



# FOCUS ON Reading Strategies

## Teacher Guide

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## All About Reading

Reading research clearly indicates that reading and learning are active processes (Vacca & Vacca, 1996; Barton & Billmeyer, 1998). The six *Focus on Reading Strategies* workbooks, Levels C–H for students in grades 3–8, offer direct instruction and practice in essential active reading strategies. Students need to be taught and have the opportunities to practice active reading strategies, which are the tools needed for comprehension. Competent readers use active reading strategies to seek meaning (Palincsar & Klenk, 1991).

### What Is Strategic Reading?

Strategic reading is thinking about and interacting with text—a conversation, either out loud with others or to oneself, between the author and the reader. Strategic readers are active thinkers when they read, not just passive receivers of information (Duke & Pearson, 2002; Irvin, et al., 1995; Vacca & Vacca, 1993).

### What Are Active Reading Strategies?

A strategy is defined as “skillful planning and management.” Therefore, think of a reading strategy as a conscious plan that helps readers manage the comprehension skills they have. Reading strategies are about connecting, questioning, visualizing, determining importance, inferring, synthesizing, monitoring, and repairing—not as isolated processes, but as interrelated processes—working together simultaneously during reading. Strategies are plans that require the reader to be an active participant in what is read. Research supports the benefits of using strategies (Pressley, 2000; Barton & Billmeyer, 1998; cf. Barton, 1997; Palincsar & Brown, 1984).

### What About Reading Skills?

Skills are the cognitive processes that make up the act of reading. Skills are essential. Good readers must be both skillful and strategic. Anyone who has been involved in sports can recall long practice sessions, drilling on skills until they became automatic. So it is with reading. As students progress beyond “learning to read” and into “reading to learn,” early reading skills, such as decoding, become automatic. At this point, students focus on more advanced comprehension skills. Strategies are the reading tools or behaviors that help readers take their literacy comprehension skills to the next level.

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## All About the *Focus on Reading Strategies* Workbooks

### How Can *Focus on Reading Strategies* Help?

Each *Focus on Reading Strategies* workbook offers direct instruction in using essential active reading strategies to master standards-based skills critical to reading comprehension. The high-interest fiction and nonfiction selections span a wide range of genres and topics.

### How Are the *Focus on Reading Strategies* Workbooks Organized?

Each workbook has six units with two related lessons. Each lesson, featuring a fiction or nonfiction selection, offers direct instruction and practice in before, during, and after reading strategies to help students develop and manage comprehension skills.



## What Skills Are Covered in *Focus on Reading Strategies*?

The following standards-based literacy skills are covered in the six workbooks for students in grades 3–8.

Focus on Reading Strategies	Grade 3 Level C	Grade 4 Level D	Grade 5 Level E	Grade 6 Level F	Grade 7 Level G	Grade 8 Level H
<b>Reading</b>						
Analyze Plot Structure	✓	✓	✓		✓	
Analyze Tone						✓
Articulate Author's Perspective					✓	
Compare and Contrast	✓	✓			✓	
Describe Mood						✓
Determine Main Idea			✓		✓	
Distinguish Fact and Opinion	✓					
Distinguish Point of View					✓	
Draw Conclusions	✓			✓		✓
Examine Theme	✓	✓	✓	✓		
Find Relevant Details	✓			✓		✓
Interpret Symbolism						✓
Make Connections	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Make Inferences	✓			✓		
Practice Active Questioning	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Predict	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
Recall Facts	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Recognize Cause and Effect			✓		✓	
Recognize Persuasive Techniques				✓		✓
Sequence Events	✓	✓				
Summarize				✓	✓	✓
Understand Characterization	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
Use Prereading Strategies	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Use Visual Mapping	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
<b>Writing</b>						
Write a Friendly Letter	✓		✓		✓	✓
Write a Prediction	✓		✓	✓	✓	
Write an Interview	✓	✓	✓	✓		
Write to Describe	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Write to Entertain	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Write to Explain	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓
Write to Inform	✓		✓	✓		✓
Write to Persuade	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓
Write to Summarize		✓		✓	✓	✓
<b>Vocabulary</b>						
Analyze Multiple Meanings		✓	✓	✓		
Build Vocabulary	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Classify Words		✓		✓	✓	
Identify Parts of Speech	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓
Recognize Base Words	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓
Understand Prefixes & Suffixes	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
Understand Synonyms & Antonyms	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Use Context Clues	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Use a Dictionary	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

The following strategies are covered in the six workbooks for students in grades 3–8.

