

Reading Comprehension

It's easier than you think!

Book Two

South
LEARNING SERIES

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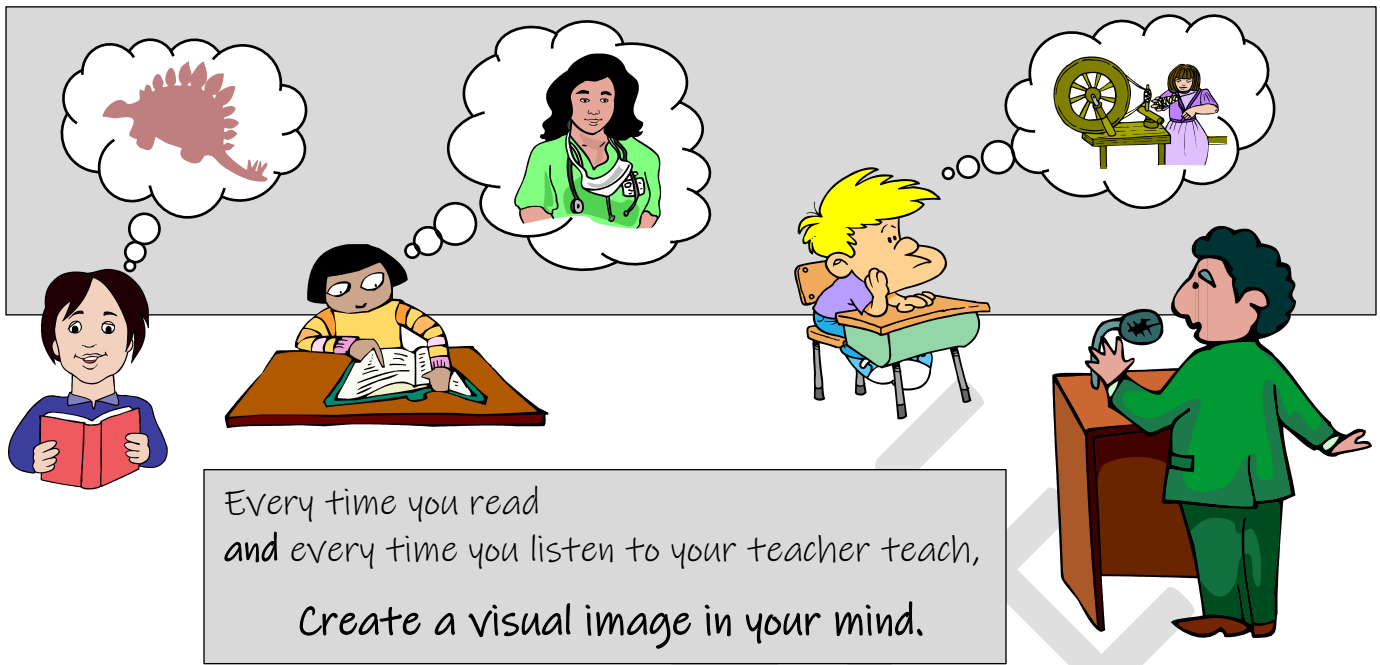
Book Two

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Part 5 includes contributions from Brenna Hanlon.



Every time you read
and every time you listen to your teacher teach,
Create a visual image in your mind.

Concrete things are easy to understand and easy to visualize. Draw an image for each word.

Teepee

Document

Pentagon

Spinning wheel

Background Knowledge:
Students are taught that using their prior knowledge *as they read* helps them give meaning to the words in a passage. Students are directly taught how to think as they read.

Concepts and ideas are much harder to “see.” Discuss how you can visualize these abstract concepts. Think: What concrete object could represent each of these abstract concepts?

Jealousy

Bravery

Liberty

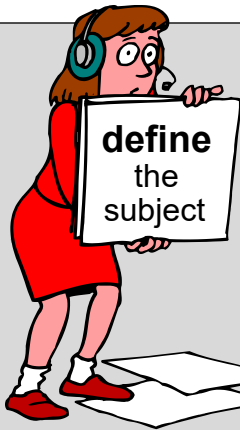
Charity

Opportunity

Democracy

Justice

Process



The people who write text books want you to understand new ideas and concepts. They want you to understand the meaning of new vocabulary words, **soooooo** they make it super easy by giving you the definition right in the text!

But they do it in different ways and some students don't recognize when a sentence includes a definition of an important word they need to know.

