the numbers of wild bobwhite quail that live on and around Dan’s farm” emphasizes that Dan’s farm supports a large number of wild quail.
5. *Which fact (or detail) from the paragraph supports the idea that the number of quail on Dan’s farm is unusual?* The fact that the wild quail population in the rest of the state has decreased supports the idea that the large number of quail found on Dan’s farm is unusual. Remember, a fact is simply a true piece of information.

### Implied Main Idea

Sometimes the main idea of a paragraph or passage isn’t directly stated. Instead, it is implied, or suggested. An **implied main idea** is one that is not written word-for-word as one of the sentences in the paragraph. The author’s message is still there, but it isn’t stated in exact words. As a reader, you will have to **infer**, or determine from clues, the main idea based on the information given.



## Section 5.1, continued

### Main Idea and Details

#### Example 3:

#### Manx Cats

When the kitten showed up meowing for food on my doorstep, I almost laughed out loud. I fed the obviously stray kitten some milk and reached to pick it up. It seemed tame enough and fairly clean. The first thing I noticed, though, was that it had no tail. It didn't look as if it had been in an accident or had the tail removed; there was just no tail there. I grinned as I realized I had to apologize to my husband, who'd always told me about the Manx cats that were tail-less. I had snickered and assumed he was again testing my overactive tendency to believe everything he told me. But, here it was, a cat with no tail.

#### What is the main idea in this paragraph?

The paragraph tells a story about finding a Manx kitten. There is not a single sentence that tells us what the paragraph is about, so can you infer the main idea from the details given? You do know that the title is "Manx Cats," so the main idea probably has to do with Manx cats. It seems that the author wants us to know, above all else, that the kitten the narrator found had no tail. The narrator seems to be very surprised at having found such a cat. The main idea, then, is simply "*Manx cats do not have tails.*"

The other sentences in the paragraph support the main idea that "Manx cats do not have tails" by telling a story. The story gives the narrator the "proof" she needs that Manx cats really do not have tails.

As you read paragraphs and passages, always pay attention to the overall message the author is trying to express. Remember that all the sentences in the passage should relate to the main idea. Also, note that each paragraph in a passage will have its own main idea, but it should always support the main idea of the entire passage. A good passage will have an overall focus that is supported by every paragraph in the passage.

### Main Idea of a Passage

To identify the main idea of a passage that contains multiple paragraphs, ask yourself the same questions you would have used to identify the main idea of a single paragraph. "What message is the author trying to share?" The main idea may be directly stated in the passage, but you may have to infer the main idea based on the information given.

#### Example 4:

#### Scuba Diving

Jumping from a boat miles from the shoreline was hardly Tam's idea of fun. He'd much rather read about tropical fish in a book. For that matter, his tablet computer had an application that showed pictures of any type of tropical fish you could imagine! He did love his tablet computer.

But this was his father's idea of fun, and Dad wanted them to dive together. So Tam stretched and pulled his way into the rented wetsuit. Fully goggled and flippered and breathing through an oxygen mask, Tam eased himself into the water. He swam close to his father, who kept looking back to see Tam's reaction to everything they saw.

Tam's reactions were definitely worth watching. He'd never imagined it could really look like this. All those pictures on television and in books, even the computer application with all its videos, could never do justice to the underwater wonderland where he was swimming. The colors alone made it unbelievable. And there were so many kinds of fish! Tam had never imagined such a beautiful place existed.



## Section 5.1, continued

### Main Idea and Details

#### What is the main idea of this passage?

The topic is Tam's scuba diving adventure. The author uses this passage to explain Tam's reaction to scuba diving. Is there a sentence in the passage that contains the author's message? Yes, in the final paragraph the author writes, "All those pictures on television and in books, even the computer application with all its videos, could never do justice to the underwater wonderland he was swimming in." This sentence is the stated main idea. If you stated the main idea in your own words, you might say that Tam was surprised that seeing tropical fish in person was so much better than viewing them in books or on a computer.

#### Why did Tam's father want Tam to go scuba diving with him?

This question is also answered by understanding the overall main idea. We can infer that Tam's father wanted Tam to experience the underwater beauty firsthand instead of only viewing videos on his computer.

#### Which details from the passage specifically support the main idea?

Many of the sentences in the passage are details that specifically support the main idea. Look at a few. "He'd much rather read about tropical fish in a book." This sentence shows Tam's original opinion and helps to explain why he was surprised by what he saw underwater. "The colors alone made it unbelievable. And so many kinds of fish! Tam had never imagined such a beautiful place existed." These sentences describe Tam's reaction to the beauty.

