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Standards: RH.6–8.6, RI.8.6, RI.8.8, RI.8.10
Welcome to the Common Core Coach, English Language Arts, Independent Leveled Practice Resource Book, First Edition. The purpose of this component is to provide students with the opportunity for independent reading practice. It allows students to apply the skills they have learned in a particular reading lesson to a short, topically related selection.

Each reading lesson in the Student Edition has a corresponding Independent Practice Reading Selection that is the third step of the research-proven, three-step "gradual release model." The Independent Practice Reading Selection is available in three versions written at different reading levels to meet the needs of a wide range of students. Level 1 passages are written below grade level; Level 2 passages are written at grade level; Level 3 passages are written above grade level. The comprehension questions are the same for each leveled passage within a selection, so regardless of reading level, all students have the opportunity to apply higher-level critical thinking skills and strategies independently. (Exception: In the Reading Poetry lesson, three different poems, at three different reading levels, are provided to give students the opportunity to read poetry independently. In this case, the comprehension questions are specific to the poem.)

Assigning Independent Leveled Practice Reading Selections

Use your knowledge of each student’s reading level to determine which version of a passage to assign. Reproducibles for each level are provided in the pages that follow. The difficulty level of each passage is indicated by the shading of the three cubes in the margin.
## Answer Key and Standards Correlation Chart

The following answer key shows both the correct answers for every question in the practice reading and the standard each question covers. Except where indicated, answers for the practice questions are provided once for each passage set.

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<tr>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Correct Answer</th>
<th>Common Core State Standard</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Striking Out</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>RL.8.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>D</td>
<td>RL.8.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Answers will vary. Sample answer: <em>The dialogue reveals how Marcia’s faking has come back to haunt her.</em></td>
<td>RL.8.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Answers will vary. Sample answer: <em>The reader would be unaware that Marcia initially faked her injury but later was really hurt. The moral of the story would lose its impact.</em></td>
<td>RL.8.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Answers will vary. Sample answer: <em>Marcia fakes an injury to avoid pitching, then is injured and has to pitch.</em></td>
<td>RL.8.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Brave Bessie Coleman</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Answers will vary. Sample answer: <em>Bessie Coleman had a difficult childhood, having to work while attending school. Bessie decided to become a pilot. Because she was an African American woman, her options were limited, so she went to France to learn how to fly, sponsored by community leaders.</em></td>
<td>RI.8.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>RI.8.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Answers will vary. Sample answer: <em>The passage notes that after Bessie’s death, flight schools for African Americans were opened in her name.</em></td>
<td>RI.8.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>RI.8.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Answers will vary. Sample answer: <em>Bessie Coleman did not give up when she was told she couldn’t learn to fly in the United States. She decided to go to France to learn how to fly. Also, airplanes were still a new invention. They were dangerous and not as reliable as they are today. This didn’t deter Bessie from wanting to learn how to fly.</em></td>
<td>RI.8.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number</td>
<td>Correct Answer</td>
<td>Common Core State Standard</td>
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<td>--------</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>The Second War of Independence</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>RH.6–8.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>D</td>
<td>RH.6–8.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Answers will vary. Sample answer: Great Britain created a blockade that stopped American trade, and British ships captured American sailors.</td>
<td>RH.6–8.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Answers will vary. Sample answer: Both documents give reasons why war with Great Britain is necessary.</td>
<td>RH.6–8.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Answers will vary. Sample answer: The Declaration of Independence was written while Americans were still British colonists, whereas Madison’s war message was written when the United States was an independent nation.</td>
<td>RH.6–8.9</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Learning to Fly</strong></td>
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<td>1</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>RL.8.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Answers will vary. Sample answer: The dialogue shows that Aliza and Dina have been friends a long time, and that Dina has always had an interest in birds.</td>
<td>RL.8.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>D</td>
<td>RL.8.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Answers will vary. Sample answer: Aliza is unaware that Dina is working alongside her.</td>
<td>RL.8.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Answers will vary. Sample answer: There would be less focus on the interaction between the characters.</td>
<td>RL.8.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>A Worn-Out Pencil (Level 1)</strong></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>RL.8.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>D</td>
<td>RL.8.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Answers will vary. Sample answer: The formal structure reflects the author’s respect for his pencil.</td>
<td>RL.8.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Answers will vary. Sample answer: his own life</td>
<td>RL.8.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Answers will vary. Sample answer: The recurring use of exclamation points reflects each author’s passion for his subject.</td>
<td>RL.8.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number</td>
<td>Correct Answer</td>
<td>Common Core State Standard</td>
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<td>--------</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>A Water-Color (Level 2)</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>RL.8.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>D</td>
<td>RL.8.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>RL.8.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Answers will vary. Sample answer: The author presents images of peace and quiet, which contribute to the relaxed mood of the poem.</td>
<td>RL.8.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Answers will vary. Sample answer: The formal structure of “Endymion” reflects the passion the author feels for his subject, whereas the looser structure of “A Water-Color” reflects the relaxed attitude of its author.</td>
<td>RL.8.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>A Dream (Level 3)</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>D</td>
<td>RL.8.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Answers will vary. Sample answer: The repetition of certain rhyme sounds quickens the pace of the poem.</td>
<td>RL.8.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Answers will vary. Sample answer: The quick pacing contributes to a mood of excitement.</td>
<td>RL.8.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>D</td>
<td>RL.8.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Answers will vary. Sample answer: Longfellow’s poem is solemn and serious, whereas this poem is ecstatic and gleeful.</td>
<td>RL.8.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>A Fire-Friendly Tree</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>RST.6–8.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Answers will vary. Sample answer: thin bark and cones covered with sticky resin</td>
<td>RST.6–8.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>RST.6–8.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Answers will vary. Sample answer: First blank: Lightning or a human-made fire ignites the material. Second blank: Heat from the fire melts the resin covering the pine cone.</td>
<td>RST.6–8.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Answers will vary. Sample answer: by making sure there is enough material around the trees to make a manageable wildfire, but not so much that the wildfire kills the tree</td>
<td>RST.6–8.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number</td>
<td>Correct Answer</td>
<td>Common Core State Standard</td>
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<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>RI.8.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Answers will vary. Sample answer: <em>by showing that sixteen-year-olds are already given adult responsibilities</em></td>
<td>RI.8.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>RI.8.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Answers will vary. Sample answer: <em>The author identifies himself or herself as a teenager.</em></td>
<td>RH.6–8.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Answers will vary. Sample answer: <em>The author argues that if other countries allow sixteen-year-olds to vote, then the United States should, as well.</em></td>
<td>RI.8.8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Independent Practice
Lesson 1: Reading Fiction

Read the passage. Then answer the questions that follow.

Striking Out

1. Let me be clear about one thing: I love softball. I really do. I just hate pitching. Standing out there in the middle of that diamond, with everyone’s eyes on me, throwing pitch after pitch in the hot sun, concentrating on what to throw next, icing my elbow after every game—it’s all just too much. I’d rather just plant myself in the outfield, catch a pop fly here and there, and daydream between at bats. Hitting was always the most enjoyable part about softball, anyway, and I’m really good at that.

2. The trouble is that nature seems to have blessed, or should I say cursed, me with a pretty good arm, too. Coach thinks I can throw a fastball at about 50 miles per hour, which he says is really great for a girl my age. It is ten times better than any of the other girls on the team, especially Lindsay, who’s still afraid of the ball, for Pete’s sake. So, every third game or so I have to dutifully trot out to the pitcher’s mound and take one for the team. What’s worse, I normally end up pitching the entire game, which makes my arm sore for about a week afterward.

3. A few weeks ago I came up with what I thought was a really ingenious plan to get out of pitching. Last Tuesday, I arrived at the pregame warm-ups sporting a fake limp on my right side. Coach looked legitimately concerned.

4. “Marcia, what happened?”

5. Putting on my bravest face, I said, “It’s nothing, Coach. I think I just sprained my ankle jogging the other day. I can still play and all, it just kind of hurts when I go through my pitching windup.” I tried to affect my most convincing sad face. “Would it be all right if I just played the outfield today?”

6. Coach took off his cap and frowned. “Well, OK. But make sure you take care of that. I really need you on the mound for the playoffs in a couple of weeks.”

7. Success! The perfect crime! We actually pulled off a win, too, and I got four hits. My “limp” continued for the next week and a half, and I was on a hitting streak. Everything was going perfectly until Rosa’s birthday party at the roller rink. Stephen and Miguel were being immature and horsing around the way they always do, and Miguel ended up sweeping my skates out from under me. I took to the air and hit the hardwood with a loud smack, right on my left hip. It hurt so much! The X-rays revealed that nothing was broken, but I was still in a lot of pain.

8. Our next game was the first round of the county playoffs, and it was my turn to pitch. I struggled to limp into the dugout.
“Coach, I—” I began.

“Let me guess,” he said, squinting suspiciously at me. “You’re still injured, right?”

“Yeah, but—”

He put his hands on his hips. “Funny thing is, last week you were limping on your right leg. You’ve been faking this whole time to get out of pitching, haven’t you?”

“No, well, yes,” I stammered, “but this time it’s really—”

Coach cut me off right away. “I’m not letting you quit on your teammates like that, Marcia. No more fooling around. Now I need you to get on that mound and pitch a big game for us today.”

It turned out to be a big game, all right—for the other team. With my left leg throbbing in pain the whole time, I couldn’t really plant my foot when I was throwing, and the other team clobbered me. I barely lasted through two innings. In the end, Coach had to resort to putting Lindsay on the mound. It was awful—I spent the whole year being the team’s MVP, and in the end, they ended up blaming me for blowing the whole season. These days, I’d give anything for the chance to pitch another game.
Comprehension Check

1. Which of the following best describes Marcia as she is portrayed throughout most of this story?
   A. genuine
   B. nervous
   C. crafty
   D. dedicated

2. What is the theme of “Striking Out”?
   A. It is best to lead an active and healthy lifestyle.
   B. Never trust others to do your job for you.
   C. Hard work is always rewarding.
   D. Dishonesty has consequences.

