

## Lesson #1: What is Non-fiction?

You have heard this term before and you have probably seen signs in the library or bookstore directing you to non-fiction, but what is non-fiction?



**Non-fiction** is literature that deals with the real world. It tells the story of actual events or people. Non-fiction can be anything from the directions that come with your cell phone to a section in your science textbook titled The Earth's Core. Non-fiction can come in the form of informational text, historical essays, biographies, letters/journals, and essays. The United States Constitution is even an example of non-fiction.

Readers can identify non-fiction by observing the structure and features of text. These elements of non-fiction help the reader connect with and understand the content. Starting with **structure**, this is how the text is organized. Text can be organized in a variety of ways – *cause & effect, compare/contrast, problem/solution, sequence, chronological order, and description.* [These will be explored further in lesson #4.]

When a reader knows what type of text to expect, they can better remember what they have read. It also helps the reader summarize after reading. If you were asked to summarize a biography, you would follow the chronological order of the text. *After all, it wouldn't make sense to summarize it out of order!*

**Features** help the reader make sense of what they are reading. These draw attention to important qualities in the text. Readers will find features such as special print, maps and visuals, captions, subtitles, glossary, index, and table of contents. Without these features, readers may struggle to comprehend the text. For example, a map of Ireland to accompany an article about Cork, Ireland's waterfront landscape would help a reader grasp the location of the city. *Look at the map below, can you spot Cork, Ireland?*

Special prints:

**Bold**

*Italics*

**Highlighter**



Now consider your textbook. What if you did not have an index to help you find the section on poetry? Readers looking for this section would have to flip through 700 pages to find the ones they need at that time. This waste of time is prevented by text features like a table of contents and index.

These text features are the building blocks of text structure. In a compare and contrast structured article you may find subtitles indicating a section about soccer and another subtitle indicating a section about football. These features prepare the reader for what type of text structure to expect.

Next time you pick up non-fiction literature, flip through the pages. Look for images, maps, graphs, captions, subtitles and see if you predict what you will learn by reading the article.





Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Homeroom: \_\_\_\_\_

### Lesson #1: What is Non-fiction?

#### Tour of the nonfiction library-

Before reading lesson 1, take a look at the collection of nonfiction. Flip through the pages and read a section or two. Write down your observations here.

1.

2.

3.

What is nonfiction?



What are some examples of nonfiction?

Go back to your observations. We can break these down into features and structures.

| Structure | Feature |
|-----------|---------|
|           |         |

How are text features helpful to authors and readers of non-fiction?

Special prints:

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Now, get a piece of nonfiction from the classroom library. Fill-in the organizer below with your observations, structure, and features.

Title: \_\_\_\_\_

Type of nonfiction: \_\_\_\_\_  
*Magazine, essay, textbook, etc.*

Feature:

Structure:

 Observations:

**TEACHER NOTES - Lesson #1: What is Non-fiction?**

**Tour of the nonfiction library-**

Before reading lesson 1, take a look at the collection of nonfiction. Flip through the pages and read a section or two. Write down your observations here.

1.

2.

3.

**What is nonfiction?**

*Literature that deals with the real world. Tells the story of actual events or people.*

*True stories!*

**What are some examples of nonfiction?**

*Informational text, historical essays, biography, letter/journals, essays*



Go back to your observations. We can break these down into features and structures.

| Structure   | Feature   |
|---|---|
| <i>The way the text is organized – C &amp; E, C/C, P &amp; S...</i> | <i>Special print (bold, italics)</i> <i>Index</i> |
|   | <i>Maps or visuals</i> <i>Table of contents</i>   |
| <i>Something in common among a type of text</i>                     | <i>Captions</i>                                   |
|   | <i>Glossary</i>                                   |

**How are text features helpful to authors and readers of non-fiction?**

Special prints:

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Get a piece of nonfiction from the classroom library. Fill-in the organizer below with you observations, structure, and features.

Title: \_\_\_\_\_

Type of nonfiction: \_\_\_\_\_

*Magazine, essay, textbook, etc.*

Feature:

Structure:



Observations:

## Lesson #2: Taking Notes

BEFORE READING- Ask yourself, *what are some ways that you currently take notes? Do you write things down in a journal? Do you cover your books in post-it notes? Or do you doodle in the margins to make visual connections?*

You have probably heard your teacher say “follow along, you will need these notes!” or “jot down notes as you read.” This lesson explores several different ways you can take notes while listening to a lecture or reading a text.

When reading, it is important to take note of the text you encounter. Proficient readers are constantly evaluating what’s important, what’s necessary, and what’s the main idea. Identifying the answers to these questions provides guidance as you read to understand.

There are two simple strategies centered around the main idea of text. These include **Boxes & Bullets** (Figure 1) and **Mind Mapping** (Figure 2). Both of these require the user to identify the main idea of the reading and support it with details from the text. These details can be examples, quotes, or anecdotes.

Building on these are more complex models such as Cornell Notes, Episodic Notes and Decision Trees. Each of these help you narrow down the important information and organize *new* information. All of these methods are graphic organizers. Let’s review what makes each of these unique?

Let’s start with **Cornell Notes** –

- **Cornell Notes** (Figure 3)
  - 2 columns
  - First column – main idea, heading, subheadings
  - Second column – bulleted notes related to first column keywords
  - Do NOT need to be complete sentences
  - Should be detailed & thoughtful
  - Capture the most important information

Next, **2 What’s and a Why** (Figure 4)

- Organize text evidence, your interpretations, and why it’s so important.
- Summarize the text
- Explain your personal response to the reading.

**Decision Tree** (Figure 5)

- Consider the consequences of different character choices
- Top box is characters choice, boxes 1-5 are possible outcomes

Lastly, **Episodic Notes** (Figure 6)

- Best for artistic and visual learners
- Determine most important scenes & draw

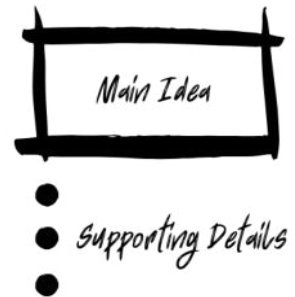


Figure 1 Boxes & Bullets

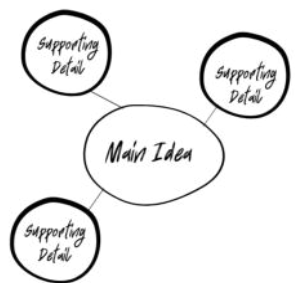


Figure 2 Mind Mapping

| Title of Notes   |   | Name<br>English Period<br>Date |
|--|---|--------------------------------|
| Main ideas, headings, subheadings                              | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Bulleted notes related to headings on the left</li><li>• Do not need to be complete sentences, but should be thoughtful, detailed, specific</li><li>• Capture the most relevant and important information</li></ul> |                                |
| Big Idea Generalizations<br>Summarizing the lesson concept(s). |   |                                |

Figure 3 Cornell Notes

| What do they say or do<br>quotes or examples | What it means<br>interpretation | Why it's important<br>discussion or analysis |
|--|---------------------------------|--|
|  |                                 |  |
|  |                                 |  |
|  |                                 |  |
|  |                                 |  |

Figure 4 Two What's and a Why

|  |  |
|--|--|
|  | Caption _____<br>_____<br>_____<br>_____<br>_____<br>_____<br>_____<br>_____<br>_____<br>_____ |
|  | Caption _____<br>_____<br>_____<br>_____<br>_____<br>_____<br>_____<br>_____<br>_____<br>_____ |
|  | Caption _____<br>_____<br>_____<br>_____<br>_____<br>_____<br>_____<br>_____<br>_____<br>_____ |

Figure 5 Episodic Notes

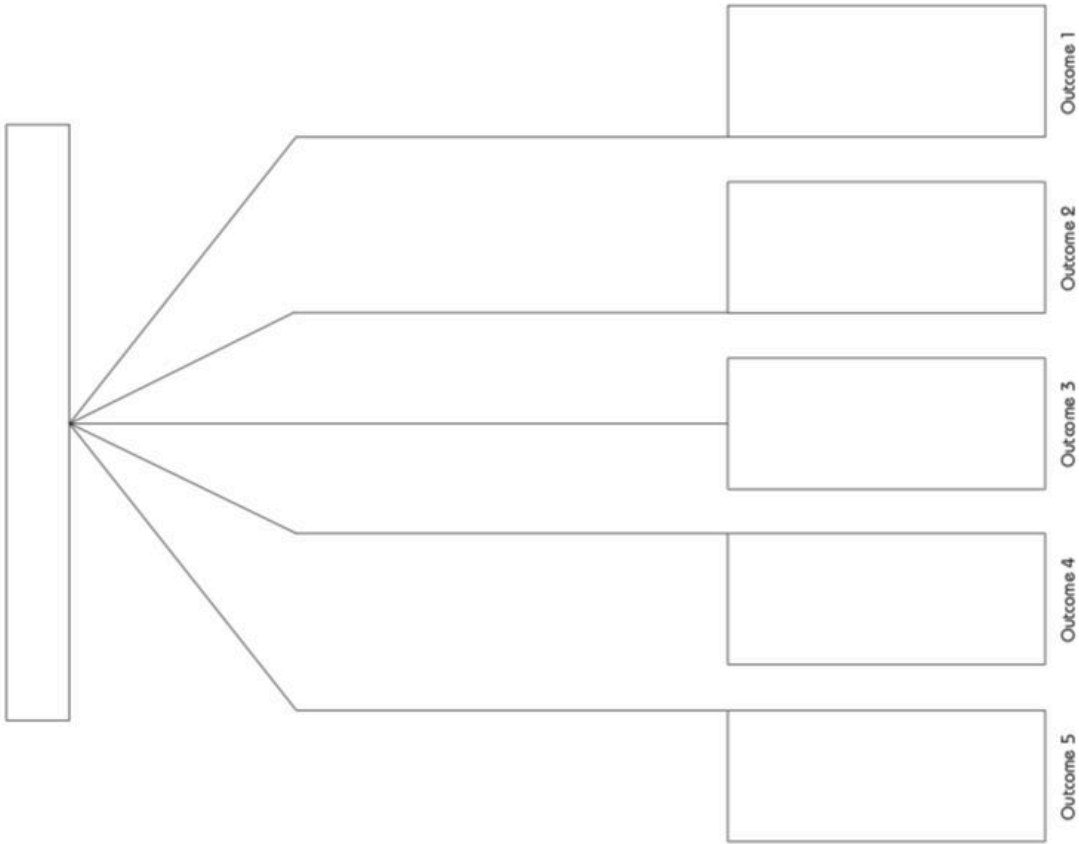
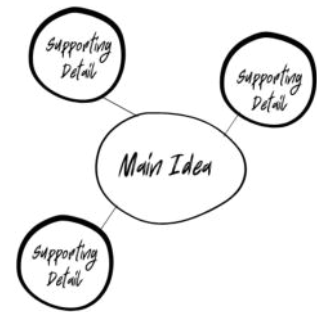
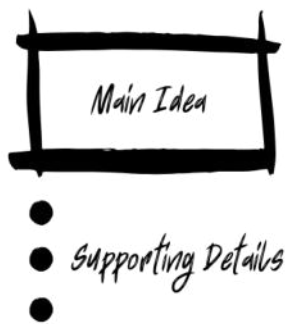


Figure 6 Decision Tree



## Note taking methods – Simple Strategies:



- ---

  - 2 columns
  - \_\_\_\_\_ column – main idea, heading, subheadings
  - \_\_\_\_\_ column – bulleted notes related to first column  
keywords
  - Do \_\_\_\_\_ need to be complete sentences
  - Should be detailed & thoughtful
  - Capture \_\_\_\_\_
- 2 what's and a why Notes
  - Organize text evidence, your interpretations, and why it's so important.
  - \_\_\_\_\_ the text
  - Explain your \_\_\_\_\_ to the reading.
- Decision Tree
  - Consider the \_\_\_\_\_ of different character choices
  - Top box is characters choice, boxes 1-5 are possible outcomes
- Episodic Notes
  - Best for artistic and \_\_\_\_\_ learners
  - Determine most important scenes & \_\_\_\_\_

Name \_\_\_\_\_  
English \_\_\_\_\_  
Date \_\_\_\_\_

# Title of Notes

Main ideas,  
headings,  
subheading

↓

- Bulleted notes related to headings on the left
- Do not need to be complete sentences, but should be thoughtful, detailed, specific
- Capture the most relevant and important information

↓

Big Idea: Generalizations summarizing the lesson concept(s).





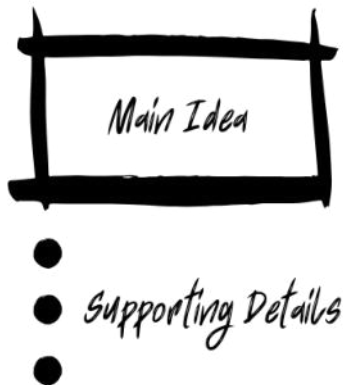
## TEACHER NOTES - Lesson #2: Taking Notes

### What are some ways that you currently take notes?

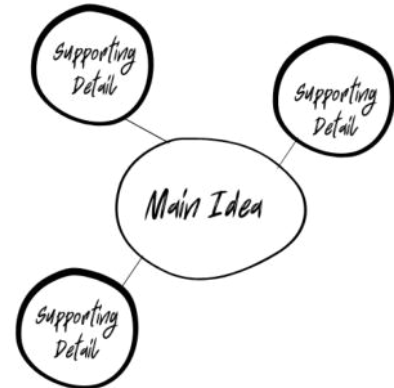
**When reading, it is important to take note of the text you encounter. What is important? What is not essential? What's the main idea?**

## Note taking methods – Simple Strategies:

## Boxes & Bullets



## Mind Mapping



Note taking method – Complex:

- **Cornell Notes**
  - 2 columns
  - First column – main idea, heading, subheadings
  - Second column – bulleted notes related to first column keywords
  - Do NOT need to be complete sentences
  - Should be detailed & thoughtful
  - Capture the most important information
- **2 what's and a why Notes**
  - Organize text evidence, your interpretations, and why it's so important.
  - Summarize the text
  - Explain your personal response to the reading.
- **Decision Tree**
  - Consider the consequences of different character choices
  - Top box is characters choice, boxes 1-5 are possible outcomes
- **Episodic Notes**
  - Best for artistic and visual learners
  - Determine most important scenes & draw

Name  
English Period  
Date

Title of Notes

Main ideas,  
headings,  
subheading

↓

- Bulleted notes related to headings on the left
- Do not need to be complete sentences, but should be thoughtful, detailed, specific
- Capture the most relevant and important information

↓

Big Idea: Generalizations summarizing the lesson concept(s).

[illegible]

|  |  |
|--|--|
|  | Caption _____<br>_____<br>_____<br>_____<br>_____<br>_____ |
|  | Caption _____<br>_____<br>_____<br>_____<br>_____<br>_____ |
|  | Caption _____<br>_____<br>_____<br>_____<br>_____<br>_____ |

Outcome 5 Outcome 4 Outcome 3 Outcome 2 Outcome 1

-Cris Tovani

### Lesson #3: Nonfiction Annotations

In the last lesson you learned about a variety of methods to take notes. Where some people excel with these skills, others are more successful when annotating text. **Annotation** refers to a reader's interaction with text. This includes highlighting and taking notes in the margins while reading. This interaction with the text allows readers to better comprehend what they read, as well as, set them up with a resource for future reference.

Not sure how to be a successful annotator? Check out these 8 tips:

1. Summarize a section or paragraph and highlight supporting details.
2. Make an inference and highlight the supporting details.
3. Explain how the title connects to the text.
4. Make text to self-text-world connections.
5. Explain how a text feature (maps, pictures, charts) connects to the passage.
6. Mark areas of confusion and writing an "I wonder..." question.
7. Clarify what an author really means when using figurative language.
8. Identify and label text structures such as cause/effect; problem/solution; compare/contrast; steps in a procedure; chronological.

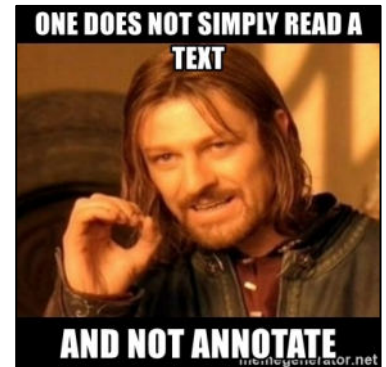
When reading non-fiction about an unfamiliar topic, you will more than likely come across new information and new words. These new, unknown words can become part of your vocabulary by practicing these vocabulary annotation techniques.

### Vocabulary Annotations

1. Circle an unfamiliar word, highlight context clues in the text, and write inferred definition in the margin.
2. Use word-whacking strategy. Identify base word, Greek/Latin roots, prefixes, and/or suffixes (affixes) to construct meaning of a word. Write the definition of circled word in the margin.
3. Use a dictionary to look up a word. Select the definition that aligns with how the word is used in context of the text. Write the definition in the margin.

These new techniques sound simple, but it's easy to get confused when reading more complete non-fiction. Stay away from these thoughts and actions when struggling with new text and annotation-

1. I like this / I don't like this.
2. This confuses me.
3. Circling a word and leaving it.
4. Highlighting details without annotations.



5. Only annotating the text feature. You must annotate text details, too.
6. Using symbols or emoticons (smiley faces, stars, question marks, exclamation points) because these do not show that you read the text.