#### Which detail sentences support the idea that Tam would normally prefer spending time indoors rather than outdoors?

The sentences in the first paragraph support the idea that Tam would rather be inside playing on his computer than be outdoors doing something like scuba diving. "Jumping from a boat miles from the shoreline was hardly Tam's idea of fun. He'd much rather read about tropical fish in a book. For that matter, his tablet computer had an application that showed pictures of any type of tropical fish you could imagine! He did love his tablet computer."

Go back to the overall main idea of the passage. Notice that not all sentences directly support the overall main idea. For example "He did love his tablet computer," is a sentence that doesn't directly support the main idea of the passage. This sentence gives additional interesting information to the story in the first paragraph by emphasizing Tam's personality, that he wasn't much for outdoor adventures but preferred computer activities. Every sentence in a passage should have a purpose, but every sentence may not directly support the main idea of the entire passage.

## Practice

Read each passage below and then answer the questions that follow.

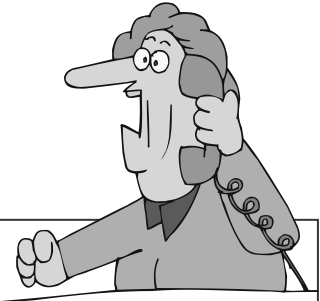
### Email

Jerome was amazed. At sixty-two years old, he had never owned a computer, much less used one. And now, here he was, about to send a message to his brother Stan through email. *Email*. That word still sounded a little foreign to him. But it did seem exciting to think that the instant he sent the message, Stan would receive it. Jerome was excited about learning to use the computer.

- (A) (B) (C) (D) 1. Which of the following sentences from the paragraph contains the main idea?
- A. At sixty-two years old, he had never owned a computer, much less used one.
  - B. That word still sounded a little foreign to him.
  - C. But it did seem exciting to think that the instant he sent the message, Stan would receive it.
  - D. Jerome was excited about learning to use the computer.

# Purposes of Text

## Section 7.4 Purposes of Sentence Structure and Language



### Key Terms

- **Declarative sentence** – a sentence that makes a statement
- **Interrogative sentence** – a sentence that asks a question and ends with a question mark
- **Exclamatory sentence** – a sentence that makes a strong statement and ends with an exclamation point
- **Imperative sentence** – a sentence that makes a request or gives a command; the subject of the sentence is an understood *you*
- **Emphatic sentence** – a sentence that uses *do* or *does* for emphasis

An author may choose a type of sentence, a style of vocabulary, and/or a level of formality for a specific purpose. You have already reviewed formal and informal language and appropriate vocabulary. Now review the different types of sentences.

### Types of Sentences

A **declarative sentence** makes a statement and ends with a period.

An **interrogative sentence** asks a question and ends with a question mark.

An **exclamatory sentence** makes a strong statement and ends with an exclamation point.

An **imperative sentence** makes a request or gives a command. The subject is *you*, but it is understood. It usually ends with a period.

An **emphatic sentence** is normally a declarative sentence that uses *do* or *does* to emphasize an action.

Study the chart below to see examples of each type of sentence.

<b>Declarative</b>	The laptop computer is new.
<b>Interrogative</b>	Do you like the new laptop?
<b>Exclamatory</b>	This new laptop is fast!
<b>Imperative</b>	Reboot the laptop to finish installing the software.
<b>Emphatic</b>	He <b>does</b> like his new laptop.

## Section 7.4, continued

### Purposes of Sentence Structure and Language

#### Author's Purpose

Analyze the example passages given below. What types of sentences does the author use? What type of language and vocabulary does the author use? What is the author's purpose for each passage?

#### Example 1: Read the following article.

Attention all photo enthusiasts! The Eldridge Photography Club is holding its annual Summer Escapes Photo Contest. Be sure to get your entry in quickly because the grand prize is a \$500 gift card to Photo Supply World!

All entries must follow these rules and requirements:

- Be a member in good standing of the Eldridge Photography Club.
- Enter a digital photograph with a resolution of at least 8 megapixels.
- Provide a signed release for photos taken on private property or for photos including people.
- Include a short description of the scene in the photo: location, time of day, etc.
- Submit your entry by email or by mailing a CD containing the image to the Eldridge Photography Club.

See if you can answer the following questions for this example.

#### Which statements in this passage are exclamatory?

Exclamatory statements end in an exclamation point. The opening paragraph contains two exclamatory statements: "Attention all photo enthusiasts!" and "Be sure to get your entry in quickly because the grand prize is a \$500 gift card to Photo Supply World!"