3. How does the dialogue between Marcia and her coach contribute to the climax of this story?

4. How would the story change if it were told from the point of view of the coach instead of from Marcia’s point of view?

5. Identify an example of situational irony in the story.

Read the passage. Then answer the questions that follow.

**Striking Out**

1. Let me be clear about one thing: It’s not that I don’t love softball. It’s just that I hate pitching. Standing out there in the middle of that diamond, with everyone’s eyes on me, throwing pitch after pitch in the hot sun, concentrating on outsmarting each hitter, icing my elbow after every game—it’s all just too much to deal with. I’d rather just plant myself in the outfield, catch a pop fly here and there, and spend the rest of the game daydreaming between at bats. Hitting was always the most enjoyable part about softball, anyway, and I’ve always been really good at that.

2. The trouble is that nature seems to have blessed, or should I say cursed, me with a pretty good arm. Coach thinks I can throw a fastball at about 50 miles per hour, which he says is really great for a girl my age and is about ten times better than any of the other girls on the team, especially Lindsay, who’s still afraid of the ball, for Pete’s sake. So, every third game or so I have to dutifully trot out to the pitcher’s mound and take one for the team. What’s worse, I normally end up having to pitch the entire game, which makes my arm sore for about a week afterward.

3. A few weeks ago I devised what I thought was a really ingenious plan to get out of pitching. Last Tuesday, I arrived at the pregame warm-ups sporting a fake limp on my right side. Coach looked legitimately concerned.

4. “Marcia, what happened?”

5. I tried to look absolutely brave as I said, “It’s nothing, Coach. I think I just sprained my ankle jogging the other day. I can still play and all, it just kind of hurts when I go through my pitching windup.” I tried to affect my most convincing sad face. “Would it be all right if I just played the outfield today?”

6. Coach took off his cap and frowned. “Well, OK. But make sure you keep an eye on that leg. I’m counting on you to be on the mound for the playoffs in a couple of weeks.”

7. Inwardly, I breathed a sigh of relief. It was the perfect crime! We actually pulled off a win, too, and I got four hits. My “limp” continued for the next week and a half, and I was on a hitting streak. Everything was going perfectly until Rosa’s birthday party at the roller rink. Stephen and Miguel were being immature and horsing around the way they always do, and Miguel ended up sweeping my skates out from under me. I took to the air and hit the hardwood with a loud smack, right on my left hip. It hurt so much! The X-rays came back as negative for any broken bones, but I was still in a lot of pain.

8. Our next game was the first round of the county playoffs, and it was my turn to pitch. I limped gingerly into the dugout.
“Coach, I—” I began.

“Let me guess,” he said, squinting suspiciously at me. “You’re still injured, right?”

“Yeah, but—”

He put his hands on his hips and craned his neck out at me. “Funny thing is, last week you were limping on your right leg.” His eyes narrowed. “You’ve been faking this whole time to get out of pitching, haven’t you?”

“No, well, yes,” I stammered, “but this time it’s really—”

Coach cut me off right away. “I’m not letting you quit on your teammates like that, Marcia. No more fooling around. Now I need you to get on that mound and pitch a big game for us today.”

It turned out to be a big game, all right—for the other team. With my left leg throbbing in pain the whole time, I couldn’t really plant my foot when I was throwing, and the other team clobbered me. I barely lasted through two innings. In the end, Coach had to resort to putting Lindsay on the mound. It was awful—I spent the whole year being the team’s MVP, and in the end, they ended up blaming me for blowing the whole season. These days, I’d give anything for the chance to pitch another game.
Comprehension Check

1. Which of the following best describes Marcia as she is portrayed throughout most of this story?
   A. genuine
   B. nervous
   C. crafty
   D. dedicated

2. What is the theme of “Striking Out”?
   A. It is best to lead an active and healthy lifestyle.
   B. Never trust others to do your job for you.
   C. Hard work is always rewarding.
   D. Dishonesty has consequences.

3. How does the dialogue between Marcia and her coach contribute to the climax of this story?

4. How would the story change if it were told from the point of view of the coach instead of from Marcia’s point of view?

5. Identify an example of situational irony in the story.
Read the passage. Then answer the questions that follow.

**Striking Out**

1. Let me be clear about one thing: Contrary to what other people might be telling you now, it’s not that I don’t love softball. It’s just that I hate pitching. Standing out there in the middle of that diamond, with everyone’s eyes on me, throwing pitch after pitch in the hot sun, concentrating on outsmarting each hitter, icing my elbow after every game—it’s all just too much to deal with. I’d rather plant myself in the outfield, catch a pop fly whenever the opportunity presents itself, and spend the rest of the game daydreaming between at bats. Hitting was always my favorite part of the game anyway, and I’ve always been really good at that.

2. The trouble is that nature seems to have blessed, or should I say cursed, me with a pretty powerful arm. Coach seems pretty confident that I can throw a fastball at about 50 miles per hour, which he says is really impressive for a girl my age and is about ten times better than any of the other girls on the team, especially Lindsay, who’s still afraid of the ball, for Pete’s sake. So, every third game or so I have to dutifully trot out to the pitcher’s mound and take one for the team. The worst part is that I normally end up having to pitch the entire game, which makes my arm sore for about a week afterward.

3. A few weeks ago I devised what I thought was a rather ingenious plan to get out of pitching. Last Tuesday, I shuffled up to the pregame warm-ups sporting a fake limp on my right side. When he saw me, Coach looked legitimately concerned.

4. “Marcia, what happened?”

5. I tried to look absolutely brave as I said, “It’s nothing, Coach. I think I just sprained my ankle jogging the other day. I can still play and everything, but it just kind of hurts when I go through my pitching windup.” I tried to affect my most convincing sad face. “Would it be all right if I just played the outfield today?”

6. Coach removed his cap and frowned thoughtfully. “Well, OK. But make sure you keep an eye on that leg. I’m counting on you to be on the mound for the playoffs in a couple of weeks.”
Inwardly, I breathed a sigh of relief. I had pulled off the perfect crime! We came away with a win that day, too, and I got four hits. My “limp” persisted for the next week and a half, and I was on a hot streak at the plate. Everything was going perfectly until Rosa’s birthday party at the roller rink. Stephen and Miguel were being immature and horsing around the way they always do, and Miguel ended up colliding with me and sweeping my skates out from under me. I took to the air and hit the hardwood with a loud smack, landing directly on my left hip. The pain was so intense! The X-rays came back as negative for any broken bones, but I was left with a really bad bruise, which the doctor told me would make it difficult for me to get around for a while.

Our next game was the first round of the county playoffs, and I was scheduled to pitch that day. I limped gingerly into the dugout.

“Coach, listen, I really don’t think that I’ll be able to …” I began.

“Let me guess,” he said, squinting suspiciously at me. “You’re still injured, right?”

“He put his hands on his hips and craned his neck out at me. “Funny thing is, last week you seemed to be limping on your right leg.” His eyes narrowed. “You’ve been faking that injury this whole time to get out of pitching, haven’t you?”

“No, well, yes,” I stammered, “but this time it’s really—”

Coach cut me off almost immediately. “I’m not letting you quit on your teammates like that, Marcia. You’re not fooling anyone anymore. Now I need you to get on that mound and pitch a big game for us today.”

It turned out to be a big game, all right—for the other team, that is. With my left leg throbbing in pain the whole time, I couldn’t really plant my foot when I was throwing, and the other team clobbered me. I barely lasted through two innings before I had to be taken out. In the end, coach had to resort to putting Lindsay on the mound. It was awful—I spent the whole year being the team’s MVP, and in the end, they ended up blaming me for blowing the whole season. These days, I’d give anything for the chance to pitch another game.
**Comprehension Check**

1. Which of the following best describes Marcia as she is portrayed throughout most of this story?
   A. genuine
   B. nervous
   C. crafty
   D. dedicated

2. What is the theme of “Striking Out”?
   A. It is best to lead an active and healthy lifestyle.
   B. Never trust others to do your job for you.
   C. Hard work is always rewarding.
   D. Dishonesty has consequences.

3. How does the dialogue between Marcia and her coach contribute to the climax of this story?

4. How would the story change if it were told from the point of view of the coach instead of from Marcia’s point of view?

5. Identify an example of situational irony in the story.
Brave Bessie Coleman

1 Today, we take flying for granted. Many people even see it as a chore. But years ago, flying was seen as an adventure. Pilots were admired for their bravery, and some even became celebrities. Perhaps the bravest was Bessie Coleman, the first African American woman to earn a pilot’s license.

2 Bessie was born in Atlanta, Texas, in 1892. Her childhood was a difficult one. She worked long hours doing chores and picking cotton on her parents’ farm. When she wasn’t working, she walked four miles each day to go to the nearest school. Although the work was hard, Bessie became a very good student. She loved to read and was very good at math. By the time she turned eighteen, Bessie had saved enough money to go to college in Oklahoma. Unfortunately, she could afford to go to school for only one year. Discouraged, Bessie moved to Chicago, where she found a job in a barbershop.

3 While working in the barbershop, Bessie heard exciting stories from pilots returning from World War I. She soon dreamed of becoming a pilot herself. Unfortunately, there were no flight schools in the United States for African Americans or women. Bessie learned that there were flight schools in France that would accept her and decided to move there. Community leaders were so impressed by Bessie’s determination that they agreed to pay for her schooling.

