# Unit 2: Reading—Improving a Skill for Life

## Overview


*We are bombarded daily with things to read.*

We are bombarded daily with things to read—billboards, directories, newspapers, stories, and the list goes on. It doesn't matter what you do for a living. Neither does it matter how you relax. Being a good reader is very important. Good readers do more than pronounce words well. They use various reading strategies in a number of ways. Theses strategies help readers

- understand the meaning of what they are reading.
- evaluate what they are reading.
- find specific information in a variety of written sources.

Many of the things you read are written for a specific purpose. The people who write them hope to convince you that one idea or product is better than another. Good readers are able to evaluate what they read. Therefore, these readers can make good choices in their daily lives.

This unit is designed to help improve your reading skills. Specific areas of focus include the following:

- previewing your reading materials
- predicting words based on subject matter
- using context clues to determine word meaning
- using word structure clues to find word meaning
- using precise language

- understanding literal and figurative language
- understanding visual references
- summarizing a reading selection
- recognizing fact and opinion.

## Previewing: Looking Ahead

Smart drivers consult road maps and travel information before they take a trip. Smart cooks read through their recipes before they cook. Smart students **preview** their materials before they begin to read. *Previewing* helps you discover the writer's purpose and prepares you to understand what you are going to read. Previewing helps you organize and interpret information right from the start, so you read more efficiently.

*Smart drivers consult road maps before they take a trip.*

Complete the following steps and answer the corresponding questions when previewing reading material.

### Previewing Reading Materials

1. **Read the title.** What is the *general subject* of the material? On what *specific part* of the general subject will the material focus? Does the title tell you how the *author feels* about the subject?

2. **Skim through the selection.** Look for chapter titles, headings, and subheadings. How is the material divided? If it is a book, skim the **table of contents** for chapter titles. If it is a chapter or article, skim for headings and subheadings. What do these divisions tell us about the content of the article? Think of them as the bones or skeleton of the material. As you read, lay the information and ideas where they belong on the skeleton.

3. **Look at the illustrations.** If illustrations appear, what do they tell you about the subject?

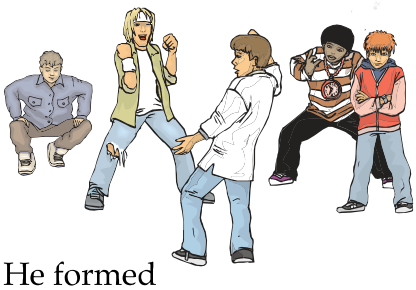
4. **Read the opening paragraph.** How does the author feel about the subject? Is he or she presenting an *explanation* or making an *argument*?

5. **Read the closing paragraph.** What conclusions does the author draw about the subject?

Look over the example article below. The title and opening **paragraph** are provided. In addition, subtitles are given for the different divisions of the information. An illustration is provided, as is the closing *paragraph*. Look closely at these examples.

**Stop the Violence in Our Schools!**

One day Joseph just stopped going to school. He couldn't take it any longer. Each day had become a question mark: Would there be a fight today? Would someone pull a weapon? Would a gang surround a single unfortunate person? And yet, after staying home for a few days, it dawned on Joseph—he was lucky. He was still unhurt, and he was still alive. Then he took action. He began to discover ways to help end the violence. He formed a mediation group that could help students settle their differences in nonviolent ways. He helped organize meetings where students could voice their fears and offer solutions. Joseph realized what all of us must: in order for our schools to do their job, they must be free of violence.



I. Why Teens Bring Violence to School

II. What the School Can Do to Help Violent Students

III. What the Family Can Do to Help Violent Children

IV. Why and How We Must Protect the Law-Abiding Student

Right now the amount of violence in many schools seems unstoppable. Short of turning schools into prisons, how can we stop the violence? The answer to this question is the same answer to most hard social issues—one person at a time, beginning with you and me. Even if you are about to graduate from school and escape the violence, you will most likely one day be packing your own children off to school. Do you want them to learn or to fight?

The steps for previewing reading materials are again given below. Beneath each is an analysis for a part of the above article. Reach each one carefully.

**Previewing Reading Materials**

1. **Read the title.** What is the *general subject* of the material? On what *specific part* of the general subject will the material focus? Does the title tell you how the *author feels* about the subject?