#### For what purpose did the author use exclamatory statements?

The author uses exclamatory statements for two reasons. The first sentence is meant to get the reader's attention. The second is to persuade or entice the reader to enter the contest.

#### What types of sentences and vocabulary are used in the bulleted list?

Each sentence in the bulleted list is imperative since the subject of each sentence is *you* understood. The language is neither overly formal nor informal. However, the statement "Enter a digital photograph with a resolution of at least 8 megapixels" contains some technical language since the intended audience is expected to be familiar with these photography terms.

#### What is the purpose of the bulleted list?

The author uses imperative statements in the bulleted list to inform the reader of the rules and requirements for the contest.

## Section 7.4, continued

### Purposes of Sentence Structure and Language

**Example 2:** Read the following article.

#### Shape-Up Week

Once a year, our school promotes Shape-Up week. This year, Shape-Up week is March 19 through March 23. During Shape-Up week, students are encouraged to find creative ways get into better shape by exercising more. Prizes are awarded to students who plan, promote, and implement ways to get into shape. Last year's winner, Heather Banks, won a \$25 gift certificate by having a group of students in her neighborhood walk to school every day instead of being driven.

Do you want to lose weight? Plan ways to walk more during Shape-Up week. Do you play a sport? Use Shape-Up week to practice your skills and to teach others what you know. Do you enjoy making people laugh? Skip or dance to class to burn extra calories during Shape-Up week. Be creative! Submit your plan to your class president, and not only can you get in better shape during Shape-Up week, but you may also win this year's top prize.

**What types of statements are used in the first paragraph? What is the purpose of these statements?**

The first paragraph uses declarative statements to inform students about Shape-Up week. These statements give explanation and details.

**What types of statements are used in the second paragraph? What is the purpose of these statements?**

The second paragraph asks questions, so it uses interrogative sentences. Each question is followed by an imperative sentence that gives a suggested activity. "Be creative!" is exclamatory. The final sentence is imperative. The paragraph uses interrogative, imperative, and exclamatory statements to encourage students to participate in Shape-Up week. Addressing students directly in the second paragraph makes the paragraph informal.

### Practice

Read each passage and answer the questions that follow.

#### Take Your Medicine

Just what does she think she's doing? Why is she prying my mouth open? I'm sure she realizes that the huge chalky pill in her hand won't fit! I am *not* swallowing that thing.

Oh, no! Now she's rubbing my throat. She knows that makes me swallow. But I won't. I won't. I... well, I tried not to swallow.

That thing was big enough to choke a horse! I'm a Yorkie and weigh only five pounds! I don't need big pills. Matter of fact, I don't need any pills at all.

*Hmm.* I'll show her. Just wait until she puts her shoes on in the morning. I'll make sure there's a nice surprise waiting inside them!

- (A) (B) (C) (D) 1. Which of the following interprets the author's purpose for writing this passage?
- A. To persuade readers that pet medications are important.
  - B. To inform readers about the dangers of medicating Yorkies
  - C. To entertain readers with the story of a puppy's reaction to his medication
  - D. To explain how dogs react to taking medicine

# Story Elements

## Section 11.2

### Characters and Character Traits



#### Key Terms

- **Character traits** – a person’s or a character’s personality or unique attributes
- **Characterization** – the way an author reveals a character’s personality or nature

### Character Traits

All people, including characters in a story, have their own personalities and unique attributes, which are called **character traits**. These traits can be positive, negative, or neutral. Positive character traits might be described by words like *kind*, *considerate*, and *honest*. Negative character traits might be described as *greedy*, *violent*, or *stubborn*. Other possible character traits are given in the chart below. Do you know what each of these traits means? These are vocabulary words that you should know, so look up any that you are unsure of.

**Chart 1:**  
**Character Trait Vocabulary Words**

admirable	corrupt	evasive	juvenile	prosperous
aloof	disciplined	fanatical	logical	respectable
amiable	disrespectful	genial	offensive	ruthless
attentive	emotional	haughty	persistent	sinister
brave	energetic	indifferent	pious	spiritual
competent	envious	jovial	prim	steadfast

### Direct Characterization

**Characterization** is the way the author reveals a character’s personality or nature. In **direct characterization**, the author describes the character or makes statements about him or her. The author may use specific words like the ones in chart 1 above to characterize a person in a story.

**Example 1:** Christina was an admirable teenager. She had earned the respect of her peers and even influenced their behavior for the better. She was always amiable, polite, and considerate, so her other classmates and friends enjoyed being with her.