<p><b>Previewing</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>10 most important words</li> <li>Analyze title</li> <li>Anticipation guide</li> <li>Brainstorm</li> <li>Framed sentence</li> <li>Knowledge chart</li> <li>KWL chart</li> <li>Make connections prompt</li> <li>Predict based on introduction</li> <li>Predict based on key words</li> <li>Prediction chart</li> <li>Prior knowledge prompt</li> <li>Probable passages</li> </ul>	<p><b>Knowing How Words Work</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Create a scenario using target word</li> <li>Create sentences with target word</li> <li>Frayer model</li> <li>Identify synonyms</li> <li>Identify word parts</li> <li>Knowledge rating checklist</li> <li>Provide examples</li> <li>Rewrite definitions</li> <li>Student VOC strategy</li> <li>Use context clues</li> <li>Use dictionary</li> <li>Word parts chart</li> </ul>
<p><b>Self-Questioning</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Think-along questions</li> </ul>	<p><b>Monitoring</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Check for understanding multiple-choice questions</li> <li>Review activities</li> <li>Think-along questions</li> </ul>
<p><b>Making Connections</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Make connections prompt</li> <li>Metacognitive statement</li> <li>Op-ed piece</li> <li>Persuasive essay</li> <li>Think-along questions</li> <li>Venn diagram</li> </ul>	<p><b>Summarizing</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>5 Ws organizer</li> <li>Plot chart</li> <li>Retelling chart</li> <li>Sequence chart</li> <li>Story frame</li> <li>Story string</li> <li>Think-along questions</li> <li>Write newspaper article</li> <li>Write summary</li> </ul>
<p><b>Visualizing</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Cause-and-effect organizer</li> <li>Character map</li> <li>Comparative organizer</li> <li>Diagram</li> <li>Draw pictures to visualize</li> <li>Frayer model</li> <li>Hierarchical organizer</li> <li>Plot chart</li> <li>Problem/solution organizer</li> <li>Semantic map</li> <li>Sequential organizer</li> <li>Series of events chain</li> <li>Spider map</li> <li>Story frame</li> <li>Story string</li> <li>Venn diagram</li> </ul>	<p><b>Evaluating</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>10 most important words</li> <li>Characterization chart</li> <li>Character map</li> <li>Character sketch</li> <li>Think-along questions</li> </ul>

## How Is Each Lesson Organized?

Each lesson in *Focus on Reading Strategies* has six sections. Students will use multiple strategies as they complete the activities in each section. The variety of activities addresses multiple learning styles.

**Before Reading: Heads Up** Direct instruction in this section accesses prior knowledge and builds background knowledge to provide a framework for deeper understanding of the reading selection in the lesson. Research shows that readers are in a better position to understand what they're reading if prior knowledge is activated (Vacca, 2002; Irvin, et al., 1995).

**During Reading: Think-Along Questions** Specific questions are interjected throughout the selection to promote active reading. Readers will question what they read, make predictions, make connections, and practice the featured skill as they answer the questions and interact with the author's words. Research shows that proficient readers keep a constant check on their understanding as they read (Duke & Pearson, 2002; Irvin, et al., 1995).

**After Reading: Read with Understanding** This multiple-choice question offers practice in the featured skill. The format of this activity is similar to questions included in state, national, and standardized tests.

**After Reading: Make Sense of Words** A featured strategy will be applied to vocabulary bolded within the selection. Students are encouraged to use this vocabulary strategy with other words that they identify as difficult as they read. Research substantiates vocabulary knowledge as an important factor in successful comprehension (Laflamme, 1997; Barton & Billmeyer, 1998). Building vocabulary will increase students' comprehension (Stahl, 1999).

**After Reading: Understand by Seeing It** Students use visual mapping strategies with a variety of graphic organizers to practice the skill featured in the lesson.

**After Reading: Write to Learn** Reading instruction should make connections between reading and writing (Duke & Pearson, 2002). Students connect reading and writing and demonstrate their understanding of the selection through this low-stakes writing activity. Research shows that low-stakes writing helps readers interact personally with the text without the pressure of completing a finished piece of writing (Vacca, 2002).

## Will Students Have a Chance to Review?

Two Review lessons, one after the first three units and the second after the last three units, offer students an opportunity to make connections as they practice the skills and strategies from the previous three units on a new selection.

## How Is Listening Comprehension Included?

A Listening Comprehension activity follows each review. The selections for each listening lesson and directions for presenting them are provided in this resource. These selections and the activities that follow help students learn to become attentive, active listeners. Students will make and confirm predictions as they complete the questions related to the listening selections.

# All About Using the *Focus on Reading Strategies* Workbooks

## Which Students Should Use the *Focus on Reading Strategies* Workbooks?

*Focus on Reading Strategies* workbooks Levels C–H are designed for all students in grades 3–8. By third grade, students have mastered the cognitive processes of reading. It is at this point that they need to begin using strategies to master comprehension.