4 Bessie arrived in Paris in 1920 and aced her flight classes. In less than a year, she became the first African American woman to earn a pilot’s license. She then returned to America and started performing in air shows. Planes were made of cloth and steel in those days, so flying was a dangerous business. At one air show, Bessie was badly injured in a crash. However, she stayed determined. From her hospital bed, she said, “As soon as I can walk, I’m going to fly!” Bessie wanted to prove that she could be a successful pilot.

5 Thanks to her daring stunts, and because she was the only woman flyer, Bessie soon became known as the world’s greatest woman flyer. Between shows, she spoke at African American churches and community centers. As her fame grew, Bessie began to dream of one day opening her own flight school, one that would be open to everyone.

6 Sadly, Bessie Coleman did not live long enough to see her dream come true. In 1926, she was killed in a plane accident on her way to an air show. Thousands attended her funeral in Chicago. Just a few years later, Bessie Coleman Aero Clubs started to open across the country. These clubs taught a new generation of African Americans to become pilots. To this day, Bessie Coleman is honored as an American pioneer and an early hero of the civil rights movement.
Comprehension Check

1. In your own words, write a summary of the second and third paragraphs of this passage.

2. Which of the following best expresses the main idea of this passage?
   A. Because of her bravery and determination, Bessie Coleman continues to be an inspirational figure.
   B. Thanks to the efforts of Bessie Coleman, flying is more popular today than ever.
   C. African Americans and women have more opportunities today than they did in the early twentieth century.
   D. Although it is common today, flying was seen as an adventure in the early twentieth century.

3. What detail from the passage would allow you to infer that the number of African American pilots increased after Bessie Coleman’s death?

4. Which of the following is the best conclusion based on the information provided in the passage?
   A. Before Bessie Coleman, no woman had ever tried to earn a pilot’s license.
   B. Planes are better made today than they were in the early twentieth century.
   C. Bessie Coleman is the best and most famous female flyer in history.
   D. Pilots are no longer admired for their courage.

5. What are two details from the passage that support the idea that Bessie Coleman was courageous?
Read the passage. Then answer the questions that follow.

**Brave Bessie Coleman**

1. Today, we take air travel for granted. Many people even see it as a chore. At the beginning of the twentieth century, however, flying was seen as a glamorous adventure. Pilots were admired for their boldness, and some even became celebrities. Although all of these pilots were brave, perhaps the most courageous was Bessie Coleman, the first African American woman to earn a pilot’s license. More than eighty years after her untimely death, Bessie’s bravery continues to inspire people all over the world.

2. Born in 1892 in Atlanta, Texas, Bessie endured a difficult childhood. She spent most of her time doing chores and picking cotton beside her twelve brothers and sisters. In the fall, she would walk several miles each day to attend the nearest school. In spite of these hardships, Bessie became a very good student. She loved to read and showed a special talent for math. By the time she turned eighteen, Bessie had saved enough money to attend an all-black college in Oklahoma. Unfortunately, she could afford only one year’s tuition. Seeking greater opportunities, Bessie moved to Chicago, where she found a job in a barbershop.

3. While working in the barbershop, Bessie began to hear exciting stories from pilots returning from World War I. Thrilled by their adventures, Bessie dreamed of becoming a pilot herself. Unfortunately, no flight schools in the United States accepted African Americans or women. However, flight schools in Europe were far more accepting. So, she developed a plan to move to France. After long hours at the barbershop, she took night classes at a local school to learn French. Local business leaders were so impressed by Bessie’s determination that they paid for her trip to France.

4. Arriving in Paris in 1920, Bessie excelled in her flight classes. In less than a year, she became the first African American woman in the world to earn a pilot’s license. After studying with ace pilots for several months, Bessie returned to America. There were no passenger flights in those days, so Bessie made her living performing in air shows. Because of the crude technology of planes at the time, flying could be a dangerous business. At one air show, Bessie was badly injured in a crash. However, her determination was unaffected. From her hospital bed, she said, “As soon as I can walk, I’m going to fly!” Bessie knew she was risking her life but thought it was her duty to prove that African Americans and women could be aviators.
Thanks to her daring stunts, and because she was the only woman flyer, Bessie soon became a national celebrity. Promoters billed her as “the world's greatest woman flyer.” Between shows, she lectured at African American churches and community centers. As her popularity grew, Bessie began to dream of one day opening her own flight school, one that would be open to everyone.

Sadly, Bessie Coleman did not live long enough to realize her dream. In 1926, she was thrown from a plane that stalled in midair and fell to her death. Thousands attended her funeral in Chicago. Just a few years later, Bessie Coleman Aero Clubs sprang up across the country. These clubs trained and inspired a new generation of African Americans to become pilots. After all these years, Bessie Coleman is still honored as a trailblazer, both in aviation and in the American civil rights movement.
Comprehension Check

1. In your own words, write a summary of the second and third paragraphs of this passage.

2. Which of the following best expresses the main idea of this passage?
   A. Because of her bravery and determination, Bessie Coleman continues to be an inspirational figure.
   B. Thanks to the efforts of Bessie Coleman, flying is more popular today than ever.
   C. African Americans and women have more opportunities today than they did in the early twentieth century.
   D. Although it is common today, flying was seen as an adventure in the early twentieth century.

3. What detail from the passage would allow you to infer that the number of African American pilots increased after Bessie Coleman’s death?

4. Which of the following is the best conclusion based on the information provided in the passage?
   A. Before Bessie Coleman, no woman had ever tried to earn a pilot’s license.
   B. Planes are better made today than they were in the early twentieth century.
   C. Bessie Coleman is the best and most famous female flyer in history.
   D. Pilots are no longer admired for their courage.

5. What are two details from the passage that support the idea that Bessie Coleman was courageous?
Read the passage. Then answer the questions that follow.

**Brave Bessie Coleman**

1. Today, it is easy for us to take air travel for granted. In many cases, we even look at it as a chore and an inconvenience. At the dawn of the aviation age, however, flying was viewed as a glamorous and adventurous experience. Pilots who were able to master the art of flight were idolized for their boldness and courage; some even became international celebrities for daring feats. In this age of pioneers, perhaps the most courageous, and most unlikely, was Bessie Coleman, the first African American woman to earn a pilot’s license. Almost a century after she first took to the air, Bessie’s perseverance and bravery continue to inspire people all over the world.

2. There was little in Bessie’s humble origins to suggest that she would someday soar to such great heights. Born in 1892 in Atlanta, Texas, Bessie endured a childhood of hardship and poverty. When she was not harvesting cotton alongside her twelve siblings, she would walk several miles each day to attend school in a one-room schoolhouse. In spite of the adversity she faced, Bessie excelled as a student. From an early age, she displayed a love of reading and a talent for math. By the time she turned eighteen, Bessie had saved enough money to enroll in an all-black college in Oklahoma. Unfortunately, she was able to afford tuition for only one year. Discouraged by the lack of opportunity in the segregated South, Bessie relocated to Chicago, where she found a job in a local barbershop.

3. It was while working in the barbershop that Bessie began to hear fantastic tales about their exciting adventures from pilots returning from World War I. Captivated by their stories, Bessie decided that she would do whatever it took to become a pilot herself. Unfortunately, the few flight schools that existed in the United States at that time would not accept Bessie because she was an African American woman. However, Bessie learned that flight schools in Europe were more tolerant. In time, she developed a plan to move to France. After long hours at the barbershop, she took night classes at a local school to learn French. Bessie’s determination so impressed a group of local business leaders that they raised funds to pay for her education in France.
Arriving in Paris in 1920, Bessie proved to be a quick study in her flight classes. In less than a year, she became the first African American woman in the world to earn an aviation license. After continuing her education under ace pilots for several months, Bessie returned to America, determined to make her mark as a great pilot. Since passenger flights were not common in those days, Bessie made her living as a stunt pilot performing in traveling air shows. Because of the crude technology of aircraft at the time, flying could be a dangerous business, and at one air show Bessie was badly injured in a crash. However, her determination was unaffected. From her hospital bed, Bessie declared, “As soon as I can walk, I’m going to fly!” Bessie knew she was risking her life, but she said it was her duty to convince the public that African Americans and women could be aviators.

Thanks to her skill at performing daring stunts, and because she was the only woman on the air show circuit, Bessie soon became a national sensation. Performing death-defying figure eights and perilous dives, Bessie was soon billed by promoters as “the world’s greatest woman flyer.” Between shows, she lectured at African American churches and community centers. As her popularity grew, Bessie began to dream of one day opening her own flight school, one that would not discriminate according to race or gender.

Sadly, Bessie Coleman did not live long enough to see that dream realized. In 1926, she was thrown from a plane that malfunctioned in midair and fell over 2,000 feet to her death. Thousands of mourners attended her funeral in Chicago. In the years that followed, Bessie Coleman Aero Clubs sprang up throughout the country, training and inspiring a new generation of African American pilots to take flight. After all these years, Bessie Coleman is still honored as a pioneer in the field of aviation and an important figure in the American civil rights movement.
Comprehension Check

1. In your own words, write a summary of the second and third paragraphs of this passage.

________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________

2. Which of the following best expresses the main idea of this passage?

   A. Because of her bravery and determination, Bessie Coleman continues to be an inspirational figure.
   B. Thanks to the efforts of Bessie Coleman, flying is more popular today than ever.
   C. African Americans and women have more opportunities today than they did in the early twentieth century.
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3. What detail from the passage would allow you to infer that the number of African American pilots increased after Bessie Coleman’s death?

________________________________________________________________________
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4. Which of the following is the best conclusion based on the information provided in the passage?

   A. Before Bessie Coleman, no woman had ever tried to earn a pilot’s license.
   B. Planes are better made today than they were in the early twentieth century.
   C. Bessie Coleman is the best and most famous female flyer in history.
   D. Pilots are no longer admired for their courage.