This is an example of direct characterization because the author describes the girl as admirable and amiable. In this excerpt, the author has not shown the girl’s character traits through the girl’s actions, words, or thoughts.

Do you know what *admirable* and *amiable* mean? *Admirable* means being admired or looked up to by others. *Amiable* means being likeable and friendly.

## Section 11.2, continued

### Characters and Character Traits

#### Indirect Characterization

In **indirect characterization**, the author shows the reader something about the characters through the characters' words, their thoughts, their actions, or other characters' words or thoughts about them. Indirect characterization is more effective because the author is showing, rather than just telling.

**Example 2:** Buddy said to his teacher, "I can't take credit for the idea behind the project because my grandfather thought of it. He told me how to make the representation of the atom with wire and beads. I put it together, but all the ideas were his."

The author reveals Buddy's character by his own words. His words show him to be honest and open. The author doesn't have to state these characteristics directly.

**Example 3:** Kennedy looked at her friend and thought, "She thinks she's so special because she has a new bracelet. She gets everything she wants while my parents are so stingy. I want that bracelet, and I deserve to have it. I'll take it when she puts it down, and she'll never know. I'll take it home and hide it. My parents won't know that I have it."

In this example, the reader can see the thoughts of Kennedy, which show she is envious of her friend and ruthless about getting what she wants.

Actions can tell the reader the most about an individual. People's actions usually show more than words because people may say one thing but do another.

**Example 4:** Jim looked around his room and adjusted the books in his bookcase to be perfectly straight. He looked in the closet to make sure his shoes were lined up neatly. Then he put the colored pencils he had used for his project into the desk drawer with the points all facing the same way. He looked around once more and then left to get a snack.

Jim is shown through his actions to be fanatical about neatness and order in his room.

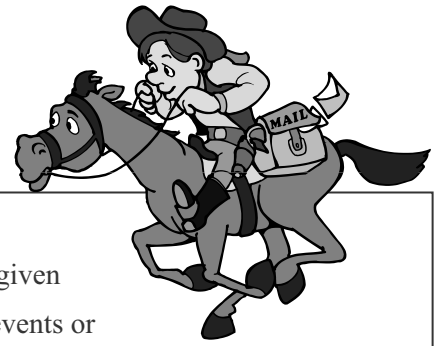
Other people in a story can also reveal character traits about one of the characters.

**Example 5:** After Jerry left, I called Rachel to tell her my computer program was finally working. I said, "Jerry is amazing with what he knows. He immediately knew the problem and the solution. He understood all the features of the program and explained them to me in an understandable way. He even recommended a new program that is even better and will be available soon. I had no idea he is so competent with technology."

The speaker explains to a friend how competent Jerry is and how he helped her with a computer program. The speaker's words describe Jerry as intelligent, knowledgeable about computer programs, and willing to help.

# Evaluation and Synthesis

## Section 12.1 Inferring Cause and Effect



### Key Terms

- **Inference** – a logical guess or opinion based on the information that is given
- **Cause and Effect** – a text structure that shows a relationship between events or actions by showing how one results in the other

Remember that an **inference** is a logical guess based on clues. You have already seen how important it is to make inferences and draw conclusions when you read. By combining the details provided by the author with your own prior knowledge, you can have a much better reading experience.

Authors usually expect readers to infer some details about a subject and may use text structure to give clues for some information. For example, a **cause and effect** text structure shows how one event or action results in another. An author can use the cause and effect text structure to enhance story elements like irony and mood, to change the reader's opinion on a subject, or even to give clues that help the reader solve a mystery. However, the author may expect the reader to infer a cause or an effect.

**Example:** Read the following passage. What causes and effects can be inferred?

### Bronco Charlie

Everyone knew the Pony Express Riders. They were men on a mission, undaunted by the trials of harsh weather or rough terrain. Every man who signed on as a rider had to take an oath, swearing that he would remain focused on his journey and not be distracted along the way with liquor or gambling or any other such evils. Of course, most of these “men” were teenage boys since no rider could weigh more than 125 pounds. The owners knew that a lightweight rider would make the journey faster and easier on himself and the horses.

The Pony Express Riders rode fearlessly in a horseback relay race to deliver mail much faster than the standards of the time. Until the Pony Express, it could take months to have a package delivered from the eastern seaboard to the distant California. So when three men — William Russell, William Waddell, and Alexander Majors — decided to set up a mail service that could make cross country deliveries in only ten days, the entire nation was impressed.