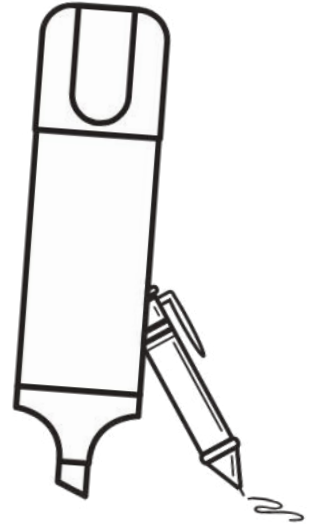
As we continue on this journey of non-fiction, take a moment to write down your annotation goals. What techniques will you use to gain new knowledge and strengthen your annotation skills. *Write this goal on your notes sheet.*

### Lesson #3: Nonfiction Annotations

#### Annotation –

Be insightful! Here's some ways to be the best at annotations:

1. \_\_\_\_\_ a section or paragraph and highlight supporting details.
2. Make an \_\_\_\_\_ and highlight the supporting details.
3. Explain how the \_\_\_\_\_ connects to the text.
4. Make text to \_\_\_\_\_ connections.
5. Explain how a \_\_\_\_\_ (maps, pictures, charts) connects to the passage.
6. Mark areas of \_\_\_\_\_ and writing an "I wonder..." question.
7. Clarify what an author really means when using \_\_\_\_\_
8. Identify and label \_\_\_\_\_ such as cause/effect; problem/solution; compare/contrast; steps in a procedure; chronological.



#### Vocabulary Annotations

1. Circle an unfamiliar word, \_\_\_\_\_ in the text, and write inferred definition in the margin.
2. Use \_\_\_\_\_ strategy. Identify base word, Greek/Latin roots, prefixes, and/or suffixes (affixes) to construct meaning of a word. Write the definition of circled word in the margin.
3. Use a \_\_\_\_\_ to look up a word. Select the definition that aligns with how the word is used in context of the text. Write the definition in the margin.

#### Stay Away From

1. I like this. / I don't like this.
2. This confuses me.
3. Circling a word and leaving it.
4. Highlighting details without annotations.
5. Only annotating the text feature. You must annotate text details, too.
6. Using symbols or emoticons (smiley faces, stars, question marks, exclamation points) because they do not show that you read the text.



#### My annotation goals:

### TEACHER NOTES - Lesson #3: Nonfiction Annotations

**Annotation** – reader’s interaction with text. This includes highlighting and taking notes in the margins while reader.

**Be insightful! Here’s some ways to be the best at annotations:**

1. Summarize a section or paragraph and highlight supporting details.
2. Make an inference and highlight the supporting details.
3. Explain how the title connects to the text.
4. Make text to self-text-world connections.
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6. Mark areas of confusion and writing an “I wonder...” question.
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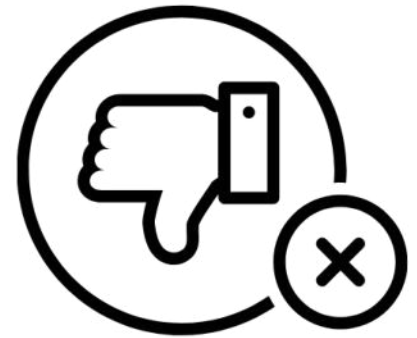
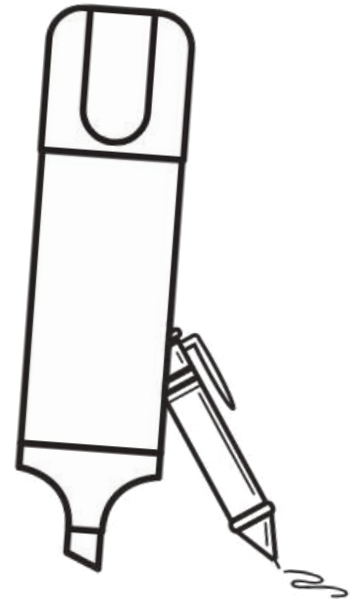
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#### My annotation goals:

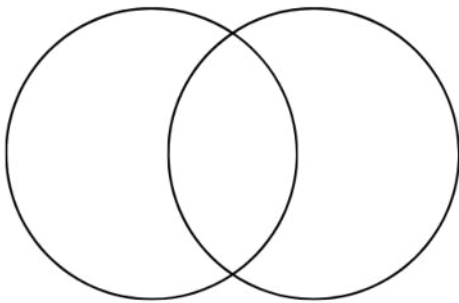




#### Lesson #4: Text Structures

Think back to the last piece of literature you read. Whether it was a magazine article or a YA novel, can you tell what structure that text followed? Did the author compare and contrast two things? How about present a problem and then a solution? Or maybe you read a recipe for chocolate chip cookies. These are all different examples of how text can be organized.

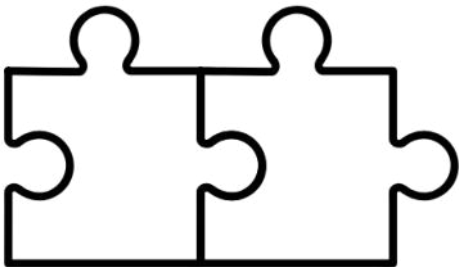
Below are six text organization structures commonly found in nonfiction literature.



##### Compare/Contrast

Typically represented by a Venn Diagram, compare and contrast is evaluating the similarities and differences of two or more items or topics.

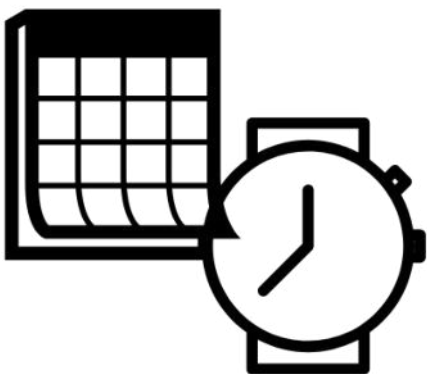
You may come across compare/contrast organization when reading about iPhones vs. Android, or Xbox vs. PlayStation. These articles will feature keywords like *alike*, *compare*, *both*, *neither*, *even though*.



##### Problem & Solution

In this type of text, an author will introduce a problem followed by a solution. The author may provide readers with one simple solution or they may share a variety of options to pick from.

An article titled “Seatbelts: How the Auto Industry is Saving Lives” would be an example of problem and solution. This article would contain keywords like *answer*, *unsure*, *conflict*, *issue*, *resolve*.



##### Chronological Order

This structure tells the reader of events that happen in order of time. It is important to note the detail of dates and times.

A book titled “The Life & Times of Nelson Mandela” would follow chronological order. Although there are no exact keywords for chronological order structure, a reader should look for specific times (3:36pm) and dates (May 31, 2014) throughout the text.

1  
2  
3

### Sequence

Commonly confused with chronological order, sequence text organization follows a series of events, however, dates and times are not relevant.

Readers will find a sequence organization when reading instructions and recipes. Key words include: *first...*, *next...*, *last...*

### Cause & Effect

Easily confused with problem/solution, cause and effect text will describe something that happened that cause something else to happen. The effect can be good or bad, and in some cases, there is more than one effect.

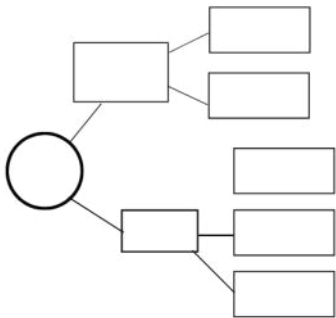
An article about how the Cane Toad has impacted the ecosystem in Africa would be a good example of cause and effect. Some common keywords include *so*, *if...then...*, *because*, *since*, *therefore*.



### Description

Lastly, a reader may come across an article that is full of information. It may include lists, details, and facts. This makes it common, but hard to identify. A reader will need to look critically to determine if the text is a description of a subject/topic or possibly another text structure in disguise.

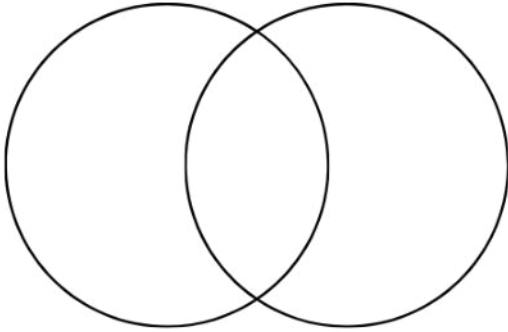
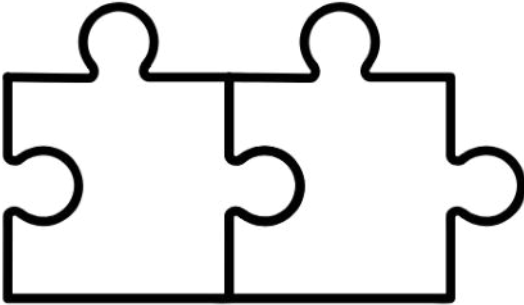
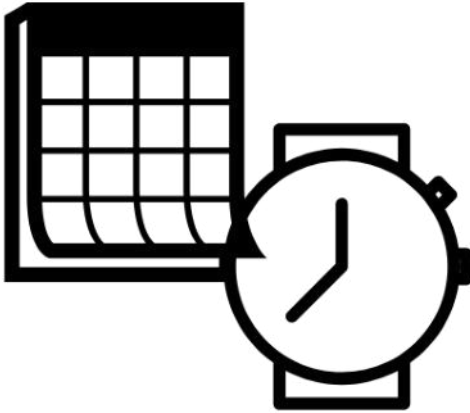
This structure does not state any key words, but readers can look for words that appeal to the 5 senses – *sight*, *smell*, *hear*, *taste*, *touch*. An example of this text would be a letter to parents for “Back to School.” This would feature a list of supplies, schedules, start times, and dress code information.

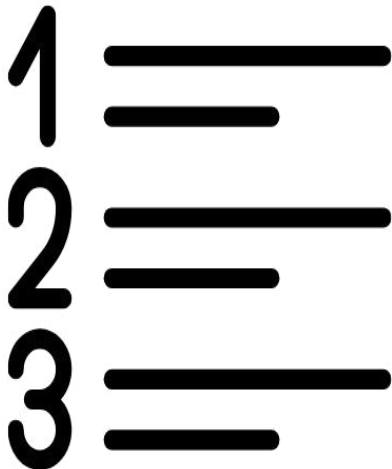

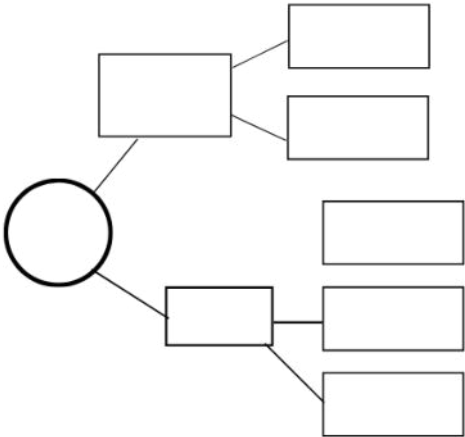


Name: \_\_\_\_\_

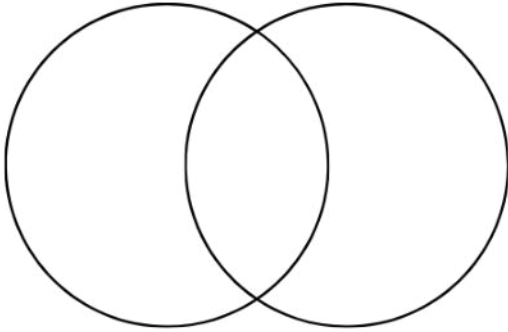
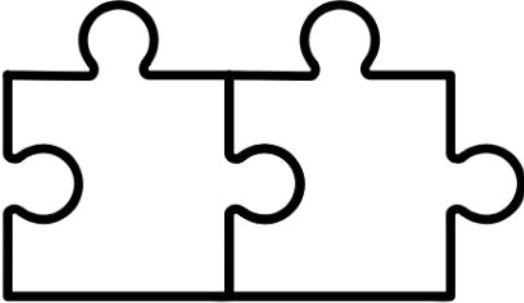
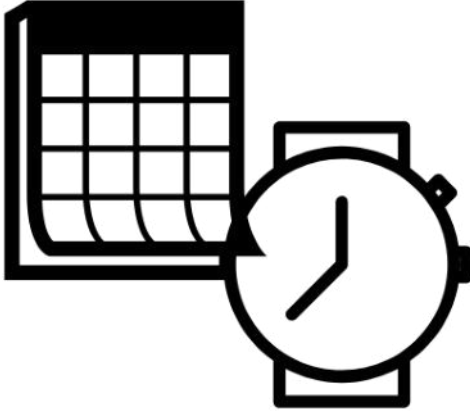
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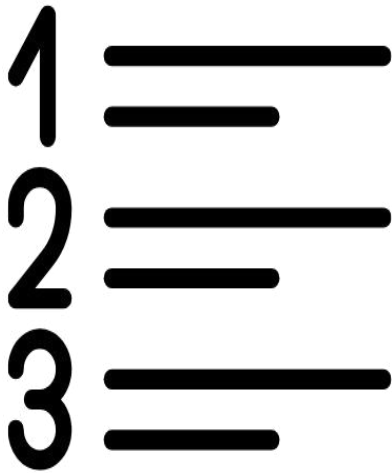
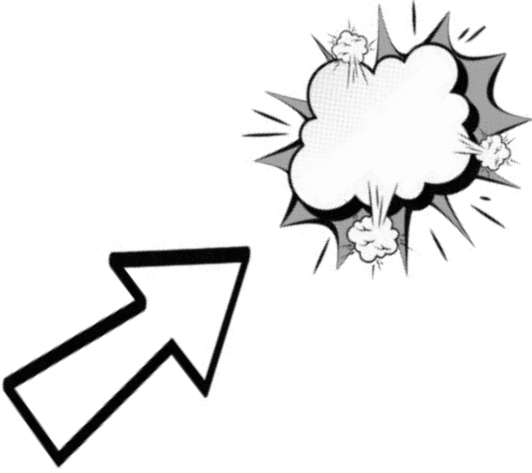
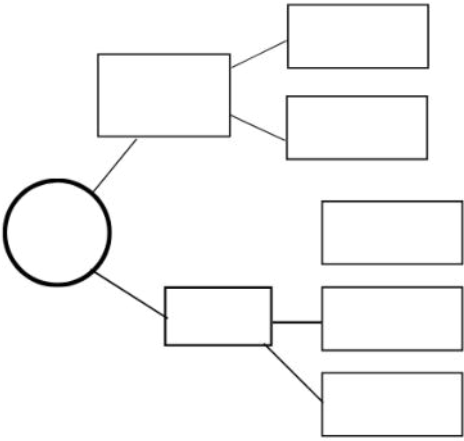
**Lesson #4: Text Structures**

|  | Key Words | Graphic  | Examples<br><i>(Take from reading or write your own)</i> |
|--|-----------|--|--|
|  |           |    |  |
|  |           |   |  |
|  |           |  |  |

|  | Key Words | Graphic  | Examples<br>(Take from reading or write your own) |
|--|-----------|--|---|
|  |           |    |   |
|  |           |   |   |
|  |           |  |   |

**TEACHER NOTES - Lesson #4: Text Structures**

|                               | Key Words  | Graphic  | Examples |
|-------------------------------|--|--|----------|
| <i>Compare contrast</i>       | <i>Alike<br/>Compare,<br/>Both,<br/>Neither,<br/>Even though</i> |    |          |
| <i>Problem &amp; Solution</i> | <i>Answer,<br/>Unsure,<br/>Conflict,<br/>Issue,<br/>Resolve</i>  |   |          |
| <i>Chronological Order</i>    | <i>Dates<br/>Times<br/><br/>In 1999...<br/><br/>At 3:36pm...</i> |  |          |

|                | Key Words   | Graphic  | Examples |
|----------------|---|--|----------|
| Sequence       | <p><i>Step one,<br/>Step two...</i></p> <p><i>First, next, last...</i></p>  |    |          |
| Cause & Effect | <p><i>So,<br/>If...then...,<br/>Because,<br/>Since,<br/>Therefore</i></p>   |   |          |
| Description    | <p><i>Words that appeal to our 5 senses</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-sight</li> <li>-smell</li> <li>-hear</li> <li>-taste</li> <li>-touch</li> </ul> |  |          |

## 6<sup>th</sup> Grade ELA – Reading

### Nonfiction Unit

#### Lesson #5: Finding the main idea -“What does the author want me to know about the topic?”

Possibly the most common question asked on a state test is one about the main idea of a reading. The **main idea**...

- is the key idea that the author introduces and develops using specific details
- may also be referred to as the central idea
- may be stated or it may be implied
- when stated in a paragraph, it is most often found in the first sentence of the paragraph. However, the main idea may be found in any sentence of the paragraph.

Example passage:

It is often said that lightning never strikes twice in the same place, but this isn't true. Go ask the forest rangers. Rangers who spend their summers as fire-fighters will tell you that every thundershower brings several bolts of lightning to their lookout stations.

Main idea: *The saying lightning never strikes the same place twice is false.*

Is this stated or implied? *Stated – first sentence of paragraph*

Specific details used to support the main idea: *“fire-fighters will tell you that every thundershower brings several bolts of lightning to their lookout stations”*

Use this example to help you figure out the main idea of the passage in your notes.

So what can you do to make sure you correctly identify the main idea? Ask yourself these questions:

1. What's the point?
2. Can you sum it up?
3. What is a good title?



#### Strategies to find the main idea (multiple choice test questions):

1. Prediction – *before reading any multiple-choice options, state the main idea of the passage in your own words*
2. Actively read –
  - Underline or circle important claims
  - Identify the point of view of the author, and note how it differs from other views presented (the perspectives of other individuals or groups)
  - Jot quick notes to yourself in the margins (annotate!)
  - After every paragraph, check your comprehension by saying the main point of the paragraph back to yourself in *your own words*.