   Take, for example, the title "Stop the Violence in Our Schools!" The general subject is *violence in our schools*. The author is focusing on a specific part of this subject: *stopping this violence*. The title also clearly tells us that the author feels strongly that we should *stop this violence!* The exclamation point and use of command are clues to this. Note how much information about the contents of this article you can get simply by reading the title carefully.

2. **Skim through the selection.** Look for chapter titles, headings, and subheadings. How is the material divided? If it is a book, skim the *table of contents* for chapter titles. If it is a chapter or article, skim for headings and subheadings. What do these divisions tell us about the content of the article? Think of them as the bones or skeleton of the material. As you read, lay the information and ideas where they belong on the skeleton.

   The article "Stop the Violence in Our Schools!" was divided by the following headings:

   I. Why Teens Bring Violence to School

   II. What the School Can Do to Help Violent Students

   III. What the Family Can Do to Help Violent Children

   IV. Why and How We Must Protect the Law-Abiding Student

   Note that simply by reading these headings you get a sense of the content of the article. The author recognizes that there are reasons why students are violent in schools. The author also thinks that schools and families can help end the violence. In addition, the author believes that peaceful students must be protected from violent ones. These headings are a kind of map telling us where this discussion is going.

3. **Look at the illustrations.** If illustrations appear, what do they tell you about the subject?

   The illustration included in the article "Stop the Violence in Our Schools!" shows a crowd of students watching two students fight. The illustration makes the point that violence detracts from education—the students in this picture are not in a classroom. When they return to the classroom, they may be distracted and upset by what they've seen. There is a good chance little learning will take place the rest of the day.

*The illustration shows a crowd of students watching two students fight.*

4. **Read the opening paragraph.** How does the author feel about the subject? Is he or she presenting an *explanation* or making an *argument*?

   The opening paragraph conveys just how serious and important the author feels this issue is. It is clearly an argument—stop the violence—but the article will most likely include explanations. The article is likely to explain, for example, how mediation groups can be formed and how they work.

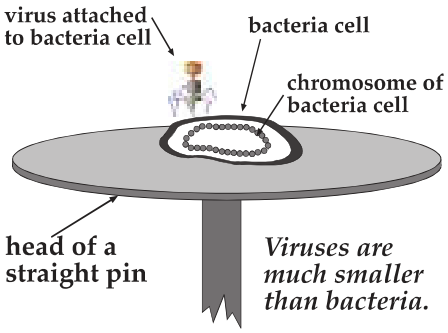
5. **Read the closing paragraph.** What conclusions does the author draw about the subject?

   The author concludes that the problem will be solved only if we don't let its size overwhelm us. The conclusion is a plea for readers to take action to solve this problem.

## Viruses: The Tiny Saboteurs

### Characteristics of Viruses

Viruses are strange little things that don't fall into any category. In fact, scientists have long argued about whether or not viruses are even alive. They are not made of cells, the basic unit of life. However, they do reproduce. Viruses reproduce by hijacking the equipment of living cells, basically taking over the cell and using its chemicals to make copies of themselves. As they reproduce, they kill the cell they have taken over. Obviously, viruses are consumers.



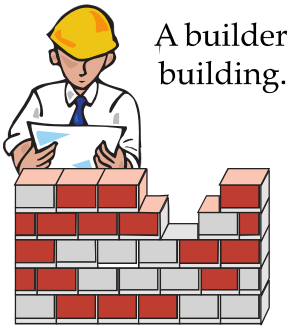

*(This illustration is not to scale—the cell and virus are much smaller.)*

If viruses aren't made of cells, what are they made of? Mostly, they're just a little bit of reproductive material inside a protective capsule. They are much smaller than bacteria and can only be seen with very specialized microscopes. A virus operates by somehow tricking a cell into allowing it inside. Then it sabotages the cell by substituting its own reproductive material for the cell's reproductive material. It tricks the cell's machinery into making virus copies instead of cell copies.

### Viruses and Illnesses

Viruses are very much in the news these days because of the human immunodeficiency virus (HIV), which attacks immune system cells and causes Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome (AIDS). Viruses are responsible for other familiar sicknesses, such as the common cold. Although scientists have developed vaccines to protect us against some viruses, they have not been able to develop vaccines to keep us safe from all of them.