Of course, there were times when riders couldn't finish their routes due to sickness, accidents, or even death. One such time was the day that “Bronco Charlie” Miller took his first ride. The rider on duty was sick, and Charlie's father tended the horses at his station along the Pony Express route. Charlie's father recommended his son to finish even though Charlie was only eleven years old. After a quick discussion, the men decided there was no other way to get the package delivered, so Charlie was told to get ready quickly. He knew the route by heart, and he was an excellent horseman despite his young age. His horse was saddled, and he charged into the route with determination showing in his young eyes.

Did Bronco Charlie finish his trip? Well, he *claimed* to have made the run successfully. He also claimed to have done such a good job that the Pony Express company hired him as a rider. Years later, he told and retold the story numerous times as part of Buffalo Bill's Wild West Show. Of course, he also claimed to have taken part in many other wild adventures that may or may not have happened. Most people think he probably stretched the truth about his time with the Pony Express. It was okay, though — they loved his stories anyway.



**Section 12.1, continued**  
**Inferring Cause and Effect**

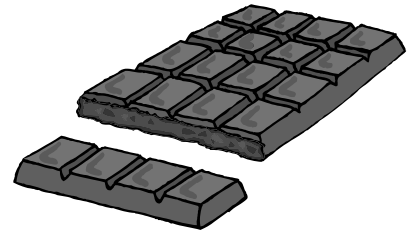
The Pony Express service lasted only eighteen months. The telegraph soon made it possible to send messages even faster, so the riders were no longer seen crossing the country at breakneck speeds. Ever since the Pony Express ended, Americans have loved to hear dramatic and romanticized stories of the Pony Express riders. They will live on as a much loved part of American history.

Several causes and effects are mentioned in this passage. The chart below summarizes the use of cause and effect in some of the paragraphs and shows inferences that the reader can make based on the given information.

Paragraph	Use of Cause and Effect	Inferences
Third paragraph	Because the regular rider was sick and because Charlie’s father tended the Pony Express horses, Charlie was considered to run the regular route that day. Charlie’s experience as a horseman and his knowledge of the route led the adults to trust him with the route even though Charlie was only eleven years old.	What can the reader infer about Charlie’s character? The reader can infer that Charlie was a dependable and trustworthy young man even at the age of eleven. Charlie’s character is a cause that can be inferred. His character caused his father to recommend him.
Fourth paragraph	Charlie told stories of many wild adventures. His elaborate tales led most people to doubt the truth of some of the stories even though they still loved to hear them.	What can the reader infer about Charlie from this information? The reader can infer that Charlie was a talented entertainer. This inference is also a cause. Because Charlie is a talented entertainer, people paid to see him perform even if they didn’t believe his stories were entirely true.
Fifth paragraph	Because the telegraph made sending messages faster and easier, the Pony Express was discontinued.	What can the reader infer about the stories told about the Pony Express? Because the Pony Express only ran for a short time, the stories of the riders are more precious. It is natural that these stories have been exaggerated and dramatized. The stories being treasured is an inferred effect of the short-lived Pony Express.

# Summarizing and Paraphrasing

## Section 13.3 Summarizing a Passage



When writing a summary of a passage, you include only the most important ideas and details. A true summary of a passage will be about one-fourth of the length of the original. The challenging part of writing a summary is deciding what is important and what should be left out. A good way of summarizing a passage is to summarize each paragraph in one or two sentences. Use the skills that you practiced in Section 13.2 for each paragraph, and then combine the summary sentences to create a summary for the passage.

**Example 1:** Read the following passage “Food of the Gods.”

### Food of the Gods

The cacao tree found in Mexico, Central America, and South America produces seed pods loaded with the dark beans that are ground to make chocolate. The Latin name for the cacao tree literally means “food of the gods.” The chocolate of the ancient world of the Incas and Mayans, however, was quite different from the sweet confection enjoyed today. It was a bitter drink made from the dried, roasted, and fermented beans. The idea of sweet chocolate would come later — much later.

Spanish explorers brought cacao beans back to Spain, along with the process for making a drink similar to the ones in Central America. The Spaniards preferred a milder version that they made by mixing in sugar and vanilla. The beans were so expensive that the drink was reserved for the rich and powerful. Not wanting to share its discovery with the rest of Europe, Spain kept the chocolate drink a secret for more than 100 years. Eventually the secret leaked out, and the privileged of other nations began enjoying chocolate, including the thirteen British colonies in North America.