The standards-based skills and reading strategies featured within each unit of the *Focus on Reading Strategies* workbooks align to the National Standards for the English-Language Arts. The *Focus on Reading Strategies* workbooks are written for students reading at or near grade level. The interest level and reading level of the selections in the workbooks are grade-level appropriate.

## How Are the Units Introduced?

Unit introductions are provided in this Teacher Guide. Teachers frontload instruction through discussion, a minilesson, and related standards practice in the teacher guide before students begin each unit in the *Focus on Reading Strategies* workbook. In addition, vocabulary from the two lesson selections in each unit in the Student Workbook is featured with definitions and offered as reproducible word cards at the end of each Unit Introduction to prepare students for reading the selections.

**Unit 5: Understand Characterization**

Unit 5 focuses on *Understanding Characterization*. Characterization is the act of bringing characters to life for the reader. An author can reveal characters by describing their thoughts, words, actions, and appearances. Characters are also seen through their interactions with other characters. How and why characters act as they do affects the way a plot develops.

**Selections Featured**

**Lesson 9** Rebecca: Calvin Coolidge's Raccoon by Kathleen Mahood  
In this fiction narrative, students will read about President Coolidge's pet raccoon, Rebecca. The passage shows his love for animals and his sensitive nature. The selection exemplifies how an author uses characterization to bring a character to life.

**Lesson 10** Teacher's Pet from *Marvin Redpost: Alone in His Teacher's House* by Louis Sachar  
This novel excerpt characterizes a clever teacher and the mischievous, but kindhearted, student named Marvin, whom she asks to take care of her dog while she is away.

**Before the Unit Introduction**  
Explain to the students that an important component of understanding and enjoying a reading selection is the reader's ability to believe in the characters in the story. An author makes this happen through characterization. Characterization involves a collection of descriptions, thoughts, and actions that bring characters to life. Discuss that writers develop their characters by

- what the characters say
- what the characters do
- what the characters think
- how the characters look
- what other characters say about them or how other characters react to them

As readers become acquainted with characters, they will understand their thoughts and behavior and better predict how they will act and interact with others. In addition, understanding a character will often help readers understand the theme.

8 | *Focus on Reading Strategies*, Level C

**Minilesson**  
Miriam

**Materials**  
Create an overhead transparency of the text on page 58 to model and practice understanding the character of Miriam. Provide students with a copy of the reproducible graphic organizer on page 59.

**Procedure**

- Introduce the character card organizer. Discuss with students how identifying information in these areas can help readers develop a clear picture of the characters and the role they play in the story.
- Ask students to read the first paragraph to themselves. Model read the paragraph, including the think-alouds to illustrate the thinking processes that help readers understand characterization. *Miriam is a middle child. So far, there isn't anything outstanding about her for people to pay attention to, but I know her name.* Have students fill in Miriam on the "Name" blank.
- Continue by having the students read the next sentence. Establish that this information describes how the character looks. Have students add the information to that section of the reproducible.
- Read the last two paragraphs, one at a time. Ask students to supply additional characterizations and justify their responses by indicating what words they used as clues. Highlight the words students indicate. Continue to determine the methods used and write the descriptions on the graphic organizer.
- Discuss with students that writers often use a combination of the methods and not just one to develop their characters.
- Allow the students time to illustrate their character cards.

**Reproducible Practice**  
Fourth of July Parade  
Use the reproducible paragraphs and graphic organizer on pages 60-61 for further practice in understanding characterization.

## Teacher-directed minilesson

**Miriam**

There were five children in Miriam's family, and Miriam was the one in the middle. Benjamin, her older brother, had just received a college scholarship, and her older sister Rebecca was a star swimmer. Everyone paid attention to the five-year-olds, Nathan and Joshua, because they were identical twins. Miriam was just . . . Miriam.

Miriam is a middle child. So far, there isn't anything outstanding about her for people to pay attention to, but I know her name.

She wore her shoulder-length hair in a plain ponytail and always had sneakers on her feet.

This tells me how she looks.

She towered over most girls her own age, but it didn't seem to bother her. She helped her mother with the washing and cleaning, and she always kept an eye on the twins when her mother was out running errands.

How is the character of Miriam developed here?

In the summer, Miriam spent a little time at the beach, but mostly loved to spend time cuddled up in the family hammock enjoying her s. Many friends called to invite her to do things with them, but she accepted some of their invitations. She often said to her mother, "I e sleepy, peaceful pace of summertime."

How is Miriam's character developed here?