Adapted from Khanacademy.org





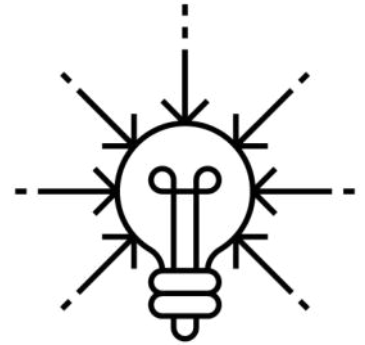
Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Homeroom: \_\_\_\_\_

**Lesson #5: Finding the main idea** Finding the main idea - “What does the author want me to know about the topic?”

The main idea:

- is the key idea that the author introduces and \_\_\_\_\_ using specific details
- may also be referred to as the \_\_\_\_\_
- may be stated or it may be \_\_\_\_\_
- when stated in a paragraph, it is most often found in the \_\_\_\_\_ of the paragraph. However, the main idea may be found in any sentence of the paragraph.



Practice passage #2:

There are great numbers of deer around here. This whole area is great country for hunters and fishermen. There are bears, mountain lions, and coyotes. To the east there are streams full of trout, and there are ducks and geese.

Main idea: \_\_\_\_\_

Is this stated or implied? \_\_\_\_\_

Specific details used to support the main idea: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

So what can you do to make sure you correctly identify the main idea? Ask yourself these questions:

1. \_\_\_\_\_ ?
2. Can you \_\_\_\_\_ it up?
3. What is a good \_\_\_\_\_ ?

On a multiple choice test you might be asked to select the correct main idea. What strategies can you use to find the main idea:

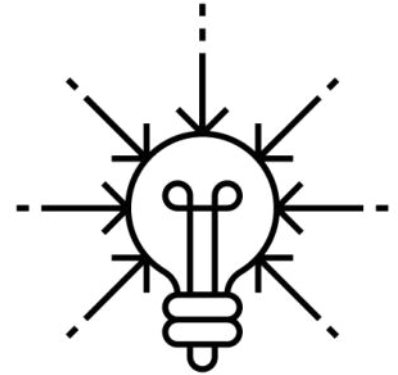
1. Prediction – *before reading any multiple-choice options, can you state the main idea of the passage*
2. Actively read –
  - \_\_\_\_\_ important claims
  - Identify the \_\_\_\_\_ of the author, and note how it differs from other views presented (the perspectives of other individuals or groups)
  - Jot quick notes to yourself in the \_\_\_\_\_
  - After every paragraph, check your comprehension by saying the main point of the paragraph back to yourself in *your own words*.

6<sup>th</sup> Grade ELA – Reading  
Nonfiction Unit

**TEACHER NOTES - Lesson #5: Finding the main idea** Finding the main idea - “What does the author want me to know about the topic?”

The main idea:

- is the key idea that the author introduces and develops using specific details
- may also be referred to as the central idea
- may be stated or it may be implied
- when stated in a paragraph, it is most often found in the first sentence of the paragraph. However, the main idea may be found in any sentence of the paragraph.



Practice passage #2:

There are great numbers of deer around here. This whole area is great country for hunters and fishermen. There are bears, mountain lions, and coyotes. To the east there are streams full of trout, and there are ducks and geese.

Main idea: \_\_\_\_\_

Is this stated or implied? \_\_\_\_\_

Specific details used to support the main idea: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

So what can you do to make sure you correctly identify the main idea? Ask yourself these questions:

1. What's the point?
2. Can you sum it up?
3. What is a good title?

On a multiple choice test you might be asked to select the correct main idea. What strategies can you use to find the main idea:

3. Prediction – *before reading any multiple-choice options, can you state the main idea of the passage*
4. Actively read –
  - Underline or circle important claims
  - Identify the point of view of the author, and note how it differs from other views presented (the perspectives of other individuals or groups)
  - Jot quick notes to yourself in the margins
  - After every paragraph, check your comprehension by saying the main point of the paragraph back to yourself in *your own words*.

## Lesson #6: Summarizing Text

*Think back to the last movie you watched. If a friend asked what it was about, what would you tell them?*

Being able to summarize text is an important skill. This allows you to pick out the important information and identify the main idea. As you read, look for the ideas the text treats most seriously. What topic is repeated and how is this topic treated?

Writing an objective summary takes practice, but following a template and rules will help you put one together successfully. An **objective summary** describes key details, events, and the main idea without commentary, or personal opinion. This summary answers the questions who, what, when, where, why, and how.

### How to write a summary:

1. State the main idea.
2. Write ONE sentence for each section that includes only the most important details for that section.

#### Subjective summary:

This type of summary includes personal opinions and interpretations. Subjective summaries should not be used for news reporting or decision making in business.

Remember, you would not tell your best friend every scene of the movie, instead you would tell them the most important details (without ruining the ending, of course!)

Let's look at some examples. See if you spot the objective summary and the subjective summary-

**SUMMARY #1:** In Disney's Frozen when the newly crowned Queen Elsa accidentally uses her power to turn things into ice to curse her home in infinite winter, her sister Anna teams up with a mountain man, his reindeer, and a snowman to change the weather conditions. (IMDB.com)

**SUMMARY #2:** "Frozen," the latest Disney musical extravaganza, preaches the importance of embracing your true nature but seems to be at odds with itself.

The animated, 3-D adventure wants to strengthen the typical Disney princess movies while simultaneously remaining true to their appealing trappings for maximum merchandising potential. It encourages young women to support and stay loyal to each other—a key message when mean girls seem so frequent—as long as some hunky potential suitors and adorable, silly creatures also are around to complete them (RogerEbert.com)

1. *What do you notice about these summaries? What do they have in common?*
2. *Can you identify the main idea of the movie?*
3. *Do you sense any opinion?*

Write your answers to these questions on the student note sheet using full sentences.

In the next lesson you will practice using a summary formula or template, but before that lesson, watch the following clip from I Love Lucy. This was a 1950's TV comedy filled with funny moments and life lessons. After watching, see if you can summarize the clip! *What would you tell someone that has never seen this clip before?*

LINK: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=y0nsN4px10>

Try to use one of the following sentence starters for writing your summary:

- This \_\_\_\_\_ is really about...
- it happened just like this...
- To summarize the text, I would say...
- The main characters are...
- The setting takes place...
- The problem or conflict is...
- The reasons are...
- Here are a few important details...
- The \_\_\_\_\_ ends with...



Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Homeroom: \_\_\_\_\_

## Lesson #6: Summarizing Text

Objective summary:

What makes a subjective summary different from an objective summary?



How to write a summary:

1. State the \_\_\_\_\_.
2. Write \_\_\_\_\_ sentence for each section that includes only the most important details for that section.

How would you summarize a movie for your best friend? What should you leave out and what should you include?

Review both summaries of Frozen in the lesson reading. *What do you notice about these summaries? Can you identify the main idea? Do you sense any opinion?*



Let's watch a TV clip from I Love Lucy! & practice: in the box jot down the "sections" and important details.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Homeroom: \_\_\_\_\_

TEACHER NOTES - Lesson #6: Summarizing Text

Objective summary:

What makes a subjective summary different from an objective summary?



How to write a summary:

1. State the main idea.
2. Write ONE sentence for each section that includes only the most important details for that section.

How would you summarize a movie for your best friend? What should you leave out and what should you include?

Review both summaries of Frozen in the lesson reading. *What do you notice about these summaries? Can you identify the main idea? Do you sense any opinion?*

*Summary #1: to the point, no opinion, stated title and production company*

*Summary #2: personal opinion about Disney's need to make money on everything. Does not seem to like the characters – calls them "mean" and "hunky." Does not take the movie seriously.*



Let's watch a TV clip from I Love Lucy! & practice: in the box jot down the "sections" and important details.

6<sup>th</sup> Grade ELA – Reading  
Nonfiction Unit

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Homeroom: \_\_\_\_\_

**Summarizing Text – Template & Helpful Words**

In the \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_,  
Type of text Title of text  
\_\_\_\_\_ the topic of  
Full name of author Verb  
\_\_\_\_\_. S/he \_\_\_\_\_  
Topic / issue in text Verb + "that"  
\_\_\_\_\_.  
Verb + "that"

*Continue the summary  
by including the  
author's main points or  
the main events/ideas  
that support the issue  
written above.*

Ultimately, what \_\_\_\_\_ is trying to convey (through) his/her \_\_\_\_\_ is  
author Text type  
\_\_\_\_\_.  
Main idea

**Types of Texts**

essay  
article  
research paper  
narrative  
report  
letter  
speech  
short story  
memoir  
poem  
novel  
movie  
drama/play

**Verbs**

addresses  
discusses  
explores  
considers  
questions  
analyzes  
criticizes  
comments on  
elaborates on  
focuses on  
reflects on  
argues for / against  
disputes  
opposes

**"Verbs + that"**

asserts  
argues  
maintains  
claims  
notes  
proposes  
declares  
states  
believes  
suggests  
implies  
infers  
intimates

**Transition Words**

in addition  
furthermore  
another  
besides...also  
further  
additionally  
beyond....also ....  
as well

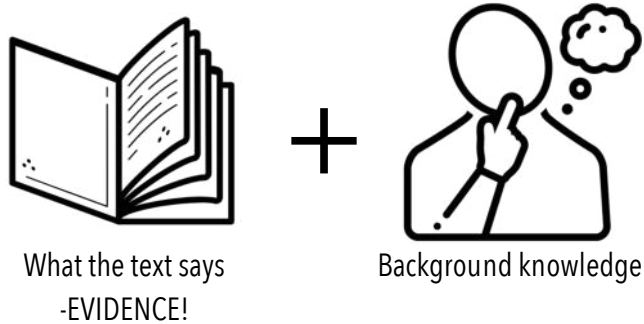




### Lesson #7: Inferences & Evidence

You have probably encountered a test question or heard your teacher ask you to make an inference. Following this lesson, you will be able to define inference and know the elements needed to make an inference.

To make an **inference**, you need two key ingredients – the text evidence and your own background knowledge.



Text evidence is what the text says, the literal meaning. One way to make sure you grasp the literal meaning is to read it once, then ask yourself “what does the text say?” not “what does the text mean?”

Background knowledge is based on your experience. You get this from the books you read, the movies you watch, the people you met, and the events you attend. These experiences make you who you are and influence the way you think without noticing. Picture your brain like a file cabinet filled with files from your experiences. You recall this information to help you read between the lines and make inferences from text on a regular basis.

Let’s practice- read the following passage:

*A penny for your thoughts? If it’s a 1943 copper penny, it could be worth as much as fifty thousand dollars. In 1943, most pennies were made from steel because of military needs during World War II. The 1943 copper penny is ultra-rare. Based on the passage, a reader can infer...*

Notice the sentence starter

From this text, I can infer that copper was used for weapons during WWII instead of being used for pennies.

How did I come to this inference?

- Evidence: “most pennies were made from steel because of military needs during World War II.”
- Background knowledge: I know from social studies class that the US made a lot of weapons during WWII.

Notice that the reader was able to use information stated in the text plus their own knowledge from social studies lessons to make an inference. Although this sounds simple, it is important to be aware of **unsupported inferences**. These conclusions are based on too few examples or little evidence. An inference **must** be supported by textual evidence. Let’s look at an example-

*Mark was frowning when he walked out of math class.*

Unsupported inference: Mark doesn’t like math.

← Is this inference supported by evidence from the text?

The reader should not assume that Mark was frowning because he doesn't like math. Maybe Mark received some bad news during math class or he is struggling with fractions. The reader might think Mark is frowning over math class because the reader does not like math, but the reader does not know why Mark is actually upset. This inference is missing textual evidence.

When writing an inference, it is important to state that you are making an inference. In order to make this clear, you can start a sentence with one of the following sentence starters-

**Ways to begin...**

- The text said \_\_\_\_\_, which made me think...
- From the text I can infer...
- This could mean...
- I predict...based on \_\_\_\_\_.



To be successful at making inference, you need to become a **detective**. Look for clues in the text and think back to your life experiences. You're constantly making inferences as you read, however, making a formal inference requires you to identify evidence in the text. After all, detectives would not be successful without clues or evidence to support their conclusions.

Next time you read a passage, ask yourself "what does this text say, not what it means?" This will allow you to find evidence and leave out your opinion.

**Put on your detective hat & try this example.**

PASSAGE: He was having a bad day. Mark walked out of math class with a big frown. Not only was the teacher going over the math lesson way too quickly, but he heard that his crush liked someone else. He thought this was the girl he was going to marry, but she was writing notes to another boy in his class. He made a mental note to "unfriend" her when he got home from school.

Question 1: Based on the text, readers can infer...

- A. Mark is typically a very happy guy
- B. Mark is in 5<sup>th</sup> grade
- C. A girl in Mark's math class broke his heart
- D. Mark is usually very good at math

Question 2: Which 2 sentences best support the inference made in question 1?

- A. "He was having a bad day."
- B. "He thought this was the girl he was going to marry"
- C. "Mark walked out of math class with a frown"
- D. "He made a mental note to "unfriend" when he got home."

Based on the passage, the correct inference (question 1) would be that a girl in Mark's math class broke his heart (C). Sentence B - "He thought this was the girl he was going to marry" and sentence C - "Mark walked out of math class with a frown" let the reader know that Mark was incredibly hurt that this girl did not seem to like him back. We can add this text evidence to our background knowledge to make this inference. *Have you ever been heartbroken by a crush that doesn't like you back?*

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Homeroom: \_\_\_\_\_

### Lesson #7: Inferences & Evidence

What is an inference?



+



**Unsupported inference:** conclusions that are based on \_\_\_\_\_ examples or \_\_\_\_\_ evidence.

Example: Mark was frowning when he walked out of math class.

Unsupported inference: \_\_\_\_\_ ← *What's wrong with this statement?*

### Ways to begin...

- The text said \_\_\_\_\_, which made me think...
- From the text I can infer...
- This could mean...
- I predict...based on \_\_\_\_\_.

Making an inference requires you to be a \_\_\_\_\_.



Use the example about Mark's math class to help you try passage 2.

PASSAGE 2: Natalie loved to bake! So, she asked her grandma if she could make cookies. "Sure," her grandma said, "but remember to keep an eye on them so they don't burn." Natalie measured the ingredients and mixed them together. She spooned dollops of cookie dough onto a cookie sheet and set the kitchen timer for 15 minutes, just as she'd seen her grandma do. She couldn't wait to eat them. Her tummy growled in anticipation. Natalie went into the den to watch TV. The TV was so loud, she didn't hear the timer when it beeped.

Question 1: Based on the text, readers can infer...

- E. Natalie made chocolate chip cookies
- F. Natalie watched cartoons on the TV in the den
- G. Natalie's grandma is a professional baker
- H. Natalie burned the cookies

Question 2: State your background knowledge as it relates to the subject: \_\_\_\_\_

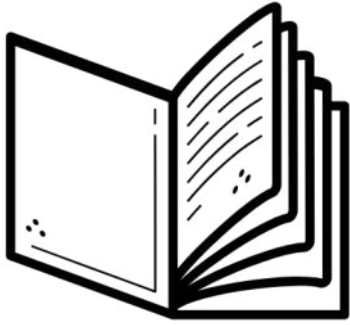
\_\_\_\_\_

Question 3: Underline 1 piece of evidence to support the inference made in question 1.

*Reading from 100 Task Cards: Literacy Text by Scholastic, Inc.*

**TEACHER NOTES - Lesson #7: Inferences & Evidence**

**What is an inference?**



What the text says  
-EVIDENCE!



Background knowledge

**Unsupported inference:** conclusions that are based on too few examples or little evidence.

Example: Mark was frowning when he walked out of math class.

Unsupported inference: Mark doesn't like math.

← *What's wrong with this statement?*

**Ways to begin...**

- The text said \_\_\_\_\_, which made me think...
- From the text I can infer...
- This could mean...
- I predict...based on \_\_\_\_\_.

**Making an inference requires you to be a \_\_\_\_\_.**



Use the example about Mark's math class to help you try passage 2.

PASSAGE 2: Natalie loved to bake! So, she asked her grandma if she could make cookies. "Sure," her grandma said, "but remember to keep an eye on them so they don't burn." Natalie measured the ingredients and mixed them together. She spooned dollops of cookie dough onto a cookie sheet and set the kitchen timer for 15 minutes, just as she'd seen her grandma do. She couldn't wait to eat them. Her tummy growled in anticipation. Natalie went into the den to watch TV. **The TV was so loud, she didn't hear the timer when it beeped.**

Question 1: Based on the text, readers can infer...

- A. Natalie made chocolate chip cookies
- B. Natalie watched cartoons on the TV in the den
- C. Natalie's grandma is a professional baker
- D. **Natalie burned the cookies**

Question 2: State your background knowledge as it relates to the subject: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Question 3: Underline 1 piece of evidence to support the inference made in question 1.

*Reading from 100 Task Cards: Literacy Text by Scholastic, Inc.*

## 6<sup>th</sup> Grade ELA – Reading

### Nonfiction Unit

#### Lesson #8: Author's Purpose

Have you ever read an article and walked away feeling like you learned something new? Or maybe you felt swayed to purchase something? Or maybe it made you laugh and feel better about yourself.

Authors always write with a purpose. It's up to the reader to identify why the author is writing that specific text, or identify the **author's purpose**. Their text will typically fall into one of three categories: *to inform*, *to entertain*, or *to persuade*. Sometimes it is helpful to identify the point of view (POV) first of the literature before determining the author's purpose.



To start, let's look at an author's purpose to **persuade**. An author will write to persuade a reader to buy something or believe something. It might be helpful to think of one of those cheesy infomercial. The narrator is saying all the right words to make you pick up the phone to buy that product (yes, this is how shopping worked before the internet). *Click on the link for an example of a vintage infomercial*. Typically, you will find persuasive text in advertisements, political campaigns, and opinion pieces such as an article titled "Here's Why You Should Buy the Next iPhone & Skip the Android."