Numerous countries in Europe and even colonial America perfected their own particular ways of making chocolate. The Industrial Revolution brought new and better ways of processing chocolate. An English company developed a way to make solid chocolate bars. Now chocolate could be eaten as a sweet snack. The ability to “mass produce” chocolate using machines, rather than by hand, made chocolate affordable for everyone.

Modern chocolate manufacturing has continued to grow worldwide and now focuses mainly on chocolate candy. Not only is chocolate a tasty treat, but many experience a “good feeling” from eating it. Perhaps that’s why chocolate has become a four billion dollar industry in the US alone with the average American eating at least half a pound of chocolate per month. Perhaps chocolate is truly the “food of the gods.”

### Which sentences belong in the summary below and which do not?

(1) Chocolate from the past was consumed in a drink that was not at all sweet. 2) Early chocolate in Spain was modified by making the drink sweet, but Spaniards kept news of this costly drink away from other countries for many years. 3) Even the new colonies in America began drinking it. 4) Making chocolate evolved into producing common place bars through efficient machines. 5) The sale of chocolate has become a profitable billion dollar business of mainly chocolate candy.

To answer this question, compare each sentence to see if it is a summary of one of the paragraphs. Can you see that sentences 1, 2, 4, and 5 correspond to summaries for paragraphs 1, 2, 3, and 4? Notice that sentence 3 is a detail found in the second paragraph, but it doesn’t summarize that paragraph. Since sentence 3 is a detail sentence and not a summary of a paragraph, it does not belong in the overall summary of the passage.

# Persuasive Writing

## Section 15.3 Tools of Persuasion, Part 1



### Key Terms

- **Tools of Persuasion** – techniques that authors use to persuade readers
- **Bandwagon** – persuasive technique that urges the reader to join the crowd
- **Stereotyping** – persuasive technique that treats an entire group as having the same characteristic
- **Association** – persuasive technique that connects a positive thought or image to the object, idea, or person being advertised
- **Name Calling** – persuasive technique that uses negative titles to describe something or someone
- **Endorsement** – persuasive technique that uses the name of a famous person to promote something or someone
- **Plain Folks** – persuasive technique that is targeted to appeal to common, ordinary people
- **Tabloid Thinking** – persuasive technique that oversimplifies a complex issue
- **Shock Tactics** or **Fear Tactics** – persuasive techniques that are meant to motivate people to act out of disgust or fear

You have already seen how authors use their writings to accomplish specific purposes, such as to inform, to entertain, or to explain. Another reason authors write is to persuade. Remember that to persuade is to convince someone to do something or to influence his or her opinion about something. Advertisements for products, services, and political candidates are all meant to be persuasive.

**Tools of persuasion** are techniques that authors use to persuade their readers. There are many different ways authors try to persuade readers, but the same tactics are often used again and again. Understanding how these tactics work and how authors use them can help you make better decisions when reading persuasive writing. In many cases, authors who want to persuade readers do not provide facts or evidence for their ideas. Instead, they use carefully arranged words and phrases to convince readers. Advertisements of all kinds often use tools of persuasion, but these tools can also be found in other types of writing.

### Bandwagon

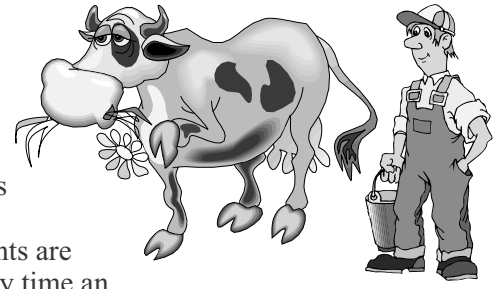
One of the most common tools of persuasion is the **bandwagon** technique. Using this method, authors try to convince readers to do something because “everybody else is doing it.” To recognize the bandwagon technique, look for the mention of other people who are already convinced. For example, if a toothpaste commercial says “Smart moms insist on Brushee Toothpaste for their children,” the author is trying to convince mothers that they should use the toothpaste because *all the other moms* are already using it.

**Example 1:** The Walk-a-Lot running shoe provides better support for your feet and ankles than any other shoe on the market. Just ask the hundreds of marathon runners who have already switched to Walk-a-Lot running shoes!

This advertisement for running shoes uses the bandwagon technique to convince readers, especially runners, to buy these shoes. The author wants to convince the reader that hundreds of marathon runners are using this brand of shoe so the reader should also.

## Section 15.3, continued

### Tools of Persuasion, Part 1



#### Stereotyping

Another way authors persuade is to use stereotypes. **Stereotyping** means assigning one characteristic to an entire group, such as saying that all lawyers are dishonest or all blondes are dumb. Obviously, these statements are not true. *All* lawyers are not dishonest, and *all* blondes are not dumb. Any time an author uses words like *all* or *always*, be careful to read further before following his ideas. Stereotype characteristics can be either positive or negative.