A definition can be introduced by

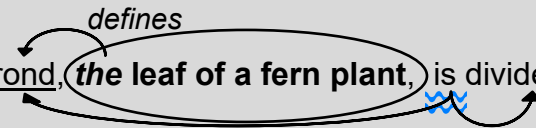
- using the word **is**
- using the words **a, an, the**
- using the word **or**

Discuss these examples with your teacher.

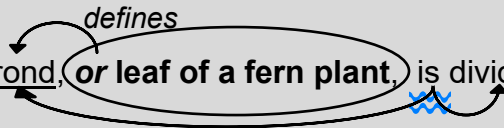
1. A frond **is the leaf of a fern plant.**



2. A frond, **the leaf of a fern plant,** is divided into many smaller parts.



3. A frond, **or leaf of a fern plant,** is divided into many smaller parts.



Vocabulary: A well-written textbook or an instructional article often provides definitions of key terms. Unfortunately, many students don't realize when a definition has been given to them. In **Book Two** we teach students how to recognize definitions so that they can take advantage of this easy way to learn new vocabulary.

★ Read each sentence. Circle the words that tell the meaning

1. **Bird of Paradise**, an exotic flower with long lasting blooms
2. A **Firewood-gatherer**, or a small brown bird from South America, uses sticks like kindling for a fire.
3. **Sarcastic fringehead** is a small fish with a very large nose
4. **Gerenuks**, large-eyed antelopes with long necks and long legs
5. A **mortar hawk**, or a tool used to hold plaster or mortar, allows the user to quickly and easily apply the material to its desired surface.

★ Match.

Bird of Paradise	antelope
Firewood-gatherer	tool
Sarcastic fringehead	fish
Gerenuk	bird
Mortar hawk	flower



- ★ Read the following lists of transition words and phrases.
- ★ Discuss the examples with your teacher.

You don't need to memorize these lists. You need to understand when you see them in a sentence, you will understand what point

Literacy Knowledge:

When students have literacy knowledge, they understand how text is organized. Learning the meaning of transition words enables students to correctly link ideas together as the author intended.

To indicate information that is similar to what has just

- | | | | | |
|----------------|---------------------|-----------------------|--------------------------|---------------------|
| and | additionally | furthermore | by the same token | |
| also | in addition | moreover | | |
| in fact | similarly | on top of that | | |
| besides | likewise | as well as | | |
| | | | | what is more |
| | | | | |

1. The large oak tree in my backyard provides a lot of shade. **In addition**, it is home to several birds that I enjoy. (Both bits of information make positive statements about the oak tree.)



To indicate a particular time or a time shift, use these words:

- | | | | | |
|-------------------------|---------------------|---------------------|------------------------|-------------------------------|
| meanwhile | initially | now | at last | after |
| while | first | currently | finally | afterwards |
| simultaneously | at first | soon | lastly | subsequently |
| at the same time | first of all | later | eventually | from now on |
| previously | secondly | sometimes | at a later date | for the time being |
| formerly | then | occasionally | in due course | immediately |
| prior to | next | over time | at one time | when the time is right |

2. Let the sauce simmer on the stove. **Meanwhile**, prepare all the vegetables you will need for this dish. (You should prepare your vegetables while the sauce is simmering.)
3. I usually leave for the office at 7:15; **occasionally**, I go in a little earlier. (*Occasionally* lets you know that sometimes you do not leave at 7:15.)

- ★ Two ideas are expressed on each line.
- ★ Add a transition word from the above lists to connect the ideas.

4. First **I went to the store**. _____, **I made tacos** for my younger brother.
5. Avocados **are high in healthy fats**. _____, they **contain more potassium than bananas**.
6. Emerald green streaks flowed in her hair; _____, a dozen shamrock necklaces graced her neck.
7. With this new routine, my alarm goes off at 5:00 a.m. _____, I slept until 6:30 a.m.

- ★ Read this paragraph. The subject and verb have been marked in each sentence.

It is 7:30 on a Tuesday morning. Connor swerves to avoid another tourist and squeezes into a high-speed elevator. Two platform, 196 feet beneath the busy streets to arrive. Connor is using the Metro, a interconnected underground tunnels. This move from one stop to the next, avoiding Travelers can switch from one line to another.

Literacy Knowledge: Identifying the author's purpose – knowing *why* an author wrote a given paragraph – makes it easy to find the main idea.

Students are explicitly taught that the main idea of a paragraph expressing the author's purpose. *Book Two* includes enough practice pages to ensure that students completely understand *how* to identify the author's purpose and *how* to use it to write clear, concise notes.

What is the author's purpose? Why did the author write this paragraph?