Link to infomercial: [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JHSQ-fEF3GQ&list=PLc\\_RHzT2n70Jqz1xXpRsoQ\\_IEVj-504EJ&index=11](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JHSQ-fEF3GQ&list=PLc_RHzT2n70Jqz1xXpRsoQ_IEVj-504EJ&index=11)

Sometimes an author instead wants to **inform** the reader on a subject. Nonfiction is full of authors wanting to give the reader information. It could be anything from a National Geographic article about Africa or it could be a reading in your social studies textbook about U.S. presidents. Other places you may see authors trying to inform would be in essays, newspaper articles, and directions.

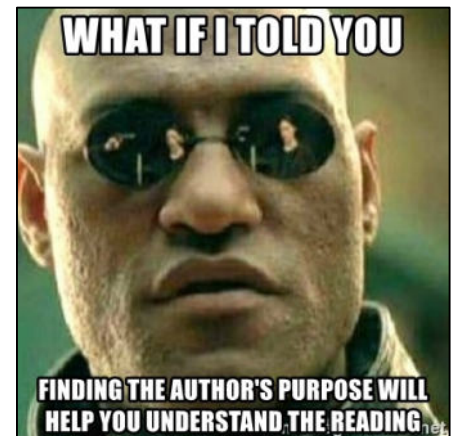
Lastly, an author may simply want to **entertain** the reader. In this case, the author wants to amuse the reader with an enjoyable read. An author looking to entertain might publish fictional stories like folktales or fables, songs, plays, or narratives.

So how can the reader identify the author's purpose?

1. Identify the point of view
2. Ask "why did the author select that POV?"
3. Look for specific details that support the author's main idea
4. Ask "what type of language, word choice, or diction did the author use throughout the text?"

Can you identify the author's purpose based on an article title? Read the examples below and see if you can predict what purpose the author may be using in the reading-

- Dummies Guide: How to Operate a Smart Phone
- How Steroids Ruined My Teens Years
- Xbox vs. PlayStation, Why You Should Buy from Microsoft
- A Sunny Day at Recess



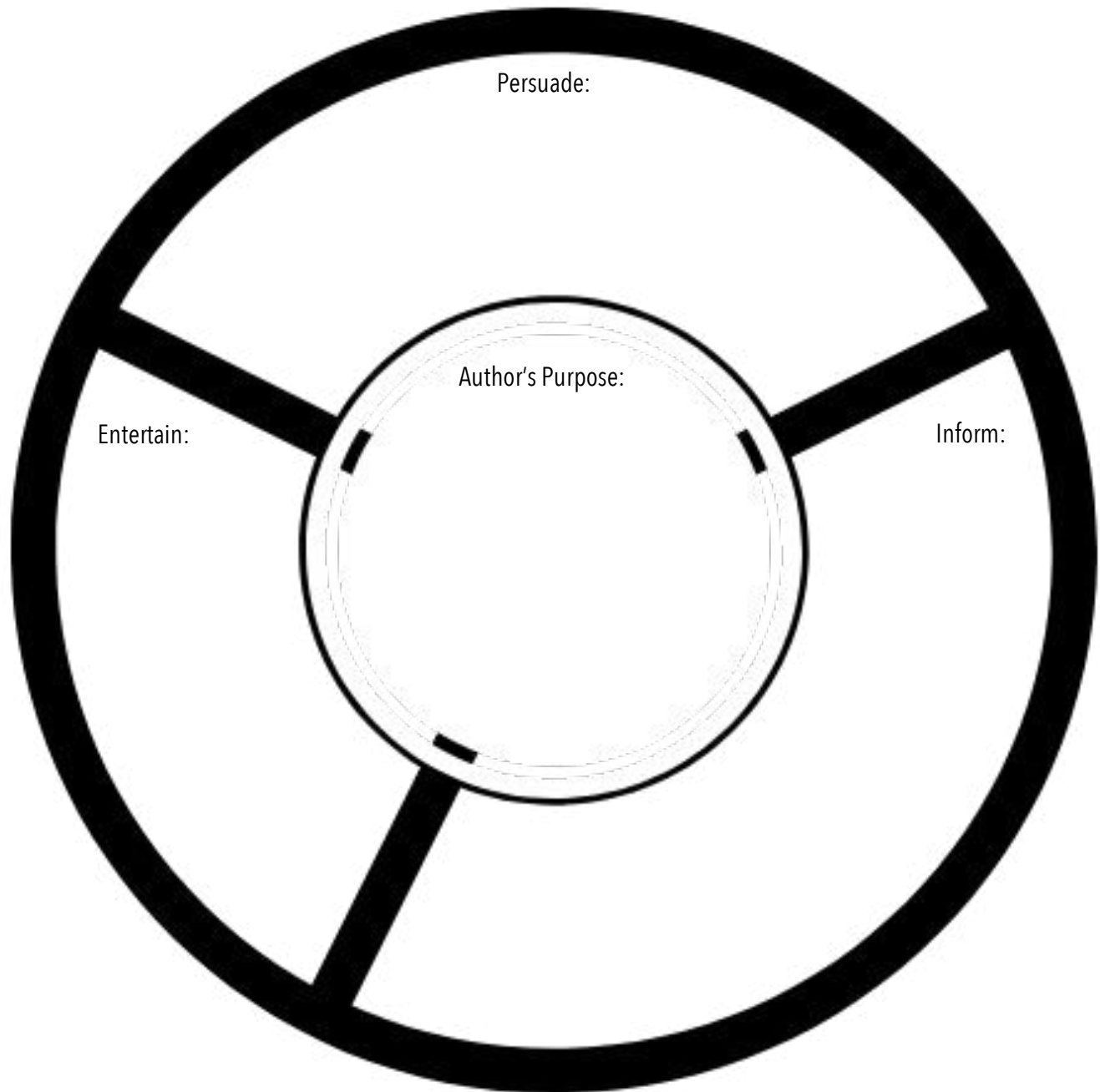




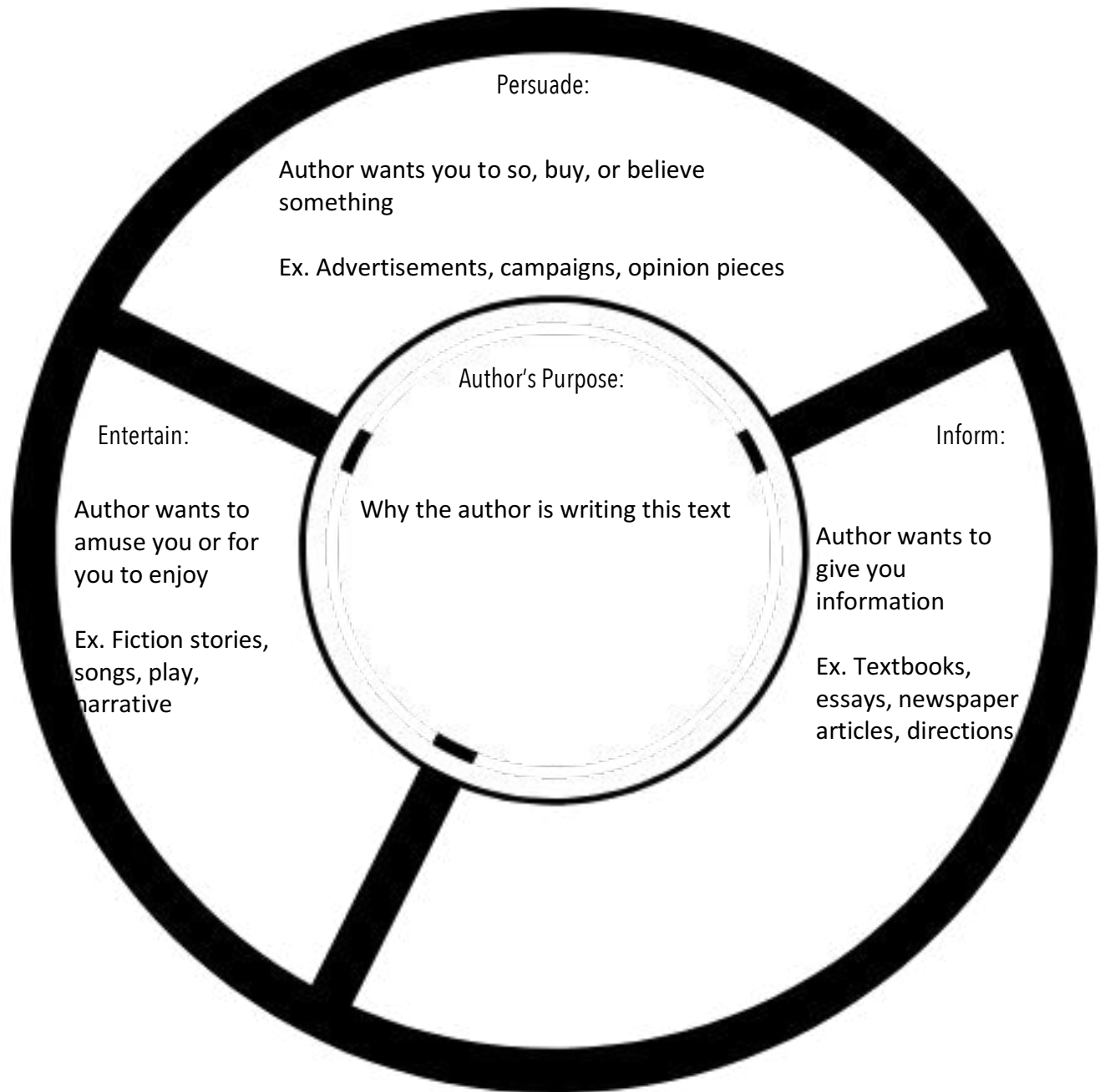
Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Homeroom: \_\_\_\_\_

**Lesson #8: Author's Purpose**



**TEACHERS NOTES - Lesson #8: Author's Purpose**



### Lesson #9: Fact vs. Opinion

Every single day we are bombarded with messages. From Instagram stories to news article, we are hearing from people all day long. We even encounter these messages in textbooks and during mini-lesson in class. As we process this information, we need to filter facts versus opinions. It is important to think critically and decide what we are willing to accept and what we need to question.

In this lesson, we will break down the differences between facts and opinions. Previously, we learned about an author's purpose, either to persuade, inform, or entertain. An author may decide to use facts or opinion in their writing depending on their purpose, and although these sound simple to distinguish, it take a critical reader to analyze why and when these are used in writing.

First, a **fact** can be proven true or false. An author will use words that everyone can agree on. Words like sharp, red, forty, and plastic. Every reader can agree on what these words mean.

**Opinion**, on the other hand, are based on the author's beliefs and cannot be proven true or false. An opinion comes from the author's feelings and judgements, meaning they will use words that mean different things to different people. Rarely can people agree on what "spicy" or "beautiful" mean. Your definition of spicy is different than the person sitting next to you. That is your opinion. *Looking for more clarification, check out the BrainPop video, link below.*

Link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1Ngkj2Lx-Ks&list=PL58tsklqYQRKlgm-yUBkvejYmd8FbUj2h&index=59>

Check out the examples below –

| FACT   | OPINION   |
|--|---|
| The control room received a total of 5 warnings about the shuttle's O-ring issues. | The atmosphere in the control was complete chaos. |

Look at the wording in this sentence –

All readers can agree that five warnings means five warnings. We can also agree on the definition for an O-Ring (okay, maybe you're not a rocket scientist, but this term refers to a vital piece of the shuttle).

Now look at the wording in this sentence –

The author describes this room as "complete chaos," but what does that mean to you? Some people thrive in chaos, others crumble. Reader can interpret this in a variety of ways. You might picture a room filled with piles of work and garbage, but a classmate might picture a room full of energized people moving rapidly.



## Lesson #9 Extension: Facts – reasoning & evidence

Now that you know the difference between facts and opinions, let's take it a step further. When faced with an argument, you should find yourself seeking out evidence to support a stated claim. An author will use facts and reasoned judgment based on research to support one side of the argument. As a critical thinker and analytical reader, you must evaluate the author's claim and trace supportive reasoning back to the argument.

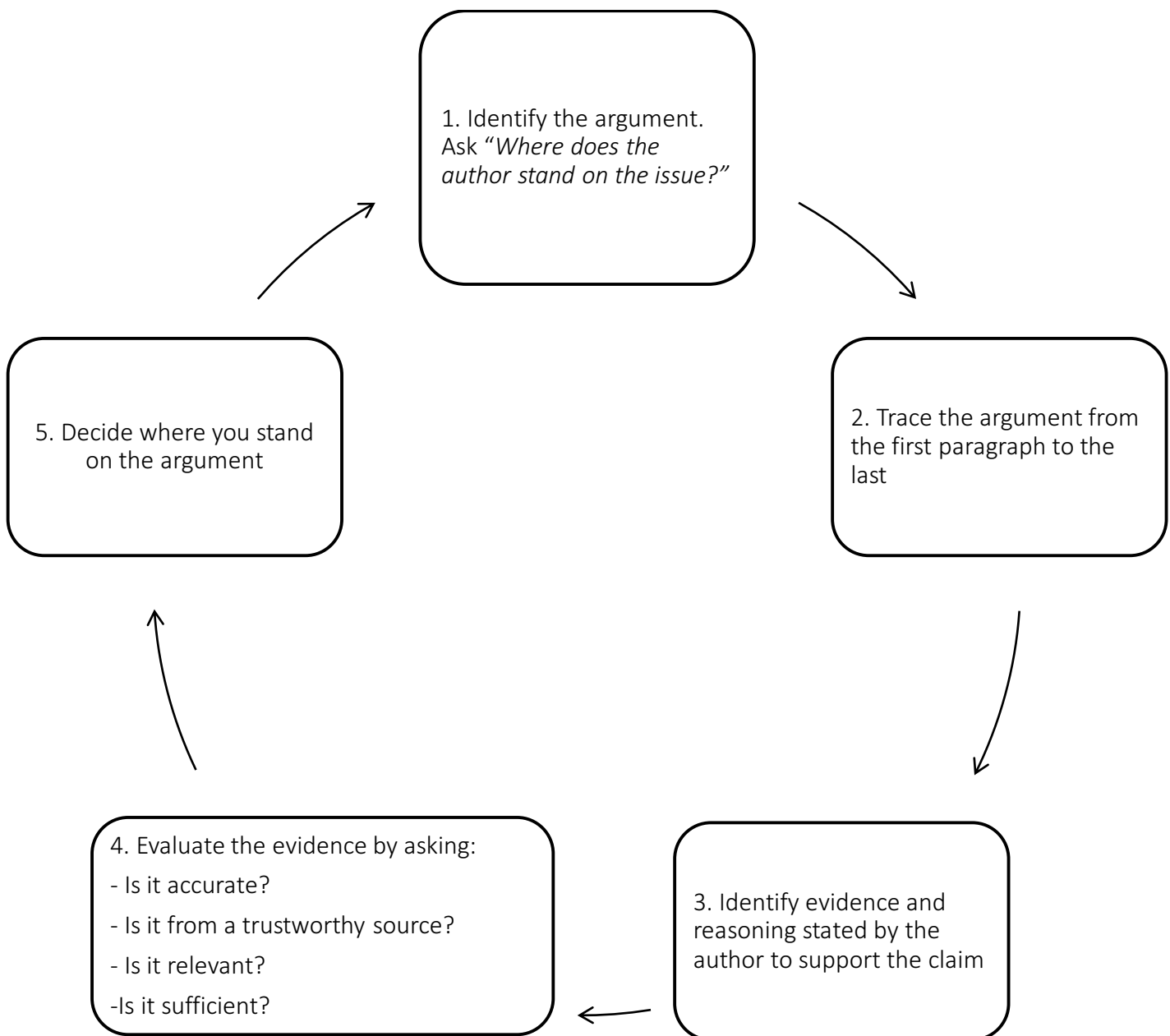
But first, let decide on some terms we will need to evaluate evidence-

**Accurate:** correctness (You need accurate measurements to do a kitchen remodel)

**Trustworthy:** expressing honest information

**Relevant:** closely connected to content being presented (on topic with argument)

**Sufficient:** enough information is presented (must be a complete thought)



Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Homeroom: \_\_\_\_\_

**Lesson #9: Fact vs. Opinion**

Fact:

Opinion:



|  |   |
|--|---|
|  |   |
| The control room received a total of 5 warnings about the shuttle's O-ring issues. | The atmosphere in the control was complete chaos. |

**You try these examples-**

1. The fastest land dwelling creature is the Cheetah.  
Fact   or   Opinion   Explain: \_\_\_\_\_
2. Michael Jordan has a career average of 30.4 points per game.  
Fact   or   Opinion   Explain: \_\_\_\_\_
3. George Washington was the first President of the United States under the Constitution.  
Fact   or   Opinion   Explain: \_\_\_\_\_
4. The ugliest sea creature is the manatee.  
Fact   or   Opinion   Explain: \_\_\_\_\_
5. Michael Jordan is the greatest basketball player of all time.  
Fact   or   Opinion   Explain: \_\_\_\_\_
6. There seems to be too much standardized testing in public schools.  
Fact   or   Opinion   Explain: \_\_\_\_\_