Think-alouds for discussion

## Practice related to the featured strategy

**Directions:** Read the passage below. Look for hints or clues to the kind of person Joel is. Then fill in the character map.

**Fourth of July Parade**

"I love the Fourth of July," said Joel to himself as he dressed for the day. He knew that he couldn't shoot off any fireworks, but he would go to a parade and watch the big fireworks display that night. Most people might wonder why an energetic, athletic, nine-year-old boy was so excited about a parade. He had just one word to say—"candy!"

Of course, he loved to see the bands, the floats, the horses, and the loud fire trucks, but most of all, he loved the candy! He had a big sack all ready to go. He was so fast, he could snatch candy as quickly as people in the parade could throw it out. . . .

Finally, the time arrived for Joel and his family to head to the parade. Joel was ready to grab some candy. The parade began, and Joel's bag got heavier and heavier as each float went by. This was better than trick-or-treating!

Suddenly, Joel heard a small cry. He turned around and saw a little boy and girl sitting on the curb crying. They had sacks like Joel's, but theirs were almost empty.

The parade continued, and the next float came down the street throwing candy by the ton! Joel quickly grabbed up two handfuls. Just as his mother was about to say something, he turned and ran straight toward the little boy and girl. He carefully divided up his handfuls into their two bags. He gave them a big grin and returned for more.

## Vocabulary word cards

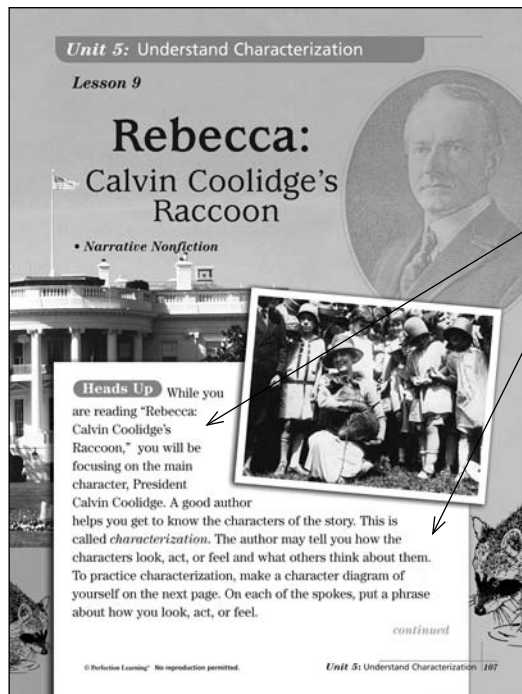
<b>hearthstones</b> stones of a fireplace between the heat and the floor South, Plain and Tall	<b>homely</b> plain; not very attractive North, Plain and Tall
<b>mild mannered</b> not harsh; gentle South, Plain and Tall	<b>descendants</b> others who are descended from (came from) a certain ancestor East Glens of Africa
<b>legend</b> story handed down through the years and connected with real events, but probably not true East Glens of Africa	<b>maneless</b> lacking the long hair along the neck of a lion East Glens of Africa
<b>outbreak</b> sudden occurrence East Glens of Africa	<b>prey</b> animal hunted for food by another animal East Glens of Africa
<b>revelation</b> something that is made known East Glens of Africa	



## Can Students Work Through the *Focus on Reading Strategies* Workbooks Independently?

The *Focus on Reading Strategies* workbooks are written to be completed independently by students. The direct instruction and clear, detailed directions provide explanations and practice of important literacy skills and strategies. Response Keys for introductory activities and workbook lessons follow each Unit Introduction in this Teacher Guide and can be reproduced for self-correcting.

### Student Workbook



Explanation of the featured skill

Detailed directions

### Response Key for introductory activities

Response Key			
<b>Before Unit 5</b>			
<b>Minilesson (Mirkus)</b>			
How She Looks	What She Does	What She Thinks	What Other People Think of Her
Makes child, always friendly, always smiling, likes to read, likes to play.	Doesn't get angry, helps her mother with cleaning and washing, reads in her room.	Considers right, doesn't let her mother read, likes to get to the beach, get hang out with friends, loves the story, powerful piece of summertime.	Mother trusts her, so happy, friends want to play with her.

**Fourth of July Parade**  
 Answers will vary. Possible responses:  
**How He Looks:** energetic, athletic, nine-year-old  
**What He Does:** sang, moved quickly, filled sack, shared the candy, grunted and returned for more.  
**Sentence:** Joel is a thoughtful person.