**Example 2:** All farmers know the value of time and hard work. Our new self-timed, automatic feed dispensers will help farmers save time and energy because they will know that their cattle are still being fed on schedule.

This advertisement is aimed at farmers to convince them to buy an automatic feed dispenser. It stereotypes farmers as a group of people who all know the value of time and hard work. It uses a positive stereotype in an attempt to appeal to farmers as a group.

#### Association

To *associate* means to connect two things in the mind. For example, one might associate the smell of freshly baked cookies with thoughts of home and parents. Authors use **association** to persuade readers by associating a product, idea, or person with positive thoughts or images. The goal of association is often to stir up positive emotions in the reader that are then associated to something or someone else. For example, a brand of soda may be associated with fun times with friends.

**Example 3:** When Jerry Stockton isn't on the job or at home with his family, you'll find him at the local nursing home where he loves to sing and dance with the patients. Trust Jerry as your next representative, and remember that he cares about the needs of our elderly citizens.

In this political advertisement, the author associates Jerry Stockton to images of him singing and dancing with elderly patients in a nursing home. The image of singing and dancing at a nursing home is meant to stir up positive emotions that are then linked to, or associated with, this political candidate. The association in this advertisement is probably meant to appeal to older citizens.

#### Name Calling

We all know it isn't polite to call people names, but authors often use the name calling technique because they want people to think of some candidate or idea in a negative way. **Name calling** is just that — using a negative label or description for the person or idea. Name calling is similar to using association but in a negative way.

**Example 4:** Mr. Wright, the radical lunch Nazi, is on the war path again! Last year, he demanded that cookies be banned from the cafeteria menu. Now he is demanding that all the vending machines be removed from the school. His tyranny has gone too far!

This example calls Mr. Wright names to persuade readers that he is being unreasonable. The author calls him *radical* and labels him as a *Nazi*. The author also compares his actions to a tyrant, or a dictator. All of these words are meant to stir up negative feelings toward Mr. Wright and his actions.

## 8th Grade Language Arts: Vocabulary/Reading TE

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### DIRECTIONS

An eighth grade Language Arts end-of-course test may be divided into two sections: Vocabulary/Reading (V/R), and Writing/Grammar (W/G). This practice test will test only Vocabulary/Reading skills.

Some V/R items will be related to passages, and others will be stand-alone items.

The items associated with passages may reference particular lines in the passages. Every fifth line is numbered to help you locate these referenced lines.

Stand-alone items may reference a stimulus for you to study before you respond to the question.

The following two boxes contain samples of V/R items.

### SAMPLE A

**Look at each pair of words. Which pair of words are antonyms?**

- A** divide — separate
- B** admit — deny
- C** exact — perfect
- D** confusion — excitement

(A) (B) (C) (D)

### SAMPLE B

**Which of the following statements is NOT an opinion?**

- F** George Washington was the first President of the United States.
- G** George Washington was a great President.
- H** George Washington's speeches are entertaining to read even today.
- J** A movie about George Washington would be educational but boring.

(F) (G) (H) (J)

**GO ON** 

Read the following passage, “Petrified...Forest?” Then answer questions 1–8 based upon the passage.

### Petrified...Forest?

The sign read, “Petrified Forest: 65 miles.” Finally, I had hope! The 1,330 miles of interstates, rest stops, and gas stations would pay off as we neared the first stop on our list of chosen destinations. My brothers continued their video games, but I peered out the window to catch occasional glimpses of jack rabbits and antelope.

5 Dad’s job as head of maintenance at the local industrial plant had always prevented him from taking us on any long vacations, so our family had settled for weekend trips to the beach every summer. Then Dad’s company closed. He had already found a new job, thankfully, but it wouldn’t start for three more weeks. We all piled into Mom’s SUV and headed for the Grand Canyon.

10 The Petrified Forest was our first stop since it was on the way to the Grand Canyon. We had driven over 1,000 miles down I-40, the interstate that crossed the Painted Desert and the Petrified Forest and would lead us closer to the Grand Canyon.

15 I checked the battery in my digital camera. Good, it was fully charged. I put the wrist strap on and mentally prepared to take some great shots of all the trees in the Petrified Forest. I knew petrification meant that the wood had hardened as the living tissues in the trees were replaced with silica and other minerals. I also knew that the process could happen only when the trees were protected from air exposure since air makes things decompose. What I couldn’t imagine was how an entire forest could become petrified. Could all the trees be buried quickly so that no air could reach them?