## Lesson #9 Extension: Facts – reasoning & evidence

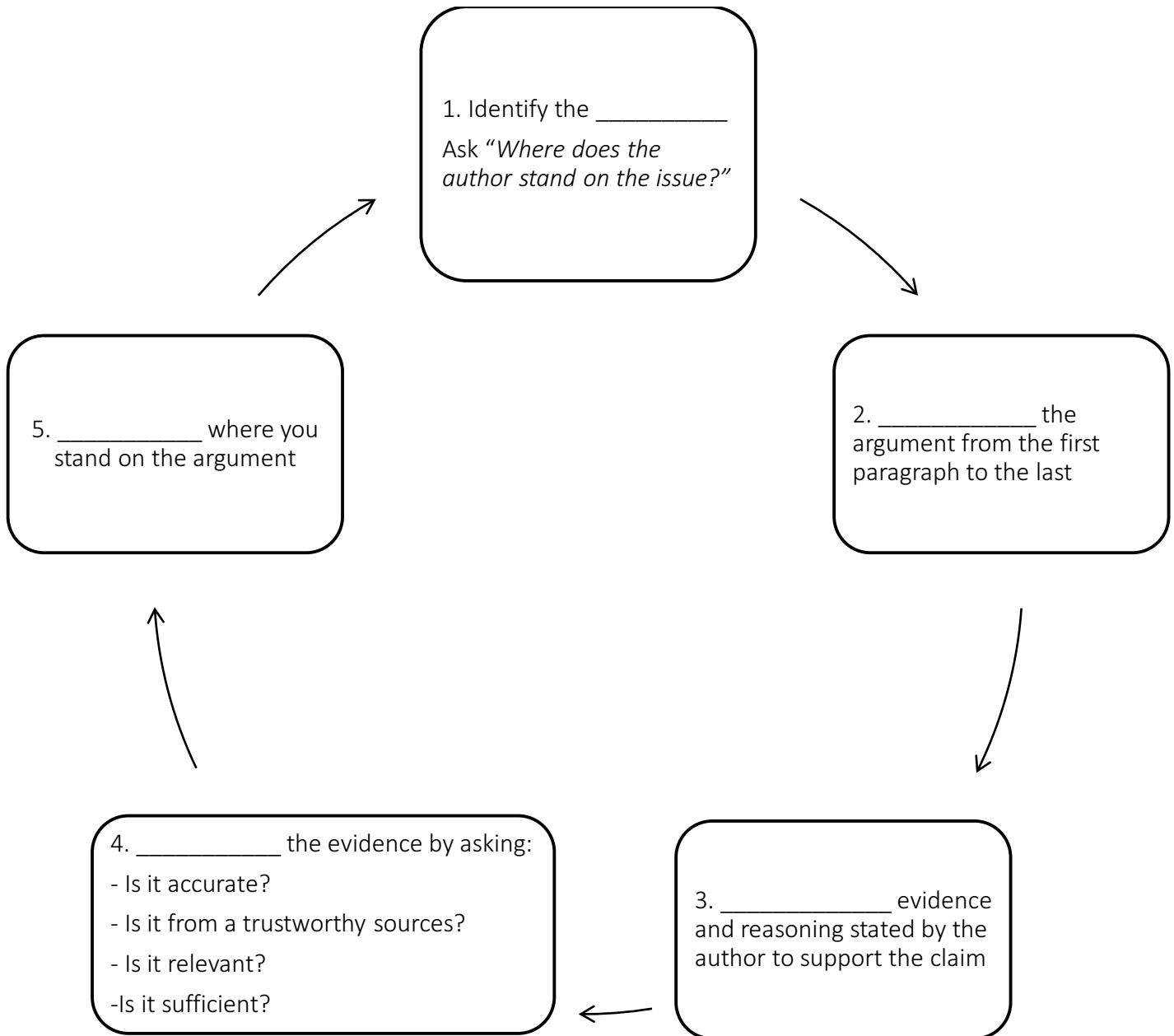
Terms we will need to evaluate evidence-

Accurate: \_\_\_\_\_

Trustworthy: \_\_\_\_\_

Relevant: \_\_\_\_\_

Sufficient: \_\_\_\_\_



Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Homeroom: \_\_\_\_\_

TEACHER NOTES: Lesson #9: Fact vs. Opinion

Fact: Can be proved, strictly based on evidence

Opinion: Can be supported by facts, but not proved, based on the interpretation on evidence



| <u>Fact</u>  | <u>Opinion</u>                                    |
|--|---|
| The control room received a total of 5 warnings about the shuttle's O-ring issues. | The atmosphere in the control was complete chaos. |

1. The fastest land dwelling creature is the Cheetah.

**Fact** or **Opinion** Explain: \_\_\_\_\_

2. Michael Jordan has a career average of 30.4 points per game.

**Fact** or **Opinion** Explain: \_\_\_\_\_

3. George Washington was the first President of the United States under the Constitution.

**Fact** or **Opinion** Explain: \_\_\_\_\_

4. The ugliest sea creature is the manatee.

**Fact** or **Opinion** Explain: \_\_\_\_\_

5. Michael Jordan is the greatest basketball player of all time.

**Fact** or **Opinion** Explain: \_\_\_\_\_

6. There seems to be too much standardized testing in public schools.

**Fact** or **Opinion** Explain: \_\_\_\_\_

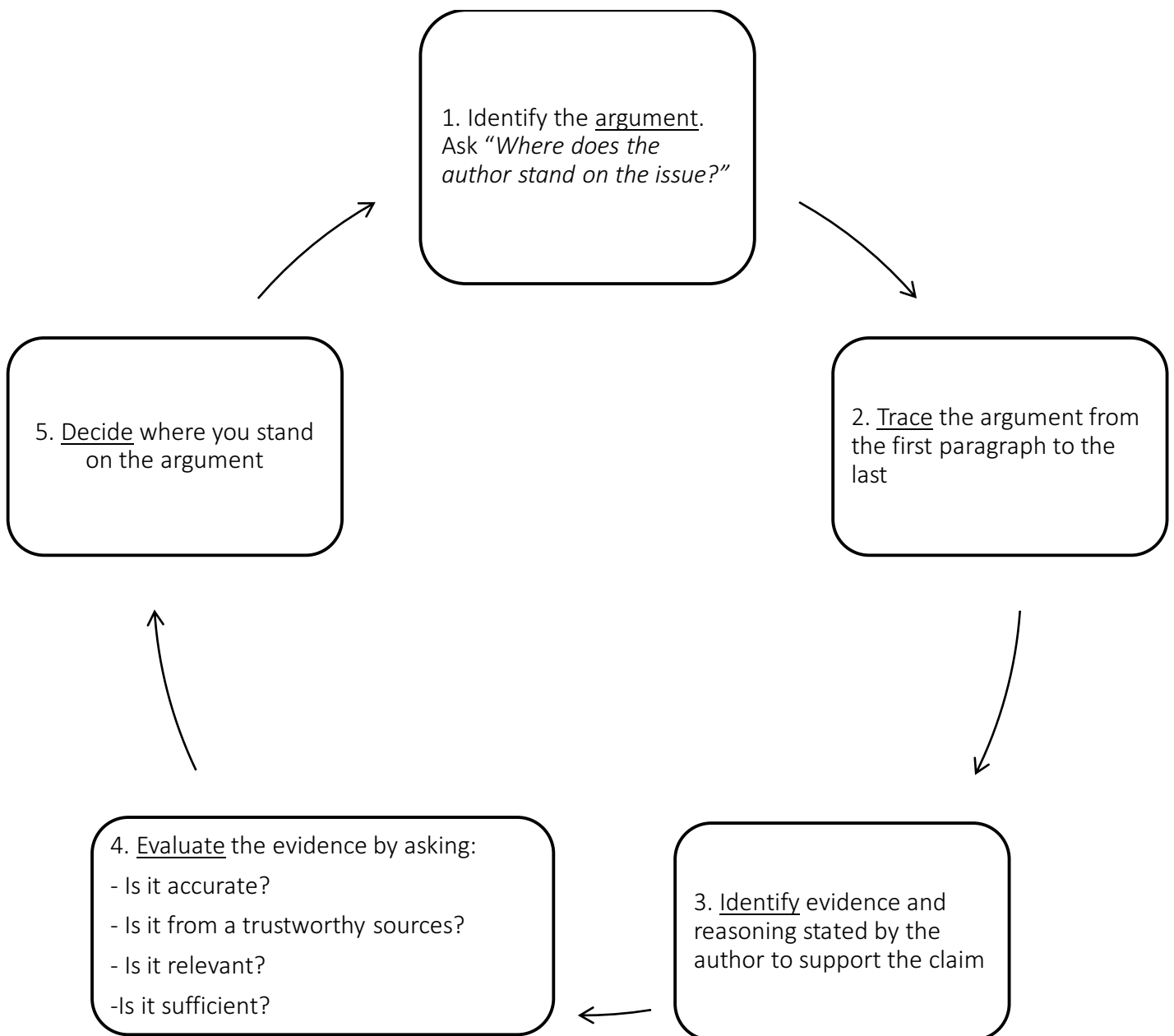
terms we will need to evaluate evidence-

Accurate: correctness (You need accurate measurements to do a kitchen remodel)

Trustworthy: honest and truthful

Relevant: closely connected to content being presented (on topic with argument)

Sufficient: enough information is presented (must be a complete thought)





## 6<sup>th</sup> Grade ELA – Reading

### Nonfiction Unit

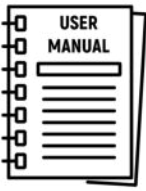


#### Lesson #10: Author's Word Choice

Before you read, predict what you think author's word choice means to you. *This should be written on your notes sheet.*

'Choose your words carefully' is a saying you hear all the time in tense situations. Words, after all, can have many meanings.

As you may already know, the types of words we choose have a tremendous effect on the message we convey. For example, saying you are 'happy' about something means something quite different compared to saying you are 'ecstatic' about something. The two words exist in the same realm (both are positive emotions), but they don't really mean the same thing.

Three types of meaning:

| Technical  | Figurative   | Connotative   |
|--|--|---|
| Definition: used in a specific setting or context  | Definition: used to express meaning without being taken literally  | Definition: used to invoke a certain feeling or meaning   |
| example: machine user manual<br> | example: we worked so hard, my arms fell off!)<br> | example: she has an <i>icy</i> personality<br><br><i>Mean girls</i> |

If a dozen readers were asked to write about the same topic, they would probably all write in different ways. An author's writing style comes from the choices they make.

When you read, pay attention to the choices the writer has made.

- Does the author use simple or difficult words?
- Are the sentences long or short?
- Even the order of words in a sentence - called syntax - is one of the authors many choices.

Authors can also choose the level of description they use in their writing. Good descriptions should keep your attention. They give enough detail so you can "see" what is being described. Below are two examples describing someone's trip up a mountain. *Think about the author's word choice. Ask yourself the questions above after reading.*

Example A

We climbed the trail up the mountain. The wind was blowing strongly.



### Example B

We climbed and crawled up the switchback trail, hoping the peak of the mountain was just around the bend. The wind blew a ferocious howl, whipping my hair.

Although both examples basically state the same information, one paints a much more vivid picture for the reader. Example B uses descriptive words to help the reader feel the steepness of the mountain and power of the wind.

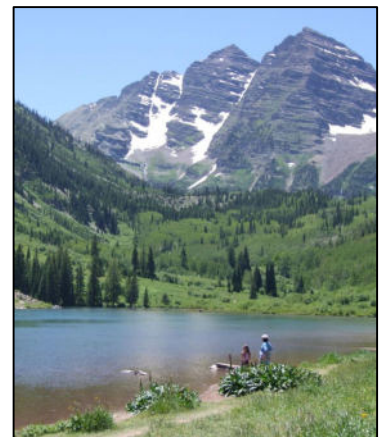
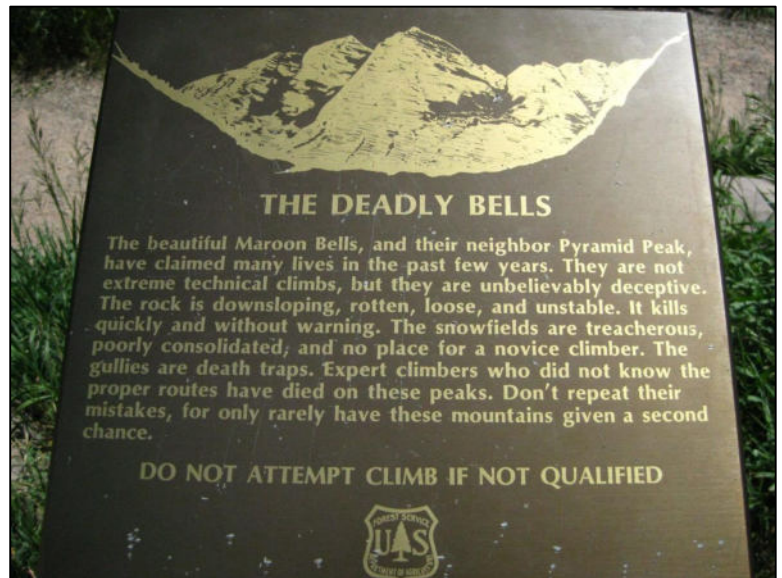
This author uses technical language like “switchback trail,” a term to describe the pattern of a trail going up a mountain side (see image). Figurative language was used to describe ferocious wind whipping hair. This wind is not literally whipping hair, but the power of the wind cause their hair to fly around. Lastly, the author’s shows an example of connotative meaning by using “climbed and crawled” to invoke a feeling of the reader. The author choose these words to express just how extreme this hike can be.

Switchback trail



### Let’s look at another real world example –

This sign is posted near a hiking trail in Aspen, Colorado. This sign is designed to be a warning to those looking to scale the mountain. *What words stand out to you? How do feel after reading this sign?*

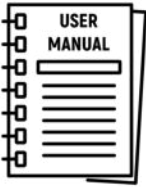




*Images from aspendailynews.com*

**TEACHER NOTES: Lesson #10: Author's Word Choice**

PREDICT – What does author's word choice mean:

Three types of meaning:

| Technical   | Figurative  | Connotative  |
|---|---|--|
| Definition: used in a specific setting or context   | Definition: used to express meaning without being true  | Definition: used to invoke a certain feeling or meaning  |
| example: machine user manual<br> | example: we worked so hard, my arms fell off!)<br> | example: she has an icy personality<br> |

When you read, pay attention to the choices the writer has made.

- Does the author use simple or difficult words?
- Are the sentences long or short?
- Even the order of words in a sentence - called syntax - is one of the authors many choices.

Look at the examples of word choice in the reading, then try this one on your own!

We carried our elephant-sized mallets out into the field. Rumors running around town that a Dunkleosteus is buried under the city. Larger than a school bus, this beast once ruled ancient oceans. This is our chance for a record breaking discovery, but time is limited. The sun beating down on us and the river beds run dry. As salty sweat drips off our faces, we chisel and wait for the skull to make itself known. How much longer can we search?

Identify an example in the text of the following:

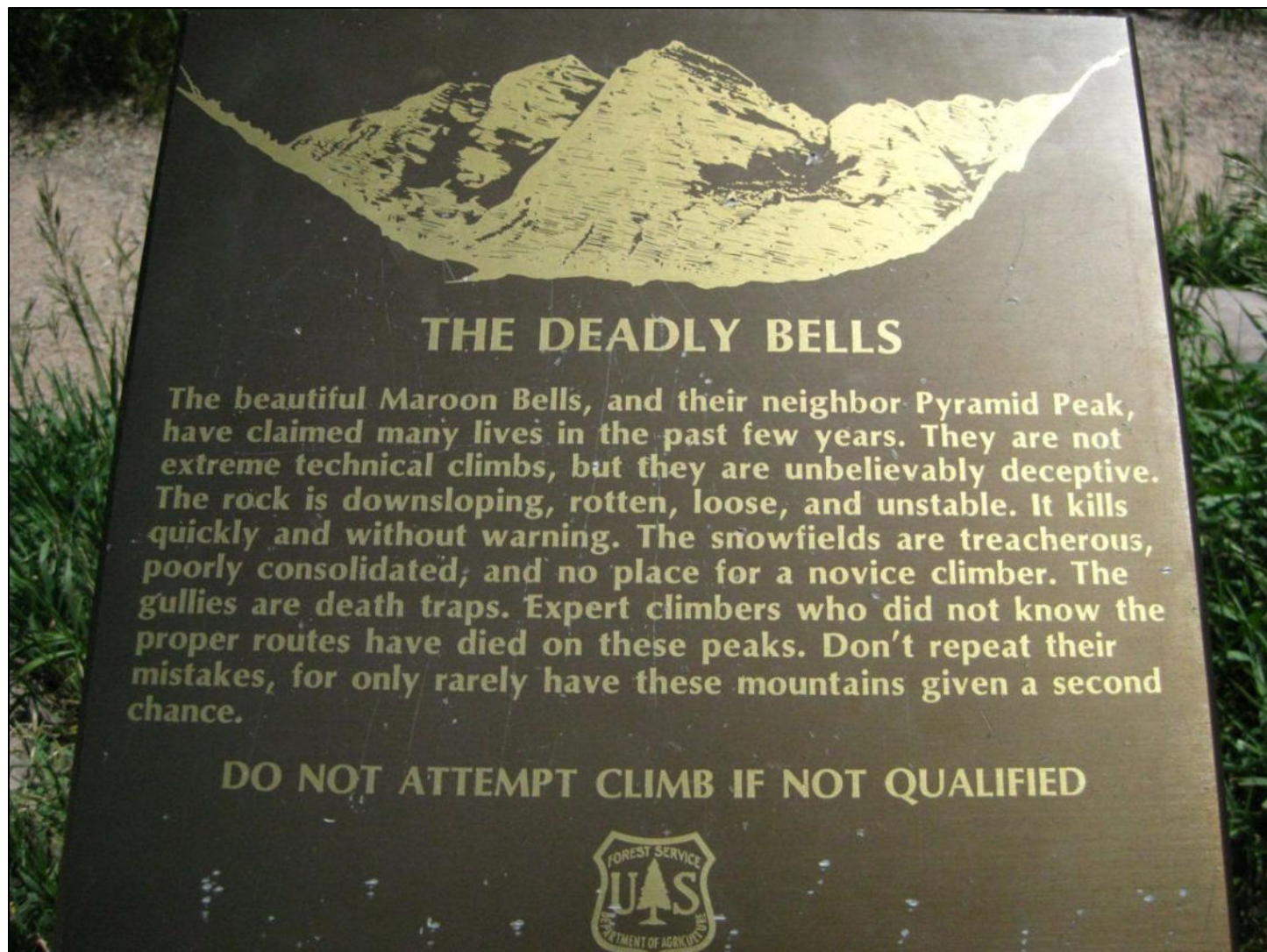
Technical: mallets, Dunkleosteus, chisel, skull

Figurative: elephant-sized, sun beating down, river bed run dry, salty sweat

Connotative: beast once ruled







6<sup>th</sup> Grade ELA – Reading  
Nonfiction Unit

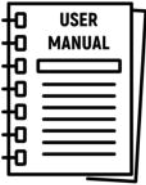


Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Homeroom: \_\_\_\_\_

**Lesson #10: Author's Word Choice**

PREDICT – What does author's word choice mean:

Three types of meaning:

| Technical  | Figurative  | Connotative   |
|--|---|---|
| Definition:  | Definition:   | Definition:   |
| example: machine user manual<br> | example: we worked so hard, my arms fell off!<br> | example: she has an icy personality<br> |

When you read, pay attention to the choices the writer has made.