### Response Key for Student Workbook lessons

Response Key <i>continued</i>	
<b>Lesson 10</b>	
<b>Make Sense of Words</b> (pages 124–125)	
1. a. believe to act in an acceptable way, especially by being polite and self-restrained b. Answer may vary. 2. b. place where people can leave their dogs while they are away c. Answer may vary.	
<b>Read with Understanding</b> (page 126)	
2. Marvin has trouble with school.	
<b>Understand by Seeing It</b> (pages 127–128)	
Marvin's friends wanted to be like him. Mrs. North trusted Marvin to watch her dog. Marvin is respectful. Marvin likes dogs. Marvin is a well liked, respectful, and responsible person.	



## What About Students Reading Above or Below Grade Level?

Although Levels C–H correspond to grades 3–8, a grade-level designation does not appear on the workbooks. As a result, students can be provided with a workbook at a higher or lower grade level based on their individual needs. English-Language Arts standards cycle up the grades, becoming more challenging as they are based on more difficult reading material. Therefore, students reading above or below grade level can use the *Focus on Reading Strategies* workbooks at their own individual reading level and still practice grade-appropriate English-Language Arts standards.

While the *Focus on Reading Strategies* workbooks are designed to be used independently by students, learning will be enhanced through classroom discussion. Talking about text, whether teacher-directed or student-to-student in partners or small groups, extends and deepens comprehension (Duke & Pearson, 2002). Teacher-directed lessons are recommended for struggling readers and English Language Learners. Although all students benefit from classmates' discussion, this discussion is especially beneficial for struggling readers and English Language Learners.

Blackline masters of graphic organizers used in the workbooks are included at the end of this Teacher Guide. Use these graphic organizers to help struggling or disadvantaged readers extend their use of reading strategies and build comprehension in reading outside their work in *Focus on Reading Strategies*.

At the end of each Unit Introduction, a Jump Start Vocabulary section lists and defines key vocabulary. Preteaching this key vocabulary is critical for English Language Learners, who cannot rely on context clues and general background knowledge to the extent that their English Language peers can.

## How Long Will It Take to Complete a Unit?

With a 30- to 40-minute class period, you should be able to cover a unit in two weeks. Shown below is a sample plan.

- Day 1: Unit Introduction and Minilesson
- Day 2: Complete reproducible practice activity and discuss
- Day 3: Heads-Up for first lesson and read selection
- Day 4: Reread selection and complete Make Sense of Words, Read with Understanding, and Understand by Seeing It
- Day 5: Reread selection and complete Write to Learn
- Day 6: Discuss all workbook activities completed for first lesson
- Day 7: Heads-Up for second lesson and read selection
- Day 8: Reread selection and complete Make Sense of Words, Read with Understanding, and Understand by Seeing It
- Day 9: Reread selection and complete Write to Learn
- Day 10: Discuss all workbook activities completed for second lesson

## National Standards for the English-Language Arts

Together NCTE (the National Council of Teachers of English) and IRA (International Reading Association) formulated twelve national standards with the vision that “all students must have the opportunities and resources to develop the language skills they need to pursue life’s goals and to participate fully as informed, productive members of society.” These standards do not address specific curriculum or instruction but encourage varied reading and experiences related to reading. *Focus on Reading Strategies* offers a wide range of text and the instruction and practice related to reading, addressing the following eight of the twelve National Standards for English-Language Arts.

1. Students read a wide range of print and non-print texts to build an understanding of texts, of themselves, and of the cultures of the United States and the world; to acquire new information; to respond to the needs and demands of society and the workplace; and for personal fulfillment. Among these texts are fiction and nonfiction, classic and contemporary works.
2. Students read a wide range of literature from many periods in many genres to build an understanding of the many dimensions (e.g., philosophical, ethical, aesthetic) of human experience.
3. Students apply a wide range of strategies to comprehend, interpret, evaluate, and appreciate texts. They draw on their prior experience, their interactions with other readers and writers, their knowledge of word meaning and of other texts, their word identification strategies, and their understanding of textual features (e.g., sound-letter correspondence, sentence structure, context, graphics).
5. Students employ a wide range of strategies as they write and use different writing process elements appropriately to communicate with different audiences for a variety of purposes.
6. Students apply knowledge of language structure, language conventions (e.g., spelling and punctuation), media techniques, figurative language, and genre to create, critique, and discuss print and non-print texts.
10. Students whose first language is not English make use of their first language to develop competency in the English language arts and to develop understanding of content across the curriculum.
11. Students participate as knowledgeable, reflective, creative, and critical members of a variety of literacy communities.
12. Students use spoken, written, and visual language to accomplish their own purposes (e.g., for learning, enjoyment, persuasion, and the exchange of information).

# All About *Focus on Reading Strategies*, Level C

The fiction and nonfiction selections represent a wide variety of interesting reading for students in grade 3.