## Understanding Words and Their Meanings: Using Clues to Find Meanings



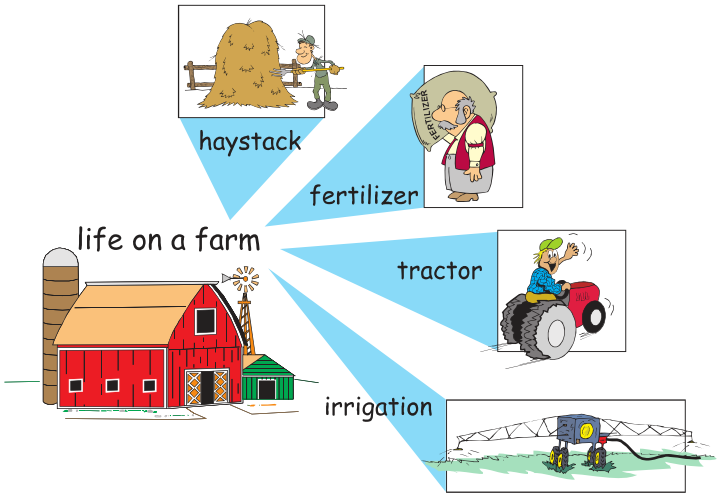
*A writer uses words to* build *a paragraph just like a builder uses bricks.*

A builder uses brick, wood, or steel to construct a wall, room, or building. In the same way, a writer uses words to *build* a phrase, sentence, paragraph, or essay. Skilled writers are aware of how to use these words effectively. They know how to make readers feel a certain way or to understand different levels of meaning. Such writers use words to make readers like or dislike a character. They help readers understand the true meaning of the text and feel comfortable or uncomfortable in a reading situation.

### Predicting Words: Which Words Belong to This Subject?

As a good reader, you should always begin by previewing a reading selection. This gives you a good idea about the subject of the selection. It also communicates the author's attitude toward that subject. In addition, you will have an idea about the kinds of words that you will find in the selection. For example, in a story about life on a farm, you might expect to find words like *haystack*, *fertilizer*, *tractor*, *irrigation*, and so on.

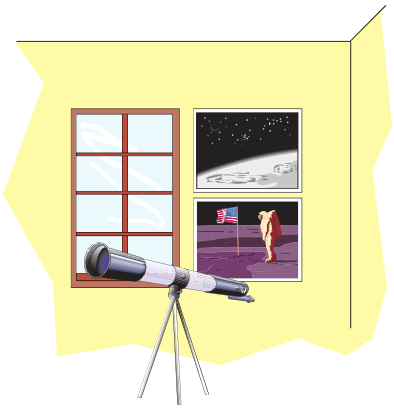
Written material includes clues that help you predict words and meaning. This ability to predict and expect certain words helps readers move more quickly through the selection.



## Context Clues: Using the Words You Know to Understand the Words You Don't

Context means *setting* or *environment*. Sentences and paragraphs are the *setting*, or *context*, of words. We use context to help us understand words. You are probably quite an expert in the process of identifying meanings from **context clues**. You just may not realize it.

We use *context clues* to understand other things as well. When you meet new people, you identify them based on their family, clothes, accent, or home. Looking around their room, you might use their books or belongings to figure out their personality. A person who has star charts on her walls and a telescope at her window may dream about traveling to the moon, and beyond.



*A person who has star charts on her walls and a telescope at her window may dream about traveling to the moon, and beyond.*

Sometimes context clues are *direct* and easy to find because the sentence contains a word or phrase that *directly* explains or defines the word. These are called *direct context clues*.

Other times there are no direct context clues. There is no explanation or definition given in the sentence. However, you may be able to use context clues that are *indirect* and *guess* the meaning of the word you do not know.

To use *indirect context clues* and identify the meanings of unknown words, look around (before and after) the unknown word and at the other words in the sentence. Look at what the entire paragraph or essay is about. Use all of these context clues to determine the meaning of the unknown word.