- Does the author use \_\_\_\_\_ or \_\_\_\_\_ words?
- Are the sentences \_\_\_\_\_ or \_\_\_\_\_?
- Even the order of words in a sentence – called \_\_\_\_\_ - is one of the authors many choices.



Look at the examples of word choice in the reading, then try this one on your own!

We carried our elephant-sized hammers out into the field. Rumors running around town that a Dunkleosteus is buried under the city. Larger than a school bus, this beast once ruled ancient oceans. This is our chance for a record breaking discovery, but time is limited. The sun beating down on us and the river beds run dry. As sweat drips off our faces, we chisel and wait for the skull to make itself known. How much longer can we search?

Identify an example in the text of the following:

Technical: \_\_\_\_\_

Figurative: \_\_\_\_\_

Connotative: \_\_\_\_\_

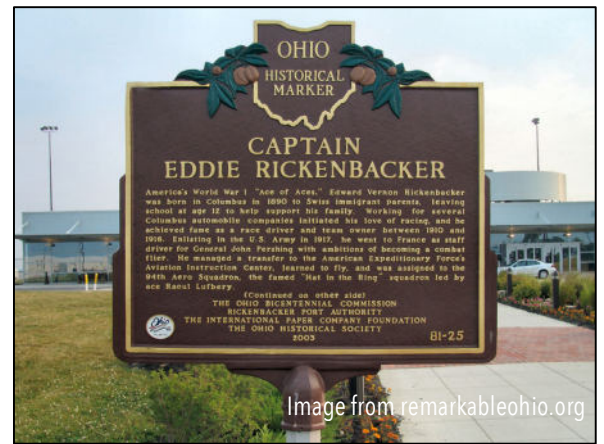


## 6<sup>th</sup> Grade ELA – Reading

### Nonfiction Unit

#### Lesson #11: Examples, Anecdotes & Facts

Nonfiction text is written differently than fiction. Nonfiction is informing, persuading and entertaining readers with real events and real people. A historical marker plaque for Captain Eddie Rickenbacker from Columbus, OH is an example of informational nonfiction. *Have you ever heard of this person?*



Side A of this plaque reads as follows-

*America's World War I 'Ace of Aces,' Edward Vernon Rickenbacker was born in Columbus in 1890 to Swiss immigrant parents, leaving school at age 12 to help support the family. Working for several Columbus automobile companies initiated his love of racing, and he achieved fame as a race driver and team owner between 1920 and 1916. Enlisting in the U.S. Army in 1917, he went to France as a staff driver for General John Pershing with ambitions of becoming a combat flyer. He managed a transfer to American Expeditionary Force's Aviation Instruction Center, learned to fly, and was assigned to the 94<sup>th</sup> Aero Squadron, the famed "Hat in the Ring" squadron lead by ace Raul Lufbery.*

Reading this gives us an introduction to someone many people have not heard of before. Readers of this plaque are being informed, but how did the creator of this plaque introduce readers to Captain Rickenbacker? As critical readers, we have to question why the author includes each sentence.

Authors can use various methods to help readers connect, but most commonly we come across facts, examples and anecdotes in nonfiction. An **anecdote** is a short and attractive story about a real incident or person. An author might use facts, examples, and anecdotes to introduce **unfamiliar** ideas or events in a way that helps readers better understand them.

In the plaque example, readers learn about the key person, Captain Rickenbacker, through facts such as dates he raced cars and years in the Army. The short story about his going to France to drive around a General is an example of an anecdote. By the author using facts and anecdotes, readers get to know the Captain as more than just a name. We discover this person that worked hard and accomplished so much in his life.

Re-read the plaque and ask yourself the following questions-

How is the individual, event or idea introduced?

How does the author illustrate the person, event or idea?

What does the author do to elaborate about the person, event, or idea?

If a reader is asked to pick out two ways that the passage develops the idea that Captain Eddie Rickenbacker is a hard worker, they might reference the following evidence from the text:

- *"leaving school at age 12 to help support the family"*
- *"Enlisting in the U.S. Army in 1917, he went to France as a staff driver for General John Pershing with ambitions of becoming a combat flyer"*





6<sup>th</sup> Grade ELA – Reading  
Nonfiction Unit

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Homeroom: \_\_\_\_\_

Lesson #11: Examples, Anecdotes & Facts

Anecdote:

An author might use facts, examples, and anecdotes to introduce \_\_\_\_\_ ideas or events in a way that helps readers better understand them.

What are three questions to ask yourself as you read pieces of nonfiction?

How is the individual, event or  
idea \_\_\_\_\_?

How does the author  
\_\_\_\_\_ the  
person, event or idea?

What does the author do to  
\_\_\_\_\_ about  
the person, event, or idea?

You try! Passage #1:

Jim was born on March 10, 1925, one of a litter of seven puppies. He was sold to Samuel Van Arsdale, who planned to train the black and white setter to be a hunting dog. Jim was a natural at hunting, always seeming to know where the quail were and how to point them out. However, Sam soon learned that Jim knew a lot more than hunting.



He first became aware of Jim's exceptional abilities as they relaxed one day out in the fields after a successful hunt. "Let's go sit in the shade of that hickory tree and rest," Sam said. Jim walked right over to a hickory tree and sat down. Somewhat surprised, Sam asked Jim to show him an oak tree, which he did. He also pointed out a walnut tree and a cedar tree at his master's request. Sam had a feeling then that Jim was a special dog.

*Text adapted from Scholastic.com*

Underline the name of a key individual introduced by the author of this text.

1. Underline the name of a key individual introduced by the author of this text.
2. Draw a circle around the anecdote that helps you better understand Jim's talents.
3. Fill-in the table below with a fact, example, and anecdote.

| Fact | Example | Anecdote |
|------|---------|----------|
|      |         |          |

TEACHER NOTES: Lesson #11: Examples, Anecdotes & Facts

**Anecdote:** short and attractive story about a real incident or person.

An author might use facts, examples, and anecdotes to introduce unfamiliar ideas or events in a way that helps readers better understand them.

What are three questions to ask yourself as you read pieces of nonfiction?

How is the individual, event or idea introduced?

How does the author illustrate the person, event or idea?

What does the author do to elaborate about the person, event, or idea?

**You try! Passage #1:**

Jim was born on March 10, 1925, one of a litter of seven puppies. He was sold to Samuel Van Arsdale, who planned to train the black and white setter to be a hunting dog. Jim was a natural at hunting, always seeming to know where the quail were and how to point them out. However, Sam soon learned that Jim knew a lot more than hunting.



He first became aware of Jim's exceptional abilities as they relaxed one day out in the fields after a successful hunt. "Let's go sit in the shade of that hickory tree and rest," Sam said. Jim walked right over to a hickory tree and sat down. Somewhat surprised, Sam asked Jim to show him an oak tree, which he did. **He also pointed out a walnut tree and a cedar tree at his master's request. Sam had a feeling then that Jim was a special dog.**

*Text adapted from Scholastic.com*

1. Underline the name of a key individual introduced by the author of this text.
2. Draw a circle around the anecdote that helps you better understand Jim.
3. Fill-in the table below with a fact, example, and anecdote.

| Fact   | Example  | Anecdote  |
|--|--|---|
| Jim is a black and white setter with many talents. | Jim was a natural at hunting, always seeming to know where the quail were and how to point them out. | "Let's go sit in the shade of that hickory tree and rest," Sam said. Jim walked right over to a hickory tree and sat down. Somewhat surprised, Sam asked Jim to show him an oak tree, which he did. |

## 6<sup>th</sup> Grade ELA – Reading

### Nonfiction Unit

#### Lesson #12: Figurative Language in Nonfiction

Can you spot any figurative language in the following passage?

*Walking up to the crater of Mount St. Helens is like watching a witch's caldron full of bubbling magma. Although this volcano remains active, the damage caused by the 1980 eruption is unlike anything else. The never-ending drive to the ranger station feels like you are entering a war zone. Desolate and dead, the ground is doing its best to grow back.*

When you are reading a text, you'll sometimes come across Figurative language. There are many types of figurative language (sometimes called figures of speech).

A few of the common ones we encounter in non-fiction include:

Metaphor – a comparison of two unlike things

- For example: The human body is a machine.

Simile – a comparison of two unlike things using the words “like” or “as”

- For example – The human body is like a machine.

Hyperbole – an extreme exaggeration

- For example – The project took an eternity to complete.

Personification – Giving human qualities to something that is not human.

- For example – The house heroically guarded the citizens hiding within.

Writers use figurative language to help readers understand concepts by linking something familiar with something that is less familiar.

Let's look at another example-

*The 1930s was a difficult decade for Americans. Under the cloud of the Great Depression, the average American learned to do without comforts and luxuries. Many had to do without necessities, such as groceries and gasoline. People were lucky to have even low-paying jobs, when many of their neighbors were unemployed, impoverished, and frightened. A great many people ended up losing their homes. Those fortunate enough to have radios listened to them in the hopes of hearing good news.*

*Good news arrived in an unlikely form: a racehorse named Seabiscuit. When Seabiscuit was born in 1933, his owners had high hopes that he would become a champion. He was, after all, the son of a champion. But Seabiscuit was not a typical racehorse. Short, stubborn, awkward, and hard to train, he was neglected and ended up losing every race at the beginning of his career.*

*Then, in 1936, Seabiscuit got some long overdue attention and care. He got motivated. He got in shape. And he began to run like the wind. For many struggling Americans, Seabiscuit became a symbol of the underdog who came from behind to beat the odds.*

*Readings adapted from macmillanmh.com*



This reading features two examples of figurative language – “the cloud of the Great Depression” and “he began to run like the wind.” Both of these are examples of two things being compared. Look at the table as an example to help you work through the chart in your notes.

|                            |   |   |
|----------------------------|---|---|
| <b>Figurative Language</b> | <b>the cloud of the Great Depression</b>  | <b>He began to run like the wind.</b>   |
| <b>Simile or Metaphor?</b> | metaphor  | simile  |
| <b>Two Things Compared</b> | cloud and the Great Depression  | Seabiscuit running and the wind   |
| <b>What You Know</b>       | Clouds can be dark and are a sign of rain.  | The wind can blow very hard and very fast.  |
| <b>Context Clues</b>       | The 1930s was a difficult decade for Americans; the average American learned to do without comforts and luxuries. | Seabiscuit became a symbol of the underdog who came from behind to beat the odds. |
| <b>Meaning</b>             | The Great Depression brought darkness and gloom to the lives of many Americans in the 1930's.                     | Seabiscuit ran very fast and won.   |

## Lesson #12: Figurative Language in Nonfiction

When you are reading a text, you'll sometimes come across Figurative language. There are many types of figurative language (sometimes called figures of speech).

A few of the common ones include:

a comparison of two unlike things  
For example: The human body is a machine.

a comparison of two unlike things using the words "like" or "as"  
For example – The human body is like a machine.

an extreme exaggeration  
For example – The project took an eternity to complete.

Giving human qualities to something that is not human.  
For example – The house heroically guarded the citizens hiding within.

Writers use figurative language to help readers understand concepts by linking something \_\_\_\_\_ with something that is \_\_\_\_\_ familiar.

### You Try! Passage 2: Read & fill in the chart on the back.

Where can you find a stage set from a famous television show and a portrait of George Washington worth \$20 million? The Smithsonian Institution, of course! Those are just two of the millions of items in the Smithsonian. The Smithsonian is America's attic, storing countless wonders.

Today the Smithsonian is a group of seventeen museums and nine research centers. It is the largest complex of museums in the world. People from all over the world visit the Smithsonian. They come to see the Hope Diamond, the Wright brothers' airplane, and the ruby slippers from the film *The Wizard of Oz*. Visiting the Smithsonian is like flipping through the pages of America's history.

The Smithsonian began with a single bequest from a man who donated money. It has grown into one of the world's most important centers for storing knowledge. Objects have come to the Smithsonian in many ways. People donate items that are precious to them. The museum buys others or gets them at auctions. And sometimes curators go out scavenging.

|                     |  |  |
|---------------------|--|--|
| Figurative Language |  |  |
| Simile or Metaphor? |  |  |
| Two Things Compared |  |  |
| What You Know       |  |  |
| Context Clues       |  |  |
| Meaning             |  |  |

Readings adapted from [macmillanmh.com](http://macmillanmh.com)

The Smithsonian is located in Washington, D.C.. It is part of the National Mall filled with museums celebrating national and international history →



**TEACHER NOTES: Lesson #12: Figurative Language in Nonfiction**

When you are reading a text, you'll sometimes come across Figurative language. There are many types of figurative language (sometimes called figures of speech).

A few of the common ones include:

|                 |  |
|-----------------|--|
| Metaphor        | a comparison of two unlike things<br>For example: The human body is a machine.   |
| Simile          | a comparison of two unlike things using the words "like" or "as"<br>For example – The human body is like a machine.              |
| Hyperbole       | an extreme exaggeration<br>For example – The project took an eternity to complete.   |
| Personification | Giving human qualities to something that is not human.<br>For example – The house heroically guarded the citizens hiding within. |

Writers use figurative language to help readers understand concepts by linking something familiar with something that is less familiar.

**You Try! Passage 2: Read & fill in the chart on the back.**

Where can you find a stage set from a famous television show and a portrait of George Washington worth \$20 million? The Smithsonian Institution, of course! Those are just two of the millions of items in the Smithsonian. **The Smithsonian is America's attic, storing countless wonders.**

Today the Smithsonian is a group of seventeen museums and nine research centers. It is the largest complex of museums in the world. People from all over the world visit the Smithsonian. They come to see the Hope Diamond, the Wright brothers' airplane, and the ruby slippers from the film *The Wizard of Oz*. **Visiting the Smithsonian is like flipping through the pages of America's history.**

The Smithsonian began with a single bequest from a man who donated money. It has grown into one of the world's most important centers for storing knowledge. Objects have come to the Smithsonian in many ways. People donate items that are precious to them. The museum buys others or gets them at auctions. And sometimes curators go out scavenging.

|                            |  |   |
|----------------------------|--|---|
| <b>Figurative Language</b> | The Smithsonian is America's attic, storing countless wonders.   | Visiting the Smithsonian is like flipping through the pages of America's history.   |
| <b>Simile or Metaphor?</b> | Metaphor   | Simile  |
| <b>Two Things Compared</b> | The Smithsonian is being compared to an attic  | Visiting the Smithsonian is like looking through a magazine   |
| <b>What You Know</b>       | The Smithsonian is located in Washington DC., it's a museum  | The Smithsonian is located in Washington DC., it's a museum   |
| <b>Context Clues</b>       | Where can you find a stage set from a famous television show and a portrait of George Washington worth \$20 million? | They come to see the Hope Diamond, the Wright brothers' airplane, and the ruby slippers from the film <i>The Wizard of Oz</i> . |
| <b>Meaning</b>             | The Smithsonian is home to many countless artifacts kept here for safe keeping.                                      | The Smithsonian has enough items and enough history to fill a textbook.   |

Readings adapted from macmillanmh.com



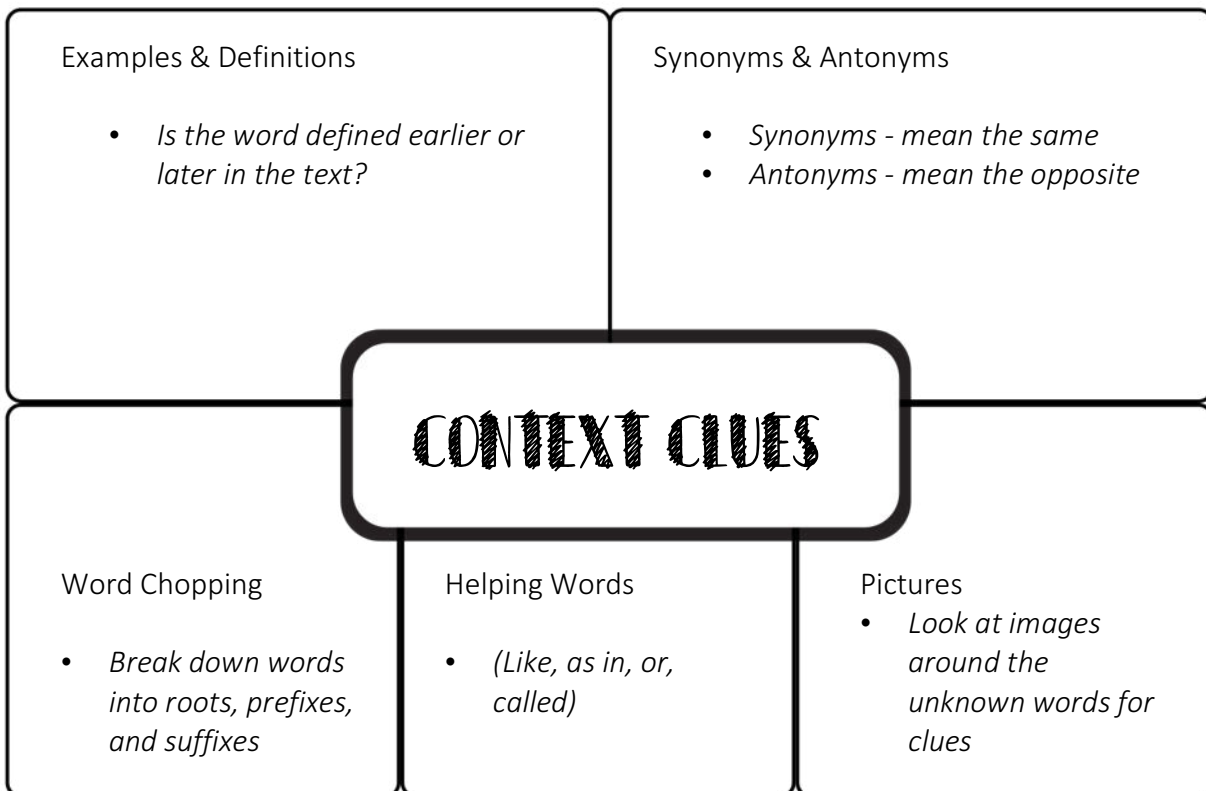
## 6<sup>th</sup> Grade ELA – Reading

### Nonfiction Unit

#### Lesson #13: Context Clues

Have you ever encountered a word that you did not know while reading? Maybe it was technical jargon (specific to the topic) or maybe it was just a bigger word that you have never seen before.