## Unit 1: Practice Active Questioning

**Lesson 1:** Card Games

*Expository Nonfiction* by Beth Dvergsten Stevens

**Lesson 2:** How Far Away? *from* Tigers at Twilight

*Novel Excerpt* by Mary Pope Osborne

## Unit 2: Make Inferences/Draw Conclusions

**Lesson 3:** *from* Sarah, Plain and Tall

*Novel Excerpt* by Patricia MacLachlan

**Lesson 4:** Lion Ghosts of Africa

*Online Magazine Article* by Margaret G. Zackowitz

## Unit 3: Distinguish Fact and Opinion

**Lesson 5:** Alexa's Letter

*Letter to the Editor* by Alexa DeVore

**Lesson 6:** Gypsy Life *from* Gypsy in the Cellar

*Novel Excerpt* by Bonnie Highsmith Taylor

## Review 1

A Plan for Fame *from* Bigfoot in New York City?

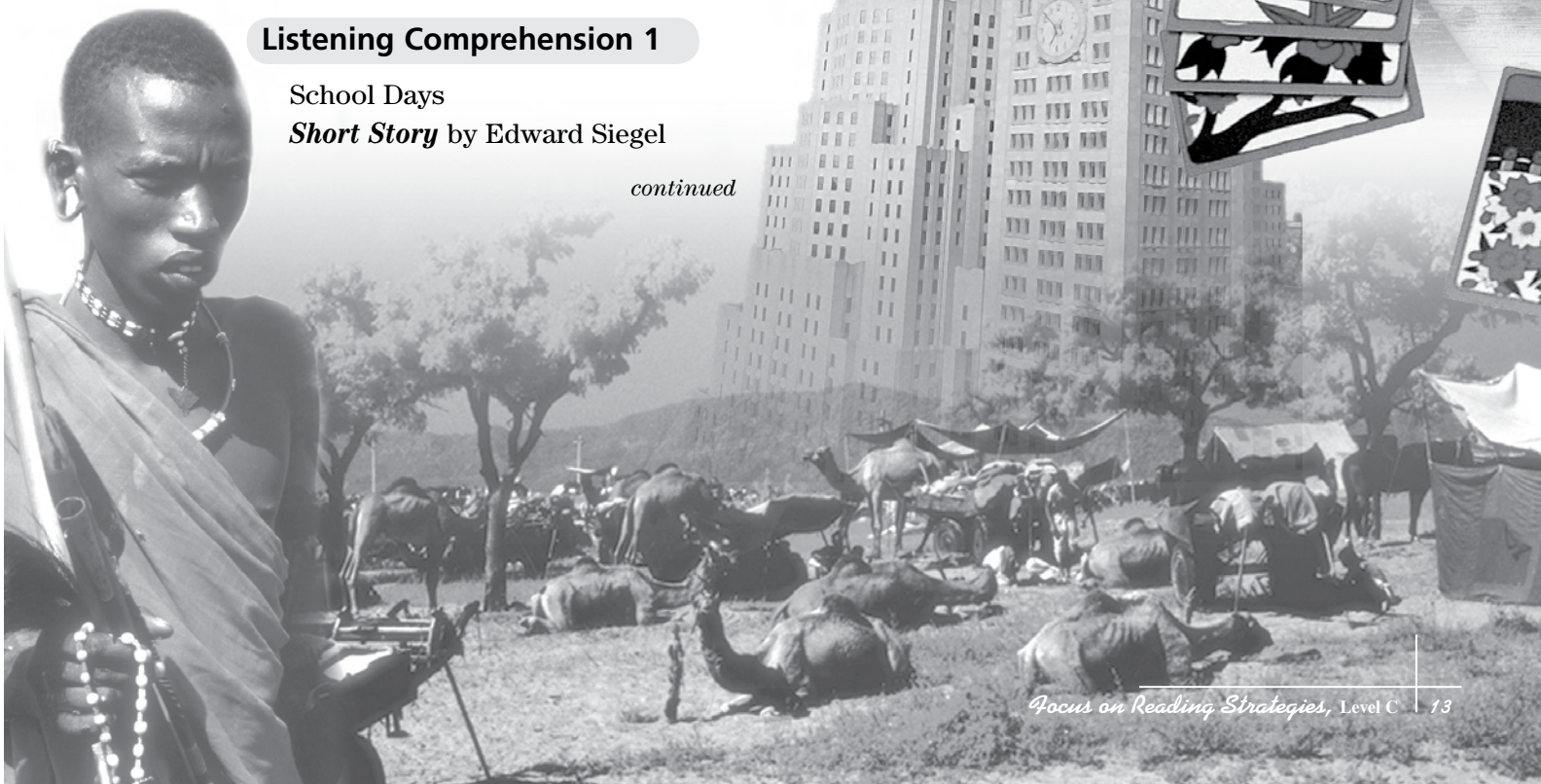
*Novel Excerpt* by Dorothy Francis

## Listening Comprehension 1

School Days

*Short Story* by Edward Siegel

*continued*





**Unit 4: Analyze Plot Structure**

**Lesson 7:** Danger at the Pond *from* The Spy Catchers

*Novel Excerpt* by Dorothy Francis

**Lesson 8:** The Ugly Duckling

*Fairy Tale* by Hans Christian Andersen (retold by L. L. Owens)