5. What are two details from the passage that support the idea that Bessie Coleman was courageous?

________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
Lesson 5: Reading Historical Texts

Read the passage. Then answer the questions that follow.

The Second War of Independence

1. In 1781, a ragtag army of American colonists shocked the world by defeating the mighty army of Great Britain. However, this victory did not mean the end of the United States’ problems with Great Britain. As Benjamin Franklin said after the war, “The War of the Revolution has been won, but the War of Independence is still to be fought.” The “Second War of Independence” would not be fought until the War of 1812. This conflict forced the United States to prove that it could survive on its own as an independent nation.

2. In the early 1800s, Britain was at war with France. Because it traded with both countries, America was caught in the middle. Hoping to cut off aid to its enemy, Great Britain created a naval blockade to block American trade with France. At the same time, its navy began capturing sailors from American ships and forcing them to work on British warships. This practice, called impressment, was seen as a threat to innocent American citizens.

3. Opponents of Great Britain wanted President James Madison to take military action. This put Madison in a difficult position. According to the Constitution, the president is the commander of the army. However, only Congress has the power to declare war. Unfortunately, the Constitution provides no details about how to declare war. So, Madison had to be careful. He needed to convince Congress to act without going against the Constitution. How he chose to handle the situation influenced every president who came after him.

4. On June 1, 1812, Madison sent a message to Congress. The message did not directly call for war. Instead, it listed the complaints of the American people against Great Britain:

5. “We behold our seafaring citizens still the daily victims of lawless violence, committed on the great common and highway of nations, even within sight of the country which owes them protection. We behold our vessels, freighted with the products of our soil and industry, or returning with the honest proceeds of them, wrested from their lawful destinations.”

1. “the great common and highway of nations”: the sea
2. industry: hard work
3. proceeds: results
4. wrested: taken unfairly
Madison pointed out that Congress needed to act because Great Britain was already at war with America. Congress agreed and soon after declared war against Great Britain.

In the war that followed, neither the United States nor Great Britain won a clear victory. In 1814, the Treaty of Ghent ended the war but declared no winner. However, the American victories at the Battle of Fort McHenry (which is described in “The Star-Spangled Banner”) and the Battle of New Orleans gave Americans a new sense of national pride. The United States proved that it could stand among the world's most powerful countries. The war also helped define how the president and Congress could work together to defend the nation. This set an example for future governments to follow. Following this example, every Congress that has declared war in our nation's history has done so only after getting an official message from the president.
Comprehension Check

1. Which of the following would be the best and most unbiased resource for analyzing the causes of the War of 1812?
   A. the full text of Madison’s war message to Congress
   B. a first-person account from an American sailor who had been captured
   C. a textbook written by a scholar of early American history
   D. the text of the Treaty of Ghent

2. According to the information given in this passage, which of the following must occur before the United States enters into a war with another country?
   A. The president must send an official message to Congress.
   B. The other country must attack first.
   C. The president must be named commander in chief.
   D. Congress must pass a declaration of war.

3. In your own words, summarize the United States’ reasons for going to war with Great Britain in 1812.

4. Read this excerpt from the American Declaration of Independence:
   “The history of the present King of Great Britain is a history of repeated injuries. … He has plundered our seas, ravaged our coasts, burned our towns, and destroyed the lives of our people.”
   How was Madison’s war message to Congress similar to the Declaration of Independence?

5. How was Madison’s war message different from the Declaration of Independence?
The Second War of Independence

1. In 1781, a ragtag army made up of American colonists shocked the world by defeating the mighty army of Great Britain. However, this victory did not mean the end of the United States’ problems with Great Britain. As Benjamin Franklin said after the war, “The War of the Revolution has been won, but the War of Independence is still to be fought.” The “Second War of Independence” would not be fought until the War of 1812. This conflict forced the United States to prove that it could survive on its own as an independent nation.

2. In the early 1800s, Britain was at war with France. Because it traded with both countries, America was caught in the middle. Hoping to cut off aid to its enemy, Great Britain created a naval blockade to halt American trade with France. At the same time, the British navy began capturing crewmen from American ships and forcing them to work on British warships. This practice, called impressment, was considered a great insult to America’s national honor and a threat to innocent American citizens.

3. As relations between the two countries grew worse, supporters of war against Britain pressed President James Madison to take military action. This put Madison in a difficult position. Although the president is commander in chief of the armed forces under the Constitution, only Congress can declare war against another country. Unfortunately, the Constitution provides no details about how this declaration of war should be made. So, Madison was working in uncharted territory. He needed to influence Congress to act without exceeding his constitutional authority. The method he chose to handle the situation would serve as a model for all future presidents.

4. Always a great writer, Madison decided to act with his pen. On June 1, 1812, he sent an official message to Congress. In this message, he did not directly call for war. Instead, he outlined the cause of the American people against Great Britain:

“We behold our seafaring citizens still the daily victims of lawless violence, committed on the great common and highway of nations, even within sight of the country which owes them protection. We behold our vessels, freighted with the products of our soil and industry, or returning with the honest proceeds of them, wrested from their lawful destinations.”

1. “the great common and highway of nations”: the sea
2. industry: hard work
3. proceeds: results
4. wrested: taken unfairly
Instead of demanding that Congress should act, Madison pointed out that a state of war already existed between the United States and Great Britain. Congress agreed and shortly thereafter passed a declaration authorizing Madison to use force against Great Britain.

In the war that followed, neither the United States nor Great Britain emerged as the clear winner. In 1814, the Treaty of Ghent ended the conflict between the two countries and restored normal relations between them. However, key American victories at the Battle of Fort McHenry (which inspired Francis Scott Key to write “The Star-Spangled Banner”) and the Battle of New Orleans gave Americans a new sense of national pride and unity. The United States had proved that it could stand among the world’s most powerful countries. What’s more, the war helped define how the president and Congress could work together in defense of the nation. The cooperation between Madison and his Congress set a model for all future administrations. Following this example, every Congress in our nation’s history that has declared war has done so only after an official request from the president.
Comprehension Check

1. Which of the following would be the best and most unbiased resource for analyzing the causes of the War of 1812?
   A. the full text of Madison’s war message to Congress
   B. a first-person account from an American sailor who had been captured
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   A. The president must send an official message to Congress.
   B. The other country must attack first.
   C. The president must be named commander in chief.
   D. Congress must pass a declaration of war.

3. In your own words, summarize the United States’ reasons for going to war with Great Britain in 1812.

4. Read this excerpt from the American Declaration of Independence:
   “The history of the present King of Great Britain is a history of repeated injuries. … He has plundered our seas, ravaged our coasts, burned our towns, and destroyed the lives of our people.”
   How was Madison’s war message to Congress similar to the Declaration of Independence?

5. How was Madison’s war message different from the Declaration of Independence?
Independent Practice
Lesson 5: Reading Historical Texts

Read the passage. Then answer the questions that follow.

The Second War of Independence

1. In 1781, a ragtag band of American colonists shocked the world by defeating the British army, the most powerful fighting force on earth. However, this victory did not signal the end of the United States’ troubles with Great Britain. As Benjamin Franklin said after the war, “The War of the Revolution has been won, but the War of Independence is still to be fought.” The “Second War of Independence” would not be fought until the War of 1812, when a worldwide conflict threatened American authority and forced the United States to prove that it could survive as an independent nation.

2. In the early 1800s, Britain was involved in a heated war with France. Because it traded with both countries, America was caught in the middle. Hoping to cut off aid to its enemy, Great Britain passed a series of laws and established blockades intended to disrupt America’s profitable trade with France. Meanwhile, the British navy, in need of sailors for its expanding fleet, began capturing crewmen from American ships and forcing them to work on British warships. This practice, called impressment, was considered a great insult to America’s national honor and a threat to innocent American citizens.

3. As relations between the United States and Great Britain worsened, supporters of war against Britain pressed President James Madison to take military action. This put Madison in a unique and difficult position. Although the president is commander in chief of the armed forces under the Constitution, only Congress has the power to declare war against another country. Unfortunately, the Constitution provides no details about how this declaration of war should be made. Because the United States had never had to declare war as an independent nation before, Madison was working in uncharted territory. He needed to influence Congress to act without exceeding his own constitutional authority. The method he chose to handle the situation would, for better or worse, serve as a model for all future presidents.
Always a superb writer, Madison decided to act with his pen. On June 1, 1812, he sent an official message to Congress. This message did not directly call for war. Instead, it outlined the grievances of the American people against Great Britain:

“We behold our seafaring citizens still the daily victims of lawless violence, committed on the great common and highway of nations, even within sight of the country which owes them protection. We behold our vessels, freighted with the products of our soil and industry, or returning with the honest proceeds of them, wrested from their lawful destinations.”

Instead of demanding that Congress should act, Madison pointed out that a state of war already existed between the United States and Great Britain. Congress agreed and shortly thereafter passed a declaration authorizing Madison to use force against Great Britain.

In the war that followed, neither the United States nor Great Britain emerged as the clear winner. In 1814, the Treaty of Ghent ended hostilities between the two countries, and normal relations were restored. However, key American victories at the Battle of Fort McHenry (which inspired Francis Scott Key to write “The Star-Spangled Banner”) and the Battle of New Orleans gave Americans a new sense of national pride and unity. The United States had proved that it could stand among the world’s most powerful countries. What’s more, the war helped define how the president and Congress could work together in defense of the nation. The cooperation between Madison and his Congress set a model for all future administrations. Following this example, every Congress in our nation’s history that has declared war has done so only after an official request from the president.

1. “the great common and highway of nations”: the sea
2. industry: hard work
3. proceeds: results
4. wrested: taken unfairly
**Comprehension Check**

1. Which of the following would be the best and most unbiased resource for analyzing the causes of the War of 1812?
   
   A. the full text of Madison’s war message to Congress  
   B. a first-person account from an American sailor who had been captured  
   C. a textbook written by a scholar of early American history  
   D. the text of the Treaty of Ghent  

2. According to the information given in this passage, which of the following *must* occur before the United States enters into a war with another country?
   
   A. The president must send an official message to Congress.  
   B. The other country must attack first.  
   C. The president must be named commander in chief.  
   D. Congress must pass a declaration of war.  

3. In your own words, summarize the United States’ reasons for going to war with Great Britain in 1812.  

   ____________________________________________________________  
   ____________________________________________________________  

4. Read this excerpt from the American Declaration of Independence:  
   
   “The history of the present King of Great Britain is a history of repeated injuries. … He has plundered our seas, ravaged our coasts, burned our towns, and destroyed the lives of our people....”  

   How was Madison’s war message to Congress similar to the Declaration of Independence?

   ____________________________________________________________  
   ____________________________________________________________  

5. How was Madison’s war message different from the Declaration of Independence?

   ____________________________________________________________  
   ____________________________________________________________
Independent Practice
Lesson 6: Reading Drama

Read the passage. Then answer the questions that follow.

Learning to Fly

CHARACTERS
ALIZA, a college student
DINA, her neighbor, a middle school student
MR. HASKIN, the director of Project Puffin

Scene 1
SCENE: A porch on a suburban street. DINA is sitting on a porch swing, waiting for her next-door neighbor, ALIZA. Enter ALIZA, carrying a large backpack.

Dina: (sees ALIZA, gets excited) Aliza! (jumps down from the porch swing and runs toward her) How’d it go? Did you get to see any puffins today?

Aliza: (sighs, smiling a weary smile) Tiring, and yes, I did. (drops her backpack on the sidewalk) It’s been really rewarding, though. Today, we got to meet Dr. Stephen Kress, who—

Dina: (interrupting, from memory)—established Project Puffin back in 1973 to help increase the puffin population. Before that, puffins were hunted for their feathers and meat, until there were almost none left.

Aliza: (holding in a laugh) That’s right, Dina! Wow, you should be the one working at Project Puffin! After all, you’ve been talking about working with birds ever since we first met. And you were just a little kid then!

Dina: I know. I really want to work there! (sighs) Aliza, you have got to get me into that program! Tell your teacher that I’m a hard worker!

Aliza: I would, but you know that they take only college students as interns. (kneels down to DINA’s level, smiling) You could go on a puffin-sighting trip for younger kids.

Dina: (folding her arms, frustrated) No, I want to help puffins, not just look at them! And besides, I’m not just a kid!

Aliza: (patting DINA on the shoulder) Well, I’ll see what I can do.

Scene 2
SCENE: A rocky coastline, with a bird blind used for observing birds. Enter MR. HASKIN, the Puffin Project supervisor, with ALIZA and DINA.
Mr. Haskin: Now, Dina, we normally don’t allow middle schoolers. However, Aliza told me that you’re very smart for your age. It’s all right for you to observe today, but you must be careful not to interfere with the workers.

Dina: (eagerly nodding) Of course, Mr. Haskin.

Mr. Haskin: Aliza, I’d like you to spend the morning in the bird blind working on counts and observing the puffins’ feeding habits. Dina, this sort of work is difficult. So, if you want, you can watch Aliza until you get bored. Then, we can find something more interesting for you to do.

(As MR. HASKIN exits, DINA and ALIZA move into the bird blind.)

Dina: (excited) How are you going to count all of these puffins? There are so many, and they’re moving all the time!

Aliza: Well, I just try to picture a rectangle around part of the flock and count how many are in that group. Then, I multiply that total by the number of rectangles. It’s a process we call blocking.

(ALIZA begins counting, unaware that DINA is counting along with her.)

Aliza: (turning, surprised) Hey, what are you doing?

Dina: (proudly) I’ve been blocking, too! (shows ALIZA her results) See?

Aliza: (reading) Wow, that’s pretty good! Your numbers are pretty close to mine! Want to watch me do some banding?

Dina: What’s that?

Aliza: It’s where we set up a fine net to catch the puffins. It annoys them a bit, but we make sure that it doesn’t hurt them. We put aluminum bands onto the puffins’ legs so we can track them. Then, we release them back into the wild. Want to try?

Dina: You mean I actually get to touch one! Yay!

(ALIZA and DINA set up a net and soon catch a puffin. DINA holds the bird and carefully puts the aluminum band on its leg. As she does this, MR. HASKIN enters unnoticed from behind the bird blind. He watches ALIZA and DINA for a few moments and looks impressed.)

Mr. Haskin: (finally revealing himself, acting as though he is angry) Dina, didn’t I tell you that you’re far too young to work here?

Dina: (nervous, trying to hide the bird) Y-yes, sir.

Aliza: But Mr. Haskin, she’s been ...

Mr. Haskin: Just a moment, Aliza. (walking over, looking at DINA’s work) Well, judging by how well you’ve done today, we might have to rethink that policy. Would you be able to come back tomorrow?

Dina: (beaming) I’ll be here!

(All laugh as DINA releases the bird into the air.)
**Comprehension Check**

1. As she is presented throughout this play, Dina could best be described as
   
   A. eager.  
   
   B. deceitful.  
   
   C. strict.  
   
   D. rebellious.  

2. What does the dialogue between Aliza and Dina in the first scene reveal about their relationship?

3. Which of the following is an example of dramatic irony in this play?
   
   A. Dina seems to be smarter than Aliza, who is older.  
   
   B. Dina wants to work with puffins and eventually gets to hold one.  
   
   C. Mr. Haskin accepts Dina into the program, even though it does not normally accept middle school children.  
   
   D. Mr. Haskin secretly observes Aliza and Dina while they are working.  

4. In your own words, identify another example of dramatic irony that is shown in this play.

5. How would this story be different if it were written as fiction instead of staged as drama?
Read the passage. Then answer the questions that follow.

Learning to Fly

CHARACTERS

ALIZA, a college student
DINA, her neighbor, a middle school student
MR. HASKIN, the director of Project Puffin

Scene 1

SCENE: A porch on a suburban street. DINA is sitting on a porch swing, waiting for the arrival of her neighbor, ALIZA. Enter ALIZA, carrying a large backpack and wearing what appears to be hiking gear.

1 Dina: (sees ALIZA, brightens) Aliza! (jumps down from the porch swing and runs toward her) How’d it go? Did you get to see any puffins today?

Aliza: (sighs, smiling a weary smile) Tiring, and yes, I did. (drops her backpack on the sidewalk) It’s been really rewarding, though. Today, we got to meet Dr. Stephen Kress, who—

Dina: (interrupting, as if reciting from a book)—established Project Puffin back in 1973 to help increase the puffin population, which at that time had been hunted almost to the point of extinction.

Aliza: (stifling a laugh) That’s right, Dina! Wow, you should be the one working at Project Puffin! After all, you’ve been talking about working with birds ever since we first met. And you were just a little kid then!

5 Dina: I know. I’m so jealous that you get to work there! (sighs) Aliza, you have got to get me into that program! Tell your supervisor that I’m a hard worker!

Aliza: I would, but you know that they take only college students as interns. (kneels down slightly to meet eyes with DINA, smiles reassuringly) You could go on a puffin-sighting trip for younger kids.

Dina: (folding her arms, frustrated) No, I want to help puffins, not just look at them! And besides, I’m not just a kid!

Aliza: (patting DINA on the shoulder) Well, I’ll see what I can do.
Scene 2

SCENE: A rocky coastline, with a bird blind used for observing birds. Enter MR. HASKIN, the Puffin Project supervisor, with ALIZA and DINA.

Mr. Haskin: Now, Dina, we normally don’t allow middle school students to participate in our program, so I’m breaking the rules a bit by letting you be here today. However, Aliza assures me that you’re quite smart for your age. It’s OK if you want to observe today, but you must be careful not to get in the way of the other workers.

Dina: (eagerly nodding) Of course, Mr. Haskin.

Mr. Haskin: Aliza, I’d like you to spend the morning in the bird blind working on counts and observing the puffins’ feeding habits. Dina, this sort of work is tiresome, so if you want, you can watch Aliza until you get bored, and then we will find something more interesting for you to occupy yourself.

(As MR. HASKIN exits, DINA and ALIZA settle into the bird blind.)

Dina: (excited) How are you going to count all of those puffins? There are so many, and they’re moving all the time!

Aliza: Well, I just try to picture a rectangle around part of the flock and count how many puffins are in that group. Then, I multiply that total by the number of rectangles needed to cover the whole flock. It’s a process called blocking.

Aliza: (turning, surprised) Hey, what are you doing?

Dina: (proudly) I’ve been blocking, too! (Shows ALIZA her results.) See?

Aliza: (reading) Wow, that’s pretty well done! Your numbers are pretty close to mine! Want to watch me do some banding?

Dina: What’s that?

Aliza: It’s where we set up a fine net to catch the puffins. It annoys them a bit, but we make sure that it doesn’t hurt them. Then, we put aluminum bands onto the puffins’ legs so we can track them, and then we release them back into the wild. Actually, do you want to try it for yourself?

Dina: You mean I actually get to touch one? Yay!

(Aliza and Dina set up a net and soon catch a puffin. Dina gently cradles the bird and carefully slips the aluminum band on its leg. As she does this, Mr. Haskin enters unnoticed from behind the bird blind and observes them for a few moments as they work.)
Mr. Haskin: *(finally revealing himself, reproachfully)* Dina, didn’t I tell you that you’re far too young to actually participate in our program?

Dina: *(stammering, trying to hide the bird)* Y-yes, sir.