As a reader, you can use a variety of methods, called **context clues**, to help you figure out that an unknown word means in text.



Let's practice these clues! Can you figure out what any of these words mean without context clues?

Vitameatavegamin

Hakuna Matata

Snarffblat

Intergalactic

Jabberwocky

Hydrophobia

Somniphobia

Now, watch the clip from I Love Lucy! to see if you can figure out what Vitameatavegamin means in context.

Link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KY3eOtJwOhE>

You try! Use these context clues on the practice questions in your notes.





**Lesson #13: Context Clues**

What are context clues? Fill in the chart below with these methods:

|  |                      |  |
|--|----------------------|--|
|  |                      |  |
|  | <b>CONTEXT CLUES</b> |  |
|  |                      |  |

**Predict – what do these words mean without context clues?**

Vitameatavegamin: \_\_\_\_\_

Hakuna Matata: \_\_\_\_\_

Snarffblat: \_\_\_\_\_

Intergalactic: \_\_\_\_\_

Hydrophobia: \_\_\_\_\_

**TYPES OF CONTEXT CLUES PRACTICE: Real Words**

**Synonym:** A word or group of words that has the same meaning as the unknown word can be found in the sentence.

Example: My little brother is **gaunt**—just so thin and bony!

**Definition:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Antonym:** A word or group of words that has the opposite meaning of the unknown word can be found in the sentence.

Example: Though some students are **aloof**, others pay attention to everything.

Definition: \_\_\_\_\_

**Explanation:** The unknown word is explained within the sentence.

Example: My friend was so **forlorn** when her dog died that she cried for a week.

Definition: \_\_\_\_\_

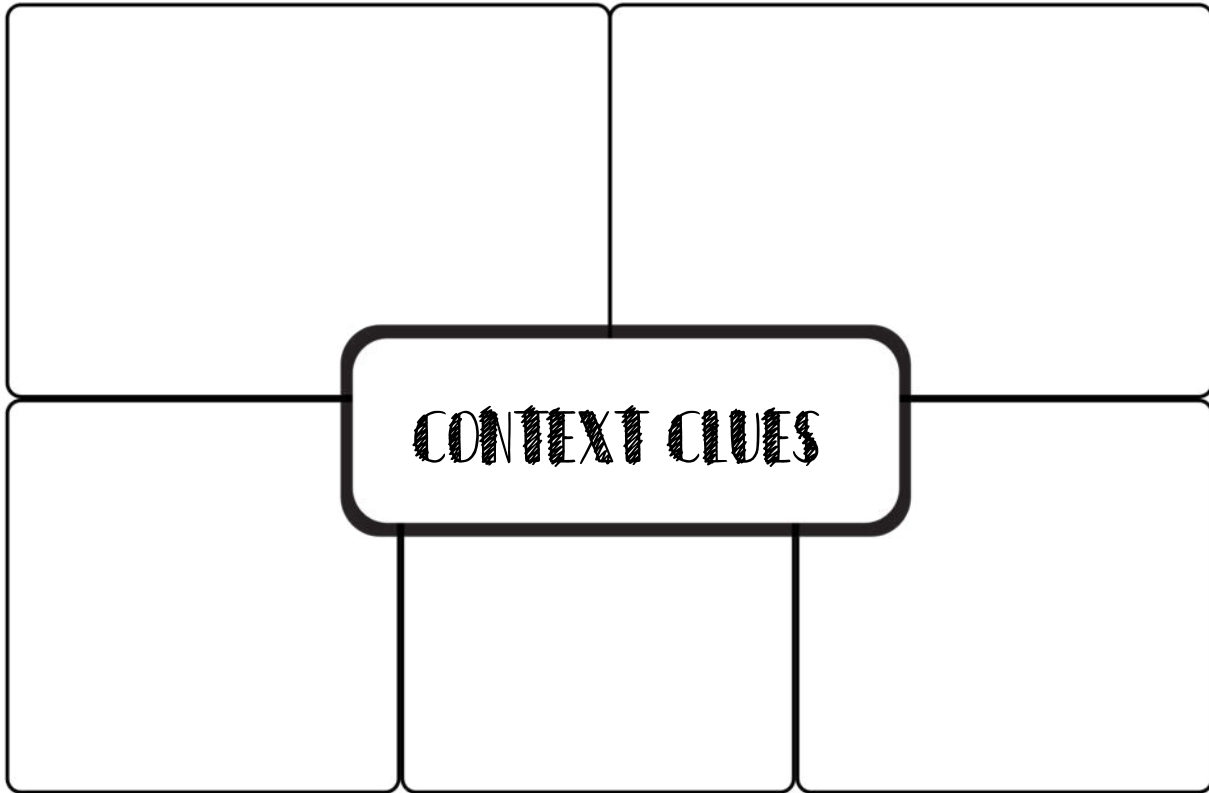
**Example:** Specific examples in the sentence help define the term.

Example: **Commercial vehicles**, such as trucks, buses, and taxis with paid drivers, can all be found on the road.

Definition: \_\_\_\_\_

**TEACHER NOTES: Lesson #13: Context Clues**

What are context clues? Fill in the chart below with these methods:



**Predict – what do these words mean without context clues?**

Vitameatavegamin: \_\_\_\_\_

Hakuna Matata: \_\_\_\_\_

Snarffblat: \_\_\_\_\_

Intergalactic: \_\_\_\_\_

Hydrophobia: \_\_\_\_\_

**Teachers – share these clips with students to provide context.**

Vitameatavegamin: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KY3eOtJwOhE>

Hakuna Matata: [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nbY\\_aP-alkw](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nbY_aP-alkw)

Snarffblat: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tpDgWm4HBW8>

Intergalactic: (Beastie Boys song) only need to play first 45 seconds to provide context.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qORYO0atB6g>

**TYPES OF CONTEXT CLUES PRACTICE: Real Words**

**Synonym:** A word or group of words that has the same meaning as the unknown word can be found in the sentence.

Example: My little brother is **gaunt**—just so thin and bony!

Definition: \_\_\_\_\_

**Antonym:** A word or group of words that has the opposite meaning of the unknown word can be found in the sentence.

Example: Though some students are **aloof**, others pay attention to everything.

Definition: \_\_\_\_\_

**Explanation:** The unknown word is explained within the sentence.

Example: My friend was so **forlorn** when her dog died that she cried for a week.

Definition: \_\_\_\_\_

**Example:** Specific examples in the sentence help define the term.

Example: **Commercial vehicles**, such as trucks, buses, and taxis with paid drivers, can all be found on the road.

Definition: \_\_\_\_\_

## 6<sup>th</sup> Grade ELA – Reading

### Nonfiction Unit

#### Lesson #14: Connotation & Denotation

Several lessons ago, we analyzed how an author's word choice can change the meaning of text for a reader. The three meanings discussed were technical, figurative, and connotative. This lesson focuses on denotation versus connotation.

**Denotation** is the definition of a word. **Connotation**, on the other hand, is the feeling that the word invokes. A word's connotation can give readers a positive or negative feeling. The following words share the same denotation, but some carry a positive connotation, others seem more negative. All of these words refer to smell, which ones makes you want to pick up that cup of coffee?

Aroma

Stench

Scented

Stink



Now look at these two examples-

1. The politician would do or say whatever it took to get a vote.
2. The statesman delivered his inspiring speech on the steps of the state capitol.

Definition of statesman/politician from Dictionary.com - one actively engaged in conducting the business of a government or in shaping its policies

| Word                  | Politician   | Statesman  |
|-----------------------|--|--|
| <b>Denotation</b>     | one actively engaged in conducting the business of a government or in shaping its policies         | one actively engaged in conducting the business of a government or in shaping its policies |
| <b>Context Clues</b>  | would do or say whatever it took to get a vote   | inspiring speech on the steps of the state capitol   |
| <b>Your Knowledge</b> | I see stories on the news of politicians doing anything and everything to get people to like them. | I watched the my state representative give a speech at my school last year.                |
| <b>Connotation</b>    | Negative   | Positive   |

Readings adapted from macmillanmh.com

Use this example to help you fill in the chart on your notes.



## REAL WORLD EXAMPLE-

Look at the Nike advertisement to the left. This print ad was published for a new shoe designed for the “unbreakable.”

According to Dictionary.com, unbreakable means – unable to reduce to pieces or fragments. This is the denotation. For most readers, the connotation of this word is positive. All of the features of this shoe listed in the ad made it seem like these shoes will make wearers a stronger athlete. Wearing this shoe will keep you playing longer than those not wearing this shoe designed to make you unbreakable.

*Based on the connotation of the words in this ad, would you purchase these shoes?*

Image from behance.com



Lesson #14: Connotation & Denotation

|             |              |
|-------------|--------------|
| Denotation: | Connotation: |
|-------------|--------------|

Fill in the chart below for the words inexpensive and cheap.

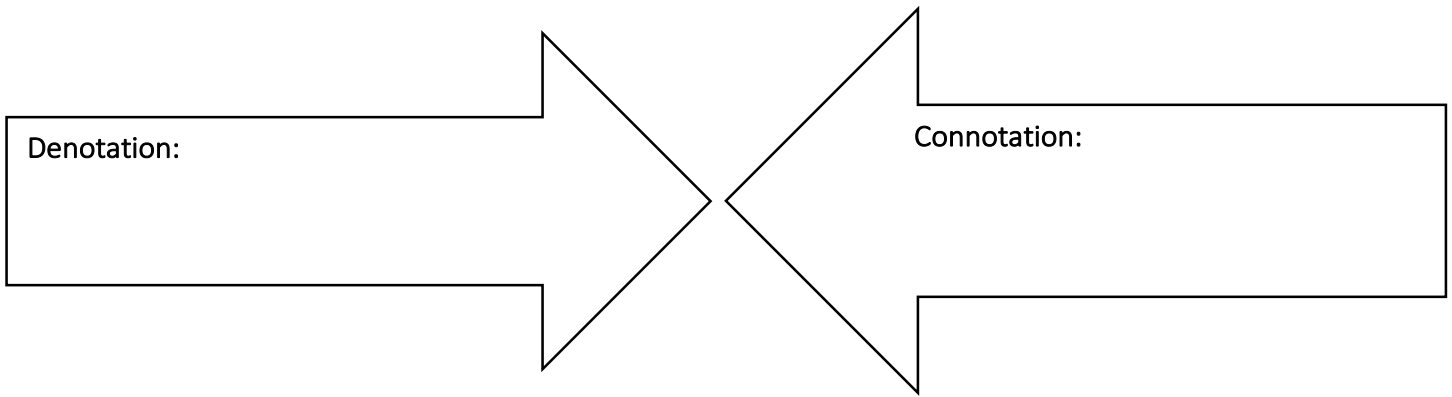
3. Clipping coupons is a good way to get the items you want at inexpensive prices.
4. In tough economic times people sometimes buy cheap food and clothing to save money.

Definition of inexpensive/cheap from dictionary.com – not in high price, costing little.

| Word           | inexpensive | cheap |
|----------------|-------------|-------|
| Denotation     |             |       |
| Context Clues  |             |       |
| Your Knowledge |             |       |
| Connotation    |             |       |

Readings adapted from macmillanmh.com

TEACHER NOTES: Lesson #14: Connotation & Denotation



Fill in the chart below for the words inexpensive and cheap.

1. Clipping coupons is a good way to get the items you want at inexpensive prices.
2. In tough economic times people sometimes buy cheap food and clothing to save money.

Definition of inexpensive/cheap from dictionary.com – not in high price, costing little.

| Word                  | <b>inexpensive</b>   | <b>cheap</b>   |
|-----------------------|--|--|
| <b>Denotation</b>     | not in high price, costing little  | not in high price, costing little                                    |
| <b>Context Clues</b>  | Clipping coupons, good way to save   | Tough times, save money on clothes                                   |
| <b>Your Knowledge</b> | Will vary-<br>My mom clips coupons for my cereal and fruit snack so I have good snacks at school | Will vary-<br>My aunt shops a thrift store and she buys junky shoes. |
| <b>Connotation</b>    | Positive   | Negative   |

## Lesson #15: Media Formats

When you hear the word “media” what do you think it means?

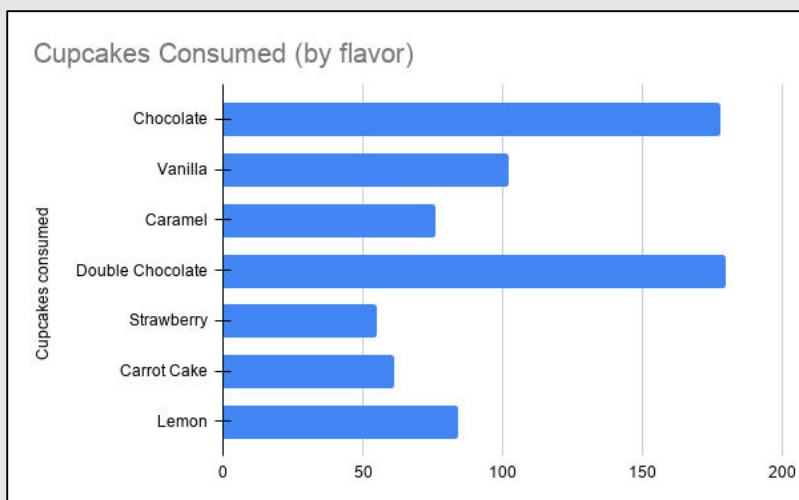
In this lesson, we will discover various types of media and visual formats you will encounter in nonfiction. Before we look at example, let’s add more words to our vocabulary-

First up, media. **Media** refers to a means of communicating information. **Visual formats** are a type of media, these include maps, graphs, tables, images, and charts. Authors use these visuals to share other aspects of the subject that may not be stated in the text. For the most part, visual formats in nonfiction are **quantitative** (think about quantity). Quantitative data refers to the count of something, the quantity. Readers will analyze quantitative data in graphs and charts. All of this comes together as the reader **synthesizes** this information. Synthesizing means to combine the given information. In other words, a reader reviews the text, the charts, and the images to gain a better understanding of the subject.

As critical readers of nonfiction, we not only read text, but we soak in the new information, look at maps, graphs, and tables. These items may look like distractions, but reviewing this bonus information helps readers comprehend and recall new information. *Read the article about Jamie, then view the visuals. What did you learn about this baker?*

### All About the Baker

Jamie loves cupcakes. Like, lots and lots of cupcakes. Chocolate, Vanilla, Strawberry, Carrot Cake, Jamie will eat them all. Jamie is a self-proclaimed cupcake enthusiast. Not only does she spend time consuming cupcakes, but she bakes a new flavor every week, sometimes twice a week. She is focused on creating the best of the best cupcakes and focuses on improving her favorite flavors. Her cookbook is covered in recipes with notes and suggestions for next time.



One day, Jamie hopes to open her own bakery in her hometown.

**Banana Bread Cupcakes**

★★★★★

| Prep | Cook | Ready In |
|------|------|----------|
| 15 m | 1 h  | 1 h 15 m |

Recipe by: Joy

"This easy banana bread recipe is quick to prepare, and everyone always comes back for seconds!"