- A. to explain why Connor swerved around the tourists
 B. to prove there is a lot of traffic in the morning
 C. to describe an underground transit system

Discuss each choice: Do most of the sentences tell why Connor swerved? If they don't, cross off A.
 Do most of the sentences talk about morning traffic? If they don't, cross off B.
 Can you describe the underground transit system?

How to Take Notes:

1. Read one entire paragraph.
2. THINK. Determine the author's purpose.
3. Circle words in the passage that express the author's purpose.
4. Write those words.



- ★ Read the following notes that were written about the above paragraph. Which student expressed the author's purpose?

Student 1

On Tuesday morning, Connor took a high-speed elevator. He waited for his train. He used the Metro to get to his destination.

Student 2

- Metro
- Underground train in D.C.
 - 196 feet below the street
 - Interconnected tunnels
 - Avoids traffic on roads

An **appositive** is a second noun, phrase, or clause that is placed beside another noun to explain or give more information about it. In each of the following sentences, the appositive is written in bold print.

- Mrs. Wilder, **my history teacher**, tells interesting stories.
- An **entrepreneur**, **a person who sets up a new business**, takes on great risk to make a profit.

Note how the words in bold explain the previous noun.

✪ Match each word with an appositive that explains it.

- | | |
|----------------------|----------------------------|
| 1. _____ Tribute | A. pride in one's country |
| 2. _____ Embargo | B. a government order that |
| 3. _____ Nationalism | C. money paid by one coun |
| 4. _____ Secede | D. withdraw |

Language Structures: Similar to students missing definitions within sentences, many students also fail to understand the purpose of appositives. We teach students *how* to recognize appositives because the more they understand about how a sentence is put together, the easier it becomes to comprehend everything they read.

✪ Fill in each blank with one of the appositives listed above.

- Because European governments paid the Barbary States _____ to another in return for protection, the Barbary States _____.
- President Jefferson imposed an embargo, _____, hoping to force Britain and France to stop attacking American ships.
- In 1810, most Americans felt a strong sense of nationalism, _____.
- At the Hartford Convention, some delegates thought that the New England states should secede, _____, from the United States.

✪ Join two sentences into one by using an appositive. Put commas before and after each appositive.

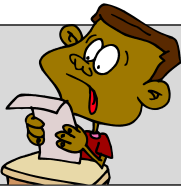
9. Daniel Webster ~~was~~ a member of Congress from Massachusetts. He supported tariffs to protect the manufacturing industry.

Note: Which words were taken out?

Daniel Webster, a member of Congress from Massachusetts, supported tariffs to protect the manufacturing industry.

10. Henry Clay ~~was~~ a member of Congress from Kentucky. He believed the country needed better roads and canals to make trade easier.

11. John C. Calhoun was a member of Congress from South Carolina. He opposed high tariffs because it made goods the southerners wanted to buy too expensive.



When you see a test question that begins with *what can you infer*, have you ever thought *this is HARD*?

Don't think this way. You are good at making inferences. You do it every day!

An inference is a conclusion based on two things: evidence and real-life experience. For example:

If you hear someone crying (even if you can't see them), you **infer** that something sad or bad happened.


- In the sentence above, the **evidence** is what you hear (crying).
- You know from **experience** why people cry. Therefore, you can make an inference.


If you see someone packing a suitcase, you **infer** that he/she is spending

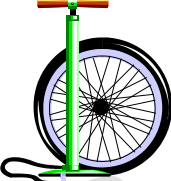
- In the sentence above, the **evidence** is what you see (someone packing a suitcase).
- You know from **experience** why people pack suitcases. Therefore, you can make an inference.


Verbal Reasoning:
Students are directly taught *how* to make inferences, a key verbal reasoning skill.

What can you infer from each of these pictures? The evidence is what you see. Put that together with what you know from experience and make an inference about each picture.

1.  _____

2.  _____


3.  _____


4.  _____

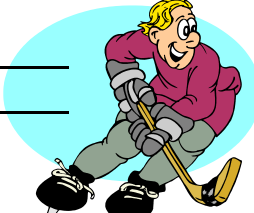
When authors write, they don't explain everything.

- Instead of telling you that someone was upset, an author might tell you that someone slammed a door or started to cry. Authors expect you to use experiences from your own life to draw conclusions.
- If you read that "beads of sweat" were dripping from someone's face when he went to a meeting with his boss, what could you infer?

Look carefully at the expression on each face. Make an inference about how each person is feeling.

5.  _____

6.  _____

7.  _____