25  Aliza: But Mr. Haskin, she’s been ...

Mr. Haskin: Just a moment, Aliza. *(walking over, examining DINA’s work)* Well, judging from how you’ve performed today, we might have to rethink that policy. Would you be able to come back tomorrow?

Dina: *(beaming)* I’ll be here!

*(All laugh as DINA releases the bird into the air.)*
**Comprehension Check**

1. As she is presented throughout this play, Dina could best be described as
   
   A. eager.
   
   B. deceitful.
   
   C. strict.
   
   D. rebellious.

2. What does the dialogue between Aliza and Dina in the first scene reveal about their relationship?

3. Which of the following is an example of dramatic irony in this play?
   
   A. Dina seems to be smarter than Aliza, who is older.
   
   B. Dina wants to work with puffins and eventually gets to hold one.
   
   C. Mr. Haskin accepts Dina into the program, even though it does not normally accept middle school children.
   
   D. Mr. Haskin secretly observes Aliza and Dina while they are working.

4. In your own words, identify another example of dramatic irony that is shown in this play.

5. How would this story be different if it were written as fiction instead of staged as drama?
Independent Practice
Lesson 6: Reading Drama

Read the passage. Then answer the questions that follow.

Learning to Fly

CHARACTERS
ALIZA, a college student
DINA, her neighbor, a middle school student
MR. HASKIN, the director of Project Puffin

Scene 1
SCENE: A porch on a suburban street. DINA is sitting on a porch swing, awaiting the arrival of her next-door neighbor, ALIZA. Enter ALIZA, carrying a large backpack and wearing what appears to be hiking gear.

1 Dina: (sees ALIZA, brightens) Aliza! (jumps down from the porch swing and runs toward her) I’ve been waiting for you to get home. How’d it go? Did you get to see any puffins today?

Aliza: (sighs, smiling a weary smile) Tiring, and yes, I did. (drops her backpack on the sidewalk) It’s been really rewarding, though. Today, we got to meet Dr. Stephen Kress, who—

Dina: (interrupting, as if reciting from a book)—established Project Puffin back in 1973 to help increase the puffin population, which at that time had been hunted almost to the point of extinction because of the puffins’ valuable meat and feathers.

Aliza: (stifling a laugh) That’s right, Dina! Wow, you should be the one working at Project Puffin! After all, you’ve been talking about wanting to work with birds ever since we first met. And you were little more than a toddler back then!

5 Dina: I know. I’m so jealous that you get to work there! (sighs) Aliza, you have got to get me into that program! Tell your supervisor that I’m a hard worker!

Aliza: I would, but you know that they accept only college students as interns. (kneels down slightly to meet eyes with DINA, smiles reassuringly) You could always go on a puffin-sighting trip for younger kids.

Dina: (folding her arms, frustrated) No, I want to actually handle puffins, not just look at them! And besides, I’m not just a kid!

Aliza: (patting DINA on the shoulder) Well, I’ll see what I can do.
Scene 2

SCENE: A rocky coastline, with a bird blind used for observing birds. Enter MR. HASKIN, the Puffin Project supervisor, with ALIZA and DINA.

Mr. Haskin: Now, Dina, we normally don’t allow middle school students to participate in our program, and I’m going against my better instincts letting you on site today. However, Aliza assures me that you’re exceptionally smart for your age. It’s permissible for you to observe today, but you must be careful not to interfere with the workers.

Dina: (eagerly nodding) Of course, Mr. Haskin.

Mr. Haskin: Aliza, I’d like you to spend the morning in the bird blind working on counts and observing the puffins’ feeding habits. Dina, this sort of work is tiresome, so if you want you can watch Aliza until you get bored, and then we will find something more interesting for you to occupy yourself.

(As MR. HASKIN exits, DINA and ALIZA settle into the bird blind.)

Dina: (excited) How are you going to count all of those birds? There are so many, and they’re constantly moving!

Aliza: Well, I just try to picture a rectangle around part of the flock, count how many are in that group, then multiply that figure times the number of rectangles needed to cover the whole flock. It’s a process we call blocking.

(Aliza begins counting, unaware that Dina is counting along with her.)

Aliza: (turning, surprised) Hey, what are you doing?

Dina: (proudly) I’ve been blocking, too! (shows Aliza her results) See?

Aliza: (reading) Wow, that’s pretty accurate! Your numbers are pretty close to mine! I think you might be ready to do some banding.

Dina: What’s that?

Aliza: It’s where we set up a fine net to catch the puffins. It annoys them a bit, but we make sure that it doesn’t hurt them. Then, we put aluminum bands onto the puffins’ legs so we can track them, and then we release them back into the wild. Actually, do you want to try?

Dina: You mean I actually get to touch one? Yay!

(Aliza and Dina set up a net and soon catch a puffin. Dina gently cradles the bird and carefully slips the aluminum band on its leg. As she does this, Mr. Haskin enters unnoticed from behind the bird blind and observes her for a few moments.)
Mr. Haskin: (finally revealing himself, reproachfully) Dina, didn’t I tell you that you’re far too young to participate in our program directly?

Dina: (stammering, trying to hide the bird) Y-yes, sir.

25 Aliza: But Mr. Haskin, she’s been ...

Mr. Haskin: Just a moment, Aliza. (walking over, examining DINA’s work) Well, judging from how you’ve performed today, we might have to rethink that policy. Would you be able to come back tomorrow?

Dina: (beaming) I’ll be here!

(All laugh as DINA releases the bird into the air.)
Comprehension Check

1. As she is presented throughout this play, Dina could best be described as
   A. eager.
   B. deceitful.
   C. strict.
   D. rebellious.

2. What does the dialogue between Aliza and Dina in the first scene reveal about their relationship?

3. Which of the following is an example of dramatic irony in this play?
   A. Dina seems to be smarter than Aliza, who is older.
   B. Dina wants to work with puffins and eventually gets to hold one.
   C. Mr. Haskin accepts Dina into the program, even though it does not normally accept middle school children.
   D. Mr. Haskin secretly observes Aliza and Dina while they are working.

4. In your own words, identify another example of dramatic irony that is shown in this play.

5. How would this story be different if it were written as fiction instead of staged as drama?
Independent Practice
Lesson 7: Reading Poetry

Read the poem. Then answer the questions that follow.

A Worn-Out Pencil
by James Whitcomb Riley

Welladay!¹
Here I lay
You at rest—all worn away,
   O my pencil, to the tip
   Of our old companionship!

Memory
Sighs to see
What you are, and used to be,
   Looking backward to the time
   When you wrote your earliest rhyme!—

When I sat
Filing at
Your first point, and dreaming that
   Your initial song should be
   Worthy of posterity.²

With regret
I forget
If the song be living yet,
   Yet remember, vaguely now,
   It was honest, anyhow.

You have brought
Me a thought—
Truer yet was never taught,—
   That the silent song is best,
   And the unsung worthiest.

1. Welladay: an old-fashioned word used to express sorrow
2. posterity: future generations
So if I,
When I die,
May as uncomplainingly
    Drop aside as now you do,
30 Write of me, as I of you:—

Here lies one
Who begun
Life a-singing, heard of none;
    And he died, satisfied,
35 With his dead songs by his side.
Comprehension Check

1. Which of the following words best describes the mood of this poem?
   A. playful
   B. thoughtful
   C. gloomy
   D. humorous

2. The second stanza of the poem contains an example of
   A. hyperbole.
   B. onomatopoeia.
   C. simile.
   D. personification.

3. What does the poem’s structure say about the author’s attitude toward his subject?

4. At the end of the poem, the author uses the pencil as a symbol for

5. Compare the use of punctuation in “A Worn-Out Pencil” with that in “Endymion” by Longfellow. How does the author’s use of punctuation contribute to the tone of each poem?
Independent Practice
Lesson 7: Reading Poetry

Read the poem. Then answer the questions that follow.

A Water-Color
by James Whitcomb Riley

Low hidden in among the forest trees
   An artist’s tilted easel, ankle-deep
In tousled ferns and mosses, and in these
   A fluffy water-spaniel, half asleep

Beside a sketch-book and a fallen hat—
   A little wicker flask tossed into that.

A sense of utter carelessness and grace
   Of pure abandon in the slumb’rous scene,—
As if the June, all hoydenish of face,

Had romped herself to sleep there on the green,
   And brink and sagging bridge and sliding stream
   Were just romantic parcels of her dream.

1. tousled: tangled
2. hoydenish: like a tomboy
3. brink: river bank
4. parcels: parts or fragments
Comprehension Check

1. Which of the following best describes the author’s tone in this poem?
   A. dismissive
   B. relaxed
   C. gloomy
   D. humorous

2. The second stanza of the poem contains an example of
   A. hyperbole.
   B. onomatopoeia.
   C. simile.
   D. personification.

3. Which pair of words from the poem best captures its mood?
   A. hidden, tilted
   B. tousled, fluffy
   C. slumb’rous, romantic
   D. romped, sagging

4. How does the imagery of this poem contribute to its mood?

5. Compare the structure of “A Water-Color” with that of “Endymion” by Longfellow. What do these structures reveal about each author’s attitude toward his subject?
Independent Practice
Lesson 7: Reading Poetry

Read the poem. Then answer the questions that follow.

A Dream
by James Whitcomb Riley

I dreamed I was a spider;
A big, fat, hungry spider;
A lusty, rusty spider

With a dozen palsied\(^1\) limbs;
With a dozen limbs that dangled
Where three wretched flies were tangled
And their buzzing wings were strangled
In the middle of their hymns.

And I mocked them like a demon—

A demoniacal demon
Who delights to be a demon
For the sake of sin alone;
And with fondly false embraces
Did I weave my mystic\(^2\) laces

Round their horror-stricken faces
Till I muffled every groan.