**Ingredients**

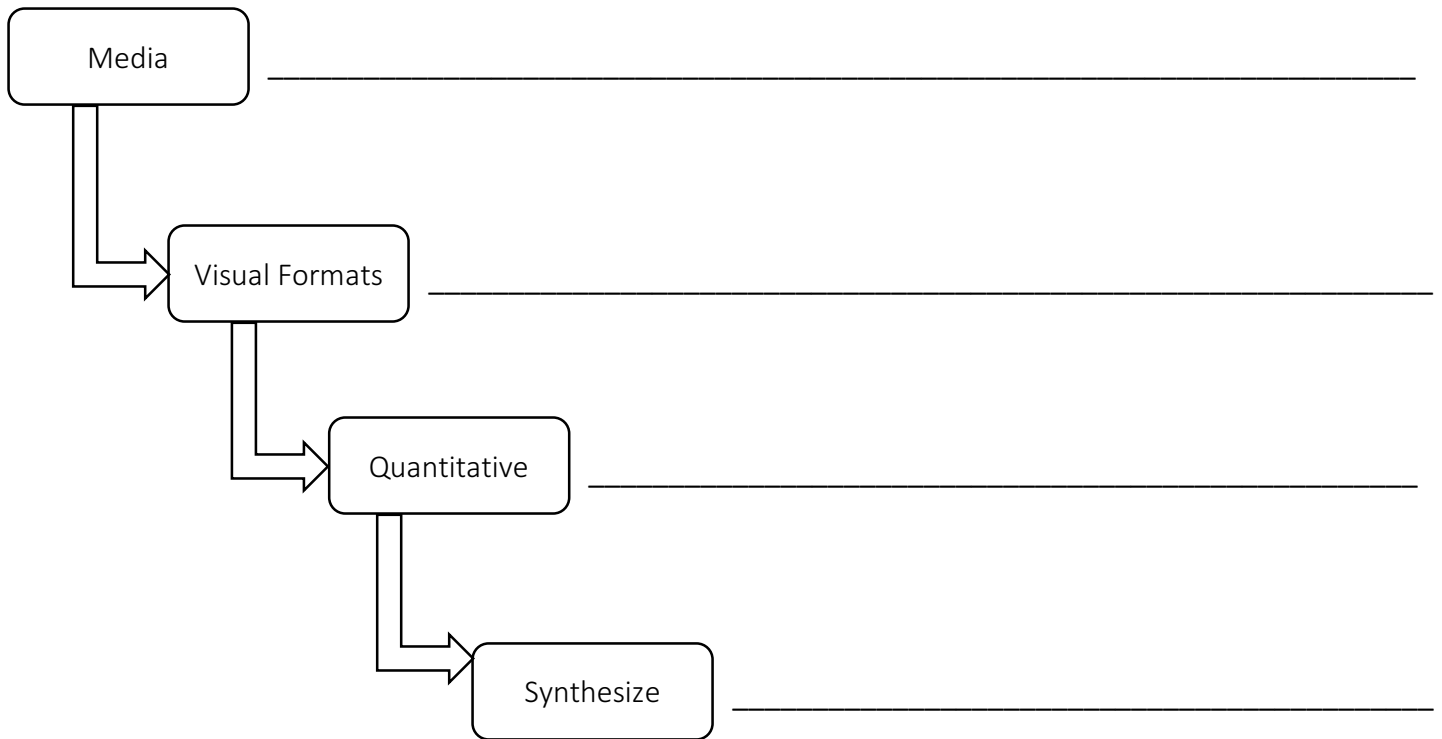
3 ripe bananas, mashed  
1 cup white sugar = 1 1/2 cups sugar  
1 egg = 2 whole eggs  
1/4 cup melted butter  
1 1/2 cups all-purpose flour  
1 teaspoon baking soda  
1 teaspoon salt  
+ 1/4 cup milk

**Directions**

1. Preheat oven to 325 degrees F (165 degrees C). Grease a 9x5-inch loaf pan.
2. Combine bananas, sugar, egg, and butter together in a bowl. Mix flour and baking soda together in a separate bowl; stir into banana mixture until batter is just mixed. Stir salt into batter. Pour batter into the prepared loaf pan.
3. Bake in the preheated oven until a toothpick inserted in the center of the bread comes out clean, about 1 hour.



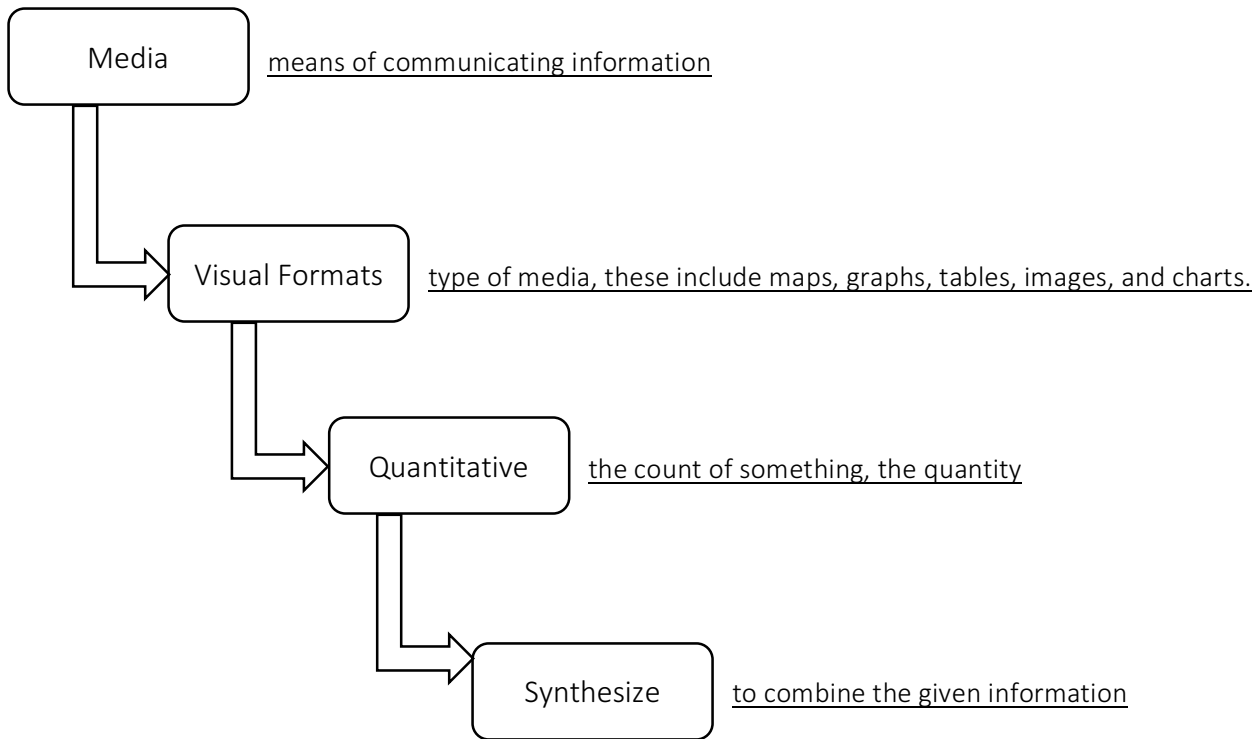
**Lesson #15: Media Formats**



*Read the article about Jamie, then view the visuals. Answer the following questions.*

1. What is something new you learned about Jamie?
2. The text states that Jamie is always trying to improve her favorite type of cupcakes by baking them over and over again. Based on this information, which type of cupcakes does Jamie bake most often?
3. Jamie has consumed many cupcakes, but she must be working on something new. What type of cupcakes with Jamie need to add to her graph next she posts this information?

**TEACHER NOTES - Lesson #15: Media Formats**



*Read the article about Jamie, then view the visuals. Answer the following questions.*

1. What is something new you learned about Jamie?

*Answers will vary.*

2. The text states that Jamie is always trying to improve her favorite type of cupcakes by baking them over and over again. Based on this information, which type of cupcakes does Jamie bake most often?

*Double chocolate, these are her favorite cupcakes to eat based on the graph*

3. Jamie has consumed many cupcakes, but she must be working on something new. What type of cupcakes with Jamie need to add to her graph next she posts this information?

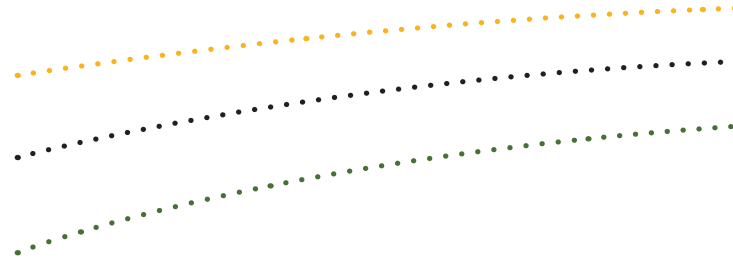
*Banana cupcake count will need to be added to her next graph. She is working on improve that recipe (see image)*

**\*\*Have students review the Cane Toad pamphlet. Analyze the text and maps.**



Australian Government

Department of the Environment,  
Water, Heritage and the Arts



# THE CANE TOAD (*BUFO MARINUS*)

Cane toads became pests after being introduced into Australia to control destructive beetles in Queensland's sugarcane crops. Cane toads are capable of poisoning predators that try to eat them and they continue to spread across Australia. There is no broadscale way to control this pest but scientists are developing a better understanding of the impacts they have on the environment and the ways in which assets, such as rare and vulnerable wildlife, can be protected.

## History

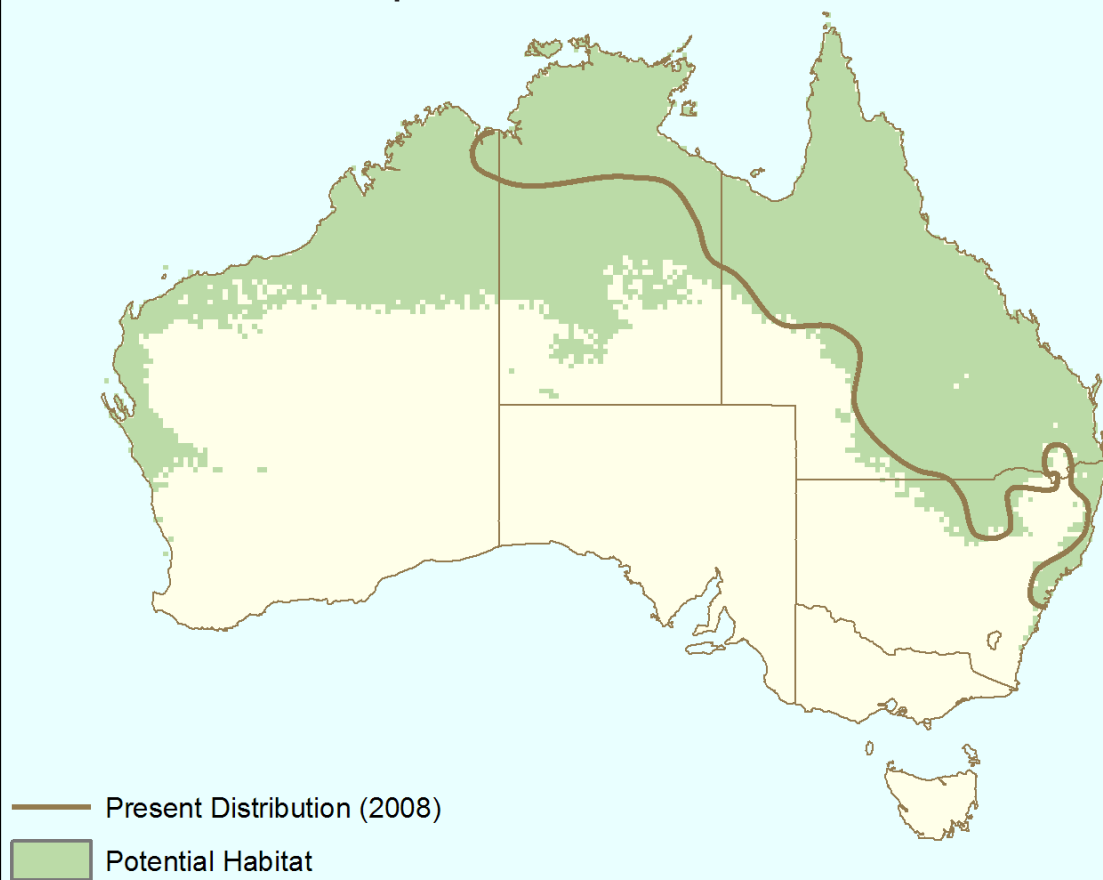
Cane toads are native to South and Central America. They are extremely hardy animals and voracious predators of insects and other small prey. These qualities led to their introduction into Australia as a means of controlling pest beetles in the sugar cane industry in 1935, before the use of agricultural chemicals became widespread.

Since then, the range of cane toads has expanded through Australia's northern landscape and they are now moving westward at an estimated 40 to 60 km per year. Cane toads reached Brisbane by 1945, Burketown in north-western Queensland by the early 1980s, Iron Range on the Cape York Peninsula by 1983 and the tip of the Cape by 1994. By 1995, their westward expansion had

reached the Roper River in the Gulf of Carpentaria in the Northern Territory. By March 2001, they had reached Kakadu National Park. In February 2009, cane toads crossed the Western Australian border with the Northern Territory (over 2000 km from the site they were released 74 years before). To the south, cane toads were introduced to Byron Bay in 1965 and then spread to Yamba and Port Macquarie on the north coast of NSW in 2003.



## Current extent and anticipated distribution of cane toads in Australia



Source: Kearney, M, Phillips, BL, Tracy, CR, Christian, KA, Betts, G & Porter, WP 2008, 'Modelling species distributions without using species distributions: the cane toad in Australia under current and future climates', *Ecography*, vol. 31, pp. 423–434.

## Ecology

Cane toads forage at night in a wide variety of habitats. The toad is a ground-dwelling predator, primarily eating terrestrial and aquatic insects and snails. Toads will even take food left out for pets.

The toads can be accidentally transported to new locations, for example in pot plants or loads of timber.

Cane toads need constant access to moisture to survive. Instead of drinking, they absorb water through the skin on their belly — from dew, moist sand or any other moist material. If forced to stay in flooded conditions, cane toads can absorb too much water and die. They can also die from water loss during dry conditions. In Australia there are no specific predators or diseases that control cane toads.





The toads can breed at any time of year but seem to prefer the weather conditions that occur with the onset of the wet season. They will lay their eggs in still or slow-moving waters. Females can lay 8000–30 000 eggs at a time. In comparison, most Australian native frogs typically lay 1000–2000 eggs per year. Cane toad eggs hatch in two or three days and the tadpole stage lasts between four and eight weeks. In tropical conditions, the toadlets can reach adult size within a year, but this may take twice that long in colder climates.

## Impact

The cane toad defends itself through poison and is poisonous, to varying degrees, during all its life stages. Adult cane toads produce toxin from glands over their upper surface, but especially from bulging glands on their shoulders — these exude venom when the toad is provoked. While some birds and native predators have learned to avoid the poison glands of adult toads, other predators are more vulnerable and die rapidly after ingesting toads. Toads contain poisons that act on the heart and on the central nervous system. The poison is absorbed through body tissues such as those of the eyes, mouth and nose.

The arrival of cane toads in Kakadu National Park was linked to a marked decline in some native predators in the park, especially northern quolls (*Dasyurus hallucatus*) and large goannas. However, based on current evidence it appears that some native predator species which are heavily impacted when toads arrive make rapid adaptations (both behavioural and physiological) allowing for population recovery in the longer term.

Adult cane toads may compete with native animals, particularly for shelter. For example, a 2004 study showed that cane toads ruined one-third of nest attempts of ground-nesting rainbow bee-eaters by usurping their nest burrows and preying upon their eggs and young nestling.



The cane toad, introduced in 1935, is spreading to more parts of Australia. Australia has no predators or diseases that control cane toad numbers (QLD Environmental Protection Agency).

## Control

It is possible to control cane toad numbers humanely in a small area, such as a local creek or pond. This can be done by collecting the long jelly-like strings of cane toad eggs from the water or by humanely disposing of adult cane toads. Control is best at the egg or adult stages because cane toad tadpoles can easily be confused with some native tadpoles. Adult cane toads are also readily confused with some of the larger native frogs. Care should be taken to ensure you can correctly identify your local frog fauna before you become involved in projects to remove cane toads from the environment. This approach to cane toad control requires ongoing monitoring of the creek or pond. Fine-mesh fencing can also assist in keeping cane toads from ponds that are in need of special protection.

There is unlikely to ever be a broadscale method available to control cane toads across Australia. Researchers are beginning to understand the toad's impact on native fauna and to appreciate the ways in which native species are adapting to



the presence of cane toads and recovering from the impact of their arrival. Protecting our most vulnerable native species on a local scale is the focus of current planning around cane toads.

## How the Australian Government is dealing with a national problem

*'The biological effects, including lethal toxic ingestion, caused by Cane Toads (Bufo marinus)'* are listed as a key threatening process under the *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999* (EPBC Act). The Australian Government is preparing a threat abatement plan to set out the research, management and other actions necessary to reduce the key threatening process concerned to an acceptable level in order to maximise the chances of long-term survival in nature of native species and ecological communities affected by cane toads.

## Caring for our Country

The Australian Government cane toad commitment is providing more than \$2 million over two years (2008-09 to 2009-10) to reduce the impacts of cane toads and to develop a national cane toad plan. Through these investments under the *Caring for our Country* initiative, the Government is continuing

to assist with funding for ground-control work, as well as research and development of sustainable control measures. In 2009-10, the Government provided over \$1 million for community-based control activities and research to reduce cane toad numbers.

The Government will continue to work with regional natural resource management organisations and with state governments to achieve outcomes for our environment and sustainable agriculture.

Further information on the Caring for our Country initiative is available at:

[www.nrm.gov.au/business-plan/10-11/index.html](http://www.nrm.gov.au/business-plan/10-11/index.html)

### For further information on Australian Government policy on cane toads go to:

[www.environment.gov.au/biodiversity/invasive/ferals/cane-toads.html](http://www.environment.gov.au/biodiversity/invasive/ferals/cane-toads.html)

### or contact:

Department of the Environment, Water, Heritage and the Arts

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Phone: 1800 803 772

Email: [InvasiveSpecies@environment.gov.au](mailto:InvasiveSpecies@environment.gov.au)

Web site: [www.environment.gov.au/biodiversity/invasive/index.html](http://www.environment.gov.au/biodiversity/invasive/index.html)

Photo credits in order: Illustration of Cane Toad (Sharyn Wragg), Metamorph cane toad (David Nelson, University of Sydney), Slaty-grey snake with cane toad (Zig Madycki, DEWHA), Calling male (David Nelson, University of Sydney), Cane toad in leaf litter (Damian McRae, DEWHA), Toad aggregation (Ruchira Somaweera, University of Sydney).

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