**Unit 5: Understand Characterization**

**Lesson 9:** Rebecca: Calvin Coolidge's Raccoon

*Narrative Nonfiction* by Kathleen Muldoon

**Lesson 10:** Teacher's Pet *from* Marvin Redpost: Alone in His Teacher's House

*Novel Excerpt* by Louis Sachar

**Unit 6: Examine Theme**

**Lesson 11:** The Country Mouse and the Town Mouse

*Fable* by Aesop (retold by Karen Berg Douglas)

**Lesson 12:** The Duck and the Moon

*Poem* by Leo Tolstoy

**Review 2**

Johnny Appleseed

*American Folktale* retold by Peg Hall

**Listening Comprehension 2**

The Three of Them

*Short Story* by Edward Siegel



## Unit 2: Make Inferences/Draw Conclusions

Unit 2 focuses on *Making Inferences* and *Drawing Conclusions*. Making inferences is equivalent to making educated guesses. Readers draw conclusions based on their own reasoning and textual clues rather than explicitly stated information. Students must combine the clues provided by the author with their previous knowledge to infer or draw conclusions about what is meant by the text.

### ***Selections Featured***

**Lesson 3** from *Sarah, Plain and Tall* by Patricia MacLachlan

This excerpt relates how a brother and sister learn to love and appreciate a woman who comes to marry their father after the tragic death of their mother. The passage gives students an opportunity to practice drawing conclusions and making inferences. The youngest child is asking questions about his deceased mother, whom he cannot remember. His lack of specific memories of her generates questions. Readers must make inferences to answer the child's questions about his mother.

**Lesson 4** *Lion Ghosts of Africa* by Margaret G. Zackowitz

This expository article details a terrifying time when two vicious lions were attacking and killing humans working on an African railroad project. The reason for their aggression toward humans instead of their normal prey was, and continues to be, a mystery. Students will have several opportunities to use what they already know about lions and the facts given in the story to draw conclusions and infer why the lions behaved the way they did.

### **Before the Unit** ***Introduction***

Explain that making inferences is a skill people use every day without even thinking about it. When your dog whines at the front door, you infer that she needs to go outside. When you hear screeching tires and a crash, you infer there has been an accident. These inferences are based on prior knowledge, or what you already know because of things that have happened before. People also use prior knowledge to make inferences when they read.

Discuss that in addition to prior knowledge, readers must pay attention to clues offered by the author. If the inferences students make rely only on prior knowledge and are not supported by the text, they will be incorrect. Likewise, those inferences that are supported by the text but are not in line with what the reader understands through prior knowledge will also be flawed. In order to make inferences, students must practice active reading strategies, always thinking and asking “I wonder” questions of themselves.

### ***Minilesson***

Recess

### **Materials**

Create an overhead transparency of the text on page 27 to model and practice *making inferences* and *drawing conclusions*.

### **Procedure**

- Explain to the class that they are going to read a passage that contains two kinds of information. Some of the information will be stated in the text, but some of the information will be implied. Remind the students that this process of drawing conclusions based on what is implied in a text is called *making inferences*.
- Read the story together. Model the inference think-alouds as they occur throughout the passage and discuss with students how your prior knowledge and clues from the text assisted you in making inferences and drawing conclusions.

### ***Reproducible Practice***

#### **Change of Season**

Use the reproducible paragraphs and graphic organizer on page 28 for further practice on *making inferences* and *drawing conclusions*.

## Recess

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Recess was so fun today. We had a great game of kickball. The team that usually plays against my team decided to stop being mad at us for telling on them yesterday. In fact, they challenged us to a weeklong kickball tournament.

I wonder what the other team did yesterday that started the argument? I can infer that they did something they weren't supposed to, because the passage said the first team told on them.

Our teacher was the referee, and he made sure that everyone followed the rules this time. Before we started to play, he said no one was allowed to throw the ball at someone else's head. Each team member got only one kick instead of three. Teams would have an equal number of third- and fourth-graders to make them fair.