And I smiled to see them weeping,
For to see an insect weeping,
Sadly, sorrowfully weeping,

Fattens every spider’s mirth\(^3\);
And to note a fly’s heart quaking,
And with anguish ever aching
Till you see it slowly breaking
Is the sweetest thing on earth.

1. **palsied**: shaking
2. **mystic**: mysterious
3. **mirth**: happiness
I experienced a pleasure,  
Such a highly-flavored pleasure,  
Such intoxicating pleasure,  
That I drank of it like wine;  
And my mortal soul engages  
That no spider on the pages  
Of the history of ages  
Felt a rapture more divine.

I careened around and capered—  
Madly, mystically capered—  
For three days and nights I capered  
Round my web in wild delight;  
Till with fierce ambition burning,  
And an inward thirst and yearning  
I hastened my returning  
With a fiendish appetite.

And I found my victims dying,  
“Ha!” they whispered, “we are dying!”  
Faintly whispered, “we are dying,  
And our earthly course is run.”

And the scene was so impressing  
That I breathed a special blessing,  
As I killed them with caressing  
And devoured them one by one.

4. **rapture**: ecstatic joy  
5. **careened**: swayed, moved back and forth  
6. **capered**: skipped, pranced
Comprehension Check

1. Which of the following best describes the author’s tone in this poem?
   A. angry
   B. relaxed
   C. fearful
   D. ecstatic

2. How does the rhyme scheme affect the pacing of this poem?

3. How does the pacing affect the mood of the poem?

4. How do the language and mood of the poem change in the last stanza of the poem?
   A. They shift from the perspective of the spider to that of the narrator.
   B. They shift from gleeful to regretful.
   C. They shift from the spider’s perspective to the perspective of the fly.
   D. They shift from excited and emphatic to quiet and subdued.

5. In what ways does the mood of this poem differ from that of Longfellow’s “Endymion”?

3
Read the passage. Then answer the questions that follow.

A Fire-Friendly Tree

1 Thanks to the efforts of conservationists, most Americans believe that wildfires are a threat to our nation’s forests. In recent years, however, scientists have changed their views about how fire works in nature. Recent evidence shows that fire can even play an important role in the survival of certain trees.

2 One such tree is the lodgepole pine. The lodgepole pine is normally found in mountainous areas. It is known for its long, thin trunk and high, thin crown. The trunk of a mature pine is normally about 2–3 feet thick. Some pines grow to be as tall as 150 feet. The lodgepole pine’s trunk is covered with thin bark that can easily catch fire. This may seem like a weakness, but it actually helps the lodgepole pine. In fact, it is an important part of the tree’s reproductive process.

3 The seeds of the lodgepole pine are kept in pinecones that are covered with a thick, sticky covering. The covering locks the seeds inside the cone and can withstand temperatures of up to 140 degrees Fahrenheit. Without wildfires, the seeds would remain trapped in their cones, and the lodgepole pine would not be able to reproduce.

4 Here’s how wildfires help: Over time, the forest floor surrounding the pines becomes cluttered with dry leaves, pine needles, and dead trees. During dry seasons, these materials are very flammable. When lightning or a human-made fire ignites the material, the fire quickly ignites the lodgepole pine’s flammable bark. The fire soon reaches the crown of the pine. Then, the fire quickly spreads to the surrounding trees. At the same time, the heat from the fire reaches the seed cones. Once the resin surrounding the cones melts, the seeds inside fall to the forest floor below.

5 So, wildfires help the lodgepole in two important ways. First, they provide the high temperatures needed to release the pinecone’s seeds. At the same time, they clear the forest floor of dead trees and other material. This gives the seeds the room they need to grow into adult pines.

6 If there is too much kindling at the base of the lodgepole pine, however, the resulting wildfire will destroy the tree. As a result, forest experts have learned that the best policy is not to stop wildfires entirely, but rather to control and monitor their growth.
Comprehension Check

1. Which of the following is a fact that can best be concluded from the information given in this passage?
   
   A. Some wildfires can produce temperatures above 140 degrees Fahrenheit.
   
   B. Until recently, scientists did not care enough about wildfires to study their possible positive effects.
   
   C. Without conservation campaigns, Americans would know nothing about wildfires.
   
   D. As wildfires increase in frequency, other species will adapt to withstand them.

2. What adaptations did the lodgepole pine develop in order to survive wildfires?

3. According to the information given in this passage, which of the following conditions might aid the survival of trees without cones?
   
   A. fire-resistant bark
   
   B. low-altitude areas
   
   C. thicker trunks
   
   D. taller crowns
4. Use information from the passage to complete the diagram below.

Debris collects at the base of the lodgepole pine.

The lodgepole seeds take root in the cleared soil and grow into a mature tree.

Fire quickly spreads up the trunk of the lodgepole pine.

5. According to the information given in this passage, how can forest experts best encourage the survival of the lodgepole pine?

____________________________________________________________________

____________________________________________________________________

____________________________________________________________________
A Fire-Friendly Tree

1 Thanks to conservation campaigns over the last century, most Americans believe that wildfires pose a significant threat to our nation’s forests. This is for the most part still true. In recent years, however, scientists have modified their views of the role fire plays in nature. Recent evidence shows that fire plays an important role in the survival of certain ecosystems. Some species even depend on occasional wildfires for their survival.

2 One such species is the lodgepole pine. The lodgepole pine is normally found in the mountainous areas of the American northwest and western Canada. The trees are known for their long, thin trunks and high, thin crowns. The trunk of a mature pine is normally about 2–3 feet thick and can be as tall as 150 feet. The trunk is covered with thin bark that can be very flammable. This might seem like a weakness, but it is actually an advantage. In fact, it is an essential part of the tree’s reproductive process.

3 The seeds of the lodgepole pine are kept in pinecones that are serotinous—that is, they are covered with a thick, sticky covering. The covering locks the seeds inside the cone and can withstand temperatures of up to 140 degrees Fahrenheit. Without wildfires, the seeds would remain trapped in their cones, and the lodgepole pine would not be able to reproduce.

4 Here’s how it works: Over time, the forest floor surrounding the pines becomes cluttered with dry material (leaves, pine needles, dead trees) that serves as kindling. When lightning or a human-made fire ignites the material, the fire quickly ignites the flammable bark. The fire soon reaches the crown of the pine, where it quickly spreads to the surrounding trees. At the same time, the heat from the fire reaches the seed cones. Once the resin surrounding the cones melts, the seeds inside fall to the forest floor below.

5 So, wildfires help the lodgepole in two important ways. First, they provide the high temperatures needed to release the pinecone’s seeds. At the same time, they clear the forest floor of dead trees and other material. This gives the seeds the room they need to grow into adult pines.

6 If there is too much kindling at the base of the lodgepole pine, however, the resulting wildfire will destroy the tree. As a result, forest experts have learned that the best policy is not to stop wildfires entirely, but rather to control and monitor their growth.
**Comprehension Check**

1. Which of the following is a fact that can best be concluded from the information given in this passage?
   
   A. Some wildfires can produce temperatures above 140 degrees Fahrenheit.
   
   B. Until recently, scientists did not care enough about wildfires to study their possible positive effects.
   
   C. Without conservation campaigns, Americans would know nothing about wildfires.
   
   D. As wildfires increase in frequency, other species will adapt to withstand them.

2. What adaptations did the lodgepole pine develop in order to survive wildfires?

3. According to the information given in this passage, which of the following conditions might aid the survival of trees without serotinous cones?
   
   A. fire-resistant bark
   
   B. low-altitude areas
   
   C. thicker trunks
   
   D. taller crowns
4. Use information from the passage to complete the chart below.

Debris collects at the base of the lodgepole pine. ______________________

The lodgepole seeds take root in the cleared soil and grow into a mature tree. ______________________

Fire quickly spreads up the trunk of the lodgepole pine. ______________________

5. According to the information given in this passage, how can forest experts best encourage the survival of the lodgepole pine?

______________________________________________________________________________

______________________________________________________________________________
Read the passage. Then answer the questions that follow.

A Fire-Friendly Tree

1 Thanks to a number of highly successful conservation campaigns over the last century, most Americans believe that wildfires pose a great threat to our nation’s forests. This is for the most part still true. In recent years, however, scientists have begun to modify their views of the role fire plays in nature. Recent evidence has shown that fire plays an important role in the survival of certain ecosystems. A number of species within these ecosystems have adapted to withstand fire. Some species even depend on periodic wildfires for their continued survival.

2 One such species is the lodgepole pine, a tree that is commonly found in the mountainous areas of the American northwest and western Canada. Lodgepole pines are known for their long, thin trunks and high, thin crowns. The trunk of a mature pine is normally about 2–3 feet thick and can be as tall as 150 feet in some regions. The trunk is covered with a sheet of thin bark that can be very flammable. The thin bark might seem like a weakness, but it actually works to the lodgepole pine’s advantage. In fact, it is an essential part of the tree’s reproductive process.

3 The seeds of the lodgepole pine are enclosed in pinecones that are serotinous—that is, they are covered with a thick, sticky resin. The resin locks the seeds inside the cone and can withstand temperatures of up to 140 degrees Fahrenheit. Without the occasional wildfire, the seeds would remain trapped in their cones, and the lodgepole pine would not be able to reproduce.

4 Here’s how it works: Over time, the forest floor surrounding the pines becomes cluttered with dead trees, dry leaves, and other types of material that serve as kindling. When lightning or a human-made fire ignites the material, the fire quickly travels up the trunk of the pine, thanks to its flammable bark. The fire soon reaches the crown of the pine, where it quickly jumps to the surrounding trees. At the same time, the intense heat from the fire reaches the seed cones, melting the thick resin surrounding the cone and releasing the seeds, which then fall to the forest floor below.