20 I was eager to see all the trees, the remnant of a long-ago forest. My brothers liked to tease me about being interested in history and geography, but I’ve found my books by their beds. When their friends come over, my brothers quickly throw the books back into my room because they are afraid their friends will make fun of them. Being a girl, I don’t have to worry about such things. We were all excited about seeing a new place. As the signs became more frequent, we  
25 knew the Petrified Forest was close, and my brothers stopped their video games in anticipation of our arrival.

At the Petrified Forest National Park entrance, the gatekeeper asked if we had any petrified wood in our car. “*Why would we have petrified wood in our car?*” I couldn’t help but ask myself. As it turns out, many people over the years had carried out pieces of the petrified wood  
30 that they found. At that rate, the Petrified Forest would eventually disappear. The gatekeeper had to ask everyone if they had any and depended on them to tell the truth about it. It seems that it would have made more sense to ask people on their way out, but no one asked me.

“*No problem,*” I thought. I would take photographs of the petrified trees and leave only my footprints around them.



GO ON

35 Past the entrance, it seemed we were still in the middle of a desert. I couldn't imagine where  
the forest might be. Then we were there, or at least, I guessed we were. There was a paved  
parking area next to more desert and a lot of pieces of what looked like petrified wood lying  
around. The parking area told me we were in the right place, but I could barely believe my eyes.  
40 All I could think was that they should have started asking people about the wood they were  
carrying out a long time ago because there wasn't much left!

As we headed for the paved walking trail, I thought to myself, "*I should've done more  
research before we left.*" This was certainly not what I'd expected when I read the name *Petrified  
Forest* on the map. The ranger on duty obviously didn't think anything was wrong, so I guessed  
this was what a petrified forest looks like. The ranger looked nice enough, so I asked him why  
45 the "forest" seemed nothing like one.

He explained, "Well, actually, the forest was somewhere else. Millions of years ago before  
the continents separated, trees fell in Amazon forests and then floated down the Colorado River  
to this location. When the continents shifted, the logs were covered with sand and silt, which  
protected them from air. Later, winds blew the top layer of sands away, and these trees were left  
50 for us to see. Pretty cool, right?" My response was, "*Yeah, I guess,*" but I held my tongue and  
nodded instead. At least now I understood how the trees were protected from air exposure.

The petrified trees and logs really were beautiful, and I took lots of amazing pictures. The  
layers and swirls of colors in each trunk were stunning. When minerals replaced the wood during  
petrification, quartz crystals of all colors formed, especially in hues of red, orange, pink, and  
55 purple. It sure did seem odd, though, that a log jam in a river on another continent and millions  
of years ago would end up being called the Petrified Forest here in Arizona.

Despite some disappointments along the way, I'm really glad we went. I sure hope the Grand  
Canyon is actually a huge ravine and not just some ditch that started somewhere else!

1. The author wants to add headings to the passage "Petrified...Forest?" Which of the following headings will not assist a reader of the narrative?

- A Don't Take the Wood
- B Almost There
- C Floating Trees
- D Deep in the Forest

(A) (B) (C) (D)

2. Based upon context clues, what is the meaning of the word decompose as it is used in line 17?

- F to thicken
- G to break down
- H to bind together
- J to rust

(F) (G) (H) (J)

GO ON 

# Vocabulary/Reading Practice Test 1

## Evaluation Chart

On the chart below, circle each question that you answered incorrectly on Practice Test 1. Review the sections for each question that you missed.

If you missed question #:	Go to section(s):	If you missed question #:	Go to section(s):
1	8.1	21	14.1
2	1.2, 1.4, 1.5	22	2.1, 2.4
3	11.2	23	11.1, 11.5, 14.1, 14.2, 14.4
4	5.2, 12.1	24	5.1, 13.4
5	Section 8	25	12.3, 12.4
6	13.1	26	5.2, 12.3, 12.4
7	11.5	27	Section 4
8	13.2	28	1.1, 1.2, 1.3
9	6.3	29	7.1, 7.2
10	13.3	30	Section 3
11	Section 8	31	15.3, 15.4
12	1.4, 1.5, 14.1, 14.2	32	10.4
13	7.3	33	15.4
14	15.1	34	10.4
15	13.1	35	10.4
16	5.1, 5.2	36	15.1
17	5.3	37	13.4
18	11.1, 11.2	38	2.3
19	11.5	39	1.2
20	14.5	40	14.3