There are several types of context clues that writers use to help readers understand unknown words. The chart on the following page lists and defines six types of context clues. It also provides an example of each clue.

| Examples of Context Clues | |
|---|---|
| **Types of Context Clue** | **Example**<br>(clues are **bold**; unknown word is underlined) |
| 1. **Synonyms** mean the same thing as the unknown word. | Fecund, or **fertile**, lands are vanishing. |
| 2. **Examples** show what the unknown word means. | **The population of roaches in my cupboard was poisoned** by the extirpator my husband hired. |
| 3. **Direct Explanations** define the unknown word. | Euphobia **is the fear of good news**. |
| 4. **Comparisons/Contrasts** show how the unknown word is the same as or different from something familiar. | Comparison:<br>Buskers, **like all wandering musicians**, depend on the public for their income.<br><br>Contrast:<br>**Unlike a black fur coat**, a miniver coat shows the dirt. |
| 5. **Antonyms** mean the opposite of the unknown word. | He was distingué, **not a peasant**. |
| 6. **Physical Contexts** place unknown word in a familiar physical setting. | Amongst the bodkins, pins, and patterns **in the tailor's little shop** lay all his half-finished suits and dresses. |

## Word Structure Clues: Unlocking the Meaning of a Word through Its Prefix, Suffix, and Root or Base Words

Our vocabulary is a mishmash of Spanish, Sanskrit, Latin, Greek, and many other languages. Some of these languages are *living*, or still spoken, and some are *dead,* or no longer spoken. Every day new words are created by speakers while others fade out of use. We build words much like a child plays with blocks. We add a block here and drop one there. Some of our word building is haphazard, and some is deliberate.

The building blocks of words are called **prefixes**, **suffixes**, and **root or base words**. A *prefix* is a word "block" added to the beginning of a word, such as the "un" in *un*done. Prefixes often change the meaning of the word from positive to negative, or negative to positive.


A *suffix* is a word "block" added to the end of a word. An example is the "ly" in bright*ly*. Suffixes often tell you the kind of word it is, such as an **adverb** or **adjective**. This will determine how it should be used in a sentence.

A *root word* is sometimes called a *base word*. These are the main parts of the word to which prefixes and suffixes are added. However, unlike a base word, a root word cannot stand alone. A root word must be attached to a prefix, suffix, or both. For example,


*annual* is a base word to which could be added a prefix (*semi*annual) or a suffix (annual*ly*) or both (*semi*annual*ly*).


The prefix *semi* means "half of." The base word *annual* means "a year" and the suffix *ly* tells us it is used as an *adverb*. By knowing the meanings of prefixes, base words, and suffixes, it is easy to unlock the meaning of unknown words.

Many root and base words were formed from prefixes and suffixes long ago. For instance, *portfolio* comes from the Latin *portare*—"to carry out"—and *folium*—"a leaf." How would knowing this help you understand the meaning of *portfolio*.

If you know the building blocks of our language, unfamiliar vocabulary is easier to understand. Increasing your vocabulary is a worthy goal because you'll be able to communicate more precisely. The tables of prefixes and suffixes on the next pages will help you to do this.

## Commonly Used Prefixes

| Prefix | Meaning | Example |
|---|---|---|
| ab- | from, away | abduct - to kidnap or lead away |
| anti- | against | anticommunist - opposing the Communist Party |
| bi- | both, double, twice | biweekly - happening twice each week |
| co- | together with | coworker - someone who works with another person |
| con- | together with | conspire - to plot or plan with another person |
| com- | together with | compose - to bring different parts together |
| de- | from, down | degrade - to take away from someone or something's value |
| dis- | apart, away, reverse | dismiss - to send away |
| em- | in, into | embrace - to take someone into your arms |
| en- | in, into | endanger - to put something or someone in danger |
| ex-, e- | out | expel - to drive out<br>eject - to throw out |
| fore- | before, front part of | forefront - at the very front |
| il- | not | illegal - not legal |
| im- | not | immoral - not moral |
| in- | not | incorrect - not correct |
| ir- | not | irregular - not regular |
| mis- | badly, wrongly | misbehave - to not behave or act badly |
| non- | not | nonexistent - not real; not existing |
| post- | after, following | postwar - after the war |
| pre- | before | preview - to see before others |
| pro- | forward, in favor | progress - to move forward |
| re- | back, again | revive - to bring back to life |
| sub- | under | submerge - to put under |
| un- | not, release | unfair - not fair<br>unbutton - to release from being buttoned |

## Commonly Used Suffixes

| Suffix | Meaning | Example |
|---|---|---|
| -able, -ible | able to be | manageable - something that can be handled or managed<br>edible - something that can be eaten |
| -age | act of | storage - act of storing |
| -al | relating to, like