5 So, wildfires help the lodgepole in two important ways. First, they provide the high temperatures needed to melt the pinecone’s resin and release its seeds. At the same time, they clear the forest floor of dead trees and other debris, giving the seeds the room they need to grow into adult pines.

6 It should be pointed out, however, that if there is too much kindling at the base of the lodgepole pine, then the resulting wildfire will destroy the tree. As a result, forest experts have learned that the best policy is not to stop wildfires entirely, but rather to control and monitor their growth.
Comprehension Check

1. Which of the following is a fact that can best be concluded from the information given in this passage?
   
   A. Some wildfires can produce temperatures above 140 degrees Fahrenheit.
   
   B. Until recently, scientists did not care enough about wildfires to study their possible positive effects.
   
   C. Without conservation campaigns, Americans would know nothing about wildfires.
   
   D. As wildfires increase in frequency, other species will adapt to withstand them.

2. What adaptations did the lodgepole pine develop in order to survive wildfires?

3. According to the information given in this passage, which of the following conditions might aid the survival of trees without serotinous cones?
   
   A. fire-resistant bark
   
   B. low-altitude areas
   
   C. thicker trunks
   
   D. taller crowns
4. Use information from the passage to complete the chart below.

Debris collects at the base of the lodgepole pine. ______________________

The lodgepole seeds take root in the cleared soil and grow into a mature tree. ______________________

Fire quickly spreads up the trunk of the lodgepole pine. ______________________

5. According to the information given in this passage, how can forest experts best encourage the survival of the lodgepole pine?

_____________________________________________________________

_____________________________________________________________
Independent Practice
Lesson 11: Reading Persuasive Nonfiction

Read the passage. Then answer the questions that follow.

Voting at Sixteen

1 Teens in the United Kingdom have a knack for starting trends that are picked up by kids all over the world. The latest trend to come from the UK has nothing to do with clothes or music, though. It’s about getting involved in politics. In just the past few years, thousands of teens have joined a movement to lower the UK’s voting age to sixteen. It’s a movement that keeps growing every day. If it’s successful, the UK will join a number of other European countries where sixteen-year-olds can vote.

2 As Americans, we take great pride in our freedom and our democratic system. If other countries allow sixteen-year-olds to vote, why don’t we? After all, people under eighteen make up a large part of the United States’ population. Our voices deserve to be heard. Therefore, I think we should start a “vote at sixteen” movement here at home.

3 Some might argue that sixteen-year-olds are not old enough to make important decisions. But this argument doesn’t make sense. In most states in America, sixteen-year-olds are allowed to drive cars and hold full-time jobs. In some states, sixteen-year-olds are even allowed to get married and move out of their parents’ houses! If sixteen-year-olds are adult enough to take on these responsibilities, why can’t they be allowed to vote?

4 Forty years ago, American young people pushed to have the voting age lowered from twenty-one to eighteen. They believed that if eighteen-year-olds were old enough to fight for their country, then they were old enough to vote. I think the same argument supports letting sixteen-year-olds vote. Lowering the voting age to sixteen would allow teenagers more opportunities to vote. It might even give teenagers a chance to vote on policies that might directly affect them.

5 America’s voting age should be lowered to sixteen because it is the right thing to do. But more than that, it also makes a lot of sense. Thanks to the Internet, teens have access to more information than at any other time in our history. What’s more, teenagers in high school take civics classes and serve in student government. Because they are already learning about democracy, they should be allowed to participate in it. This important early experience would help them stay more involved in their democracy as adults. And best of all, it might help make them more caring and effective citizens.
**Comprehension Check**

1. The author's purpose in this passage is to
   A. discuss the history of an important issue.
   B. persuade the reader to adopt a point of view.
   C. tell an entertaining story.
   D. inform the reader about a current event.

2. How does the author respond to opponents of lowering the voting age to sixteen?

3. Which of the following, if true, would most weaken the author's argument?
   A. Countries in Europe are less democratic than the United States.
   B. Voting requires more maturity than driving or holding a job.
   C. Some people have suggested that the minimum age for military service should be raised to twenty-one.
   D. Some schools do not offer civics classes until high school.

4. A critic of this article claimed that the author was unfairly biased in favor of sixteen-year-olds. Where might he or she find evidence of such bias?

5. To support their arguments, some authors make “bandwagon” appeals—that is, they argue that something is right because other groups believe it is right. Identify an example of the bandwagon approach in this passage.
Independent Practice
Lesson 11: Reading Persuasive Nonfiction

Read the passage. Then answer the questions that follow.

Voting at Sixteen

1. Teens in the United Kingdom have a long history of starting trends that have been picked up by kids all over the world. The latest trend to come from the UK is different, though. It has nothing to do with clothes or music. It’s about getting involved in politics. In just the past few years, thousands of supporters have joined an online campaign to lower the UK’s official voting age to sixteen. It’s a movement that keeps growing every day. If the movement is successful, the UK will join a number of other European countries that have already given sixteen-year-olds the right to vote.

2. As Americans, we pride ourselves on being the most democratic nation on earth. So why do we deny people under the age of eighteen the right to vote? After all, people under eighteen make up almost a quarter of the United States’ population. Therefore, I think we should start a “vote at sixteen” movement in our own country. Ours is a voice that deserves to be heard.

3. Opponents of lowering the voting age argue that sixteen-year-olds are not adult enough to make important decisions. But this argument doesn’t make sense. In pretty much every state in America, sixteen-year-olds are allowed to drive cars and hold full-time jobs. In some states, sixteen-year-olds are even allowed to get married and move out of their parents’ houses! American law already considers sixteen-year-olds mature enough to take on adult responsibilities. Why should they be denied the right to vote?

4. Forty years ago, American young people campaigned to have the voting age changed from twenty-one to eighteen. They chose this age because eighteen is the age when young people can serve in the military. They believed that if eighteen-year-olds were old enough to fight and die for their country, then they were old enough to vote. I think the same argument applies to the argument in favor of lowering the voting age to sixteen. Lowering the voting age to sixteen would allow teenagers more opportunities to vote. It might even give them a chance to have a say in the policies that might affect their age group.
America’s voting age should be lowered to sixteen because it is the right thing to do. But more than that, it also makes a lot of sense. Thanks to the Internet, teens have access to more information than at any other time in our history. What’s more, lowering the voting age would give teenagers experience with the political process during a time in their lives when they are learning about civics and participating in student government at school. This important early experience would help students stay more involved in their democracy throughout their adult lives. And best of all, it might help make them more caring and effective citizens.
Comprehension Check

1. The author's purpose in this passage is to
   A. discuss the history of an important issue.
   B. persuade the reader to adopt a point of view.
   C. tell an entertaining story.
   D. inform the reader about a current event.

2. How does the author respond to opponents of lowering the voting age to sixteen?

3. Which of the following, if true, would most weaken the author's argument?
   A. Countries in Europe are less democratic than the United States.
   B. Voting requires more maturity than driving or holding a job.
   C. Some people have suggested that the minimum age for military service should be raised to twenty-one.
   D. Some schools do not offer civics classes until high school.

4. A critic of this article claimed that the author was unfairly biased in favor of sixteen-year-olds. Where might he or she find evidence of such bias?

5. To support their arguments, some authors make “bandwagon” appeals—that is, they argue that something is right because other groups believe it is right. Identify an example of “bandwagoning” in this passage.
Independent Practice
Lesson 11: Reading Persuasive Nonfiction

Read the passage. Then answer the questions that follow.

Voting at Sixteen

1. The United Kingdom has a long history of launching fads that have been picked up by teens all over the world. The latest trend to come from the UK has nothing to do with clothes or music, though. It’s all about getting directly involved in the political process. In just the past few years, thousands of supporters have joined an online campaign to lower the UK’s official voting age to sixteen. It is a movement that keeps growing every day. If the effort is successful, the United Kingdom will join a number of other European countries that have already given sixteen-year-olds the right to vote. As Americans, we pride ourselves on being the freest and most democratic nation on earth. So why do we deny the right to vote to people under the age of eighteen? After all, this age group makes up almost a quarter of the United States’ population. I think it’s about time we started a similar movement in our own country. Ours is a voice that deserves to be heard.

2. Those who are opposed to lowering the voting age would argue that sixteen-year-olds just aren’t mature enough to make the important decisions that go along with voting. But when you think about the other rights and responsibilities our society gives people who are sixteen, this argument just falls apart. In pretty much every state in America, sixteen-year-olds are legally allowed to drive cars and hold full-time jobs. Under some state laws, sixteen-year-olds are even allowed to get married and move out of their parents’ houses! In other words, American law already considers sixteen-year-olds mature enough to take on all of the responsibilities that come with adulthood. So why should they be denied the right to participate directly in shaping the policies that will shape their future?

3. A generation ago, American youths successfully campaigned to have the voting age lowered from twenty-one to eighteen. They chose this age because eighteen was the age at which young people were eligible for military service. They reasoned that if eighteen-year-olds were old enough to fight and die for their country, then they were old enough to have a say in government. I think the same argument applies to the argument in favor of lowering the voting age to sixteen. Lowering the voting age to sixteen would allow teenagers more of a chance to use their right to vote, and perhaps even have a say in the policies that might affect their age group.
In short, then, the official voting age should be lowered to sixteen for the simple reason that it is the right thing to do. But more than that, it also makes a great deal of practical sense. Thanks to the Internet, teens have access to more information than at any other time in our history. What’s more, lowering the voting age would give teenagers valuable experience with the political process during a time in their lives when they are actually learning about civics and participating in student government at school. This important early experience would help students stay more involved in their democracy throughout their adult lives. And best of all, it would help make them more caring and effective citizens.
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