I can infer that some people weren't playing by the rules yesterday because it says this time they did follow the rules. The conclusions I draw are that the other team had all the fourth-graders on it, so the teams weren't evenly matched. And I also conclude that the other team took more turns than they were supposed to. My prior knowledge tells me that the third-graders might not have had a chance "at bat" with a three-kick rule. Three kicks would be too easy for fourth-graders, so they never struck out, and that's why they changed that rule. I can also infer that someone got hit in the head with the ball yesterday.

The tournament was so much fun. Even though the other team won in the end, it was still a great experience, and it helped teach all of us some much-needed lessons in good sportsmanship.

**Directions:** Read the story. Answer each question using complete sentences.

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## Change of Season

Bonnie and her mother were working. They were taking their sweaters, long-sleeved shirts, and heavy pants out of their drawers and closets. They were folding them up and placing them in storage bins. Next, they opened up the doorway to the attic and went up the steep stairs. They dragged out two enormous boxes and managed to get them down the stairs. Then they opened them up and began sorting through sleeveless cotton shirts, brightly colored shorts, and numerous bathing suits. Bonnie tried a few things on. Some of the shorts were too small, not surprising since she hadn't worn them since last year. Everything else, however, seemed to fit. She carefully folded all of the items that still fit her and placed them in her drawers where the other clothes had been. After returning the empty boxes to the attic, she happily ran outside and down the street to join her friends who were riding bikes. She smiled to herself. This was her favorite time of year!

1. Where does this story take place? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

2. What happened to Bonnie between last year and now? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

3. What are Bonnie and her mother doing? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

4. What season is it? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_



### ***Jump Start Vocabulary***

Preteach key vocabulary to English Language Learners and struggling readers. Without this preteaching, they may be unable to access the concepts. Important vocabulary and relevant definitions are shown below. Discuss the meanings and provide examples. Whenever possible, provide visual clues as well.

#### **Sarah, Plain and Tall**

**hearthstones:** stones of a fireplace between the hearth and the floor

**homely:** plain; not very attractive

**mild mannered:** not harsh; gentle

#### **Lion Ghosts of Africa**

**descendants:** others who are descended from (came from) a certain ancestor

**legend:** story handed down through the years and connected with real events, but probably not true

**maneless:** lacking the long hair along the neck of a lion

**outbreak:** sudden occurrence

**prey:** animal hunted for food by another animal

**revelation:** something that is made known



## hearthstones

stones of a fireplace between  
the heat and the floor

Sarah, Plain and Tall

## homely

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Sarah, Plain and Tall

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Sarah, Plain and Tall

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## prey

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by another animal

Lion Ghosts of Africa

## revelation

something that is made known

Lion Ghosts of Africa

# Response Key

## Before Unit 2

### **Minilesson (Recess)**

Students should infer that the teams must have argued based on the statement about the teams being upset with each other.

Based on the new rules, it is fair to infer that someone must have been hit in the head the day before, and that three kicks were too many.

Since a point was made to ensure equality on the teams, one can infer that teams were not equal the day before.

### **Change of Season**

1. **Where does this story take place?** The story takes place in Bonnie's house. The author said it was their clothes and their furniture. I keep my clothes in my house.
2. **What happened to Bonnie between last year and now?** Bonnie grew over the past year. The author said her shorts fit last year, but they are too small now. I outgrow clothes too.
3. **What are Bonnie and her mother doing?** They are putting away their winter clothes and are getting out clothing for warmer weather. The author said they were putting away sweaters and heavy pants and bringing down shorts and bathing suits from the attic. We put our winter clothes away in boxes when it gets warm.
4. **What season is it?** It is summer. Sleeveless shirts and swimsuits are used in the summer. I ride bikes with my friends in the summer.

## Lesson 3

### **Make Sense of Words** (pages 33–34)

1. a. troublesome, homely, plain, horrid smell  
b. *Answers may vary.*  
c. of very low quality; extremely bad  
d. rotten, poor
2. a. characterized by spirited, sometimes aggressive, behavior  
b. *Answers may vary.*

### **Read with Understanding** (page 35)

2. Anna's family will write back to Sarah.

### **Understand by Seeing It** (pages 36–37)

#### **What the author says about Papa:**

Papa used to sing but doesn't anymore.

Papa was affectionate to his children.

Papa let his horse get away with anything.

Papa wanted a wife.

#### **What I already know:**

People sing when they are happy.

Parents who love their children are affectionate.

People who love their pets look past their faults.

Some people without spouses are lonely.

#### **What I can infer about Papa:**

Papa wasn't as happy without Mama.

Papa loved his children.

Papa loved his horse.

Papa was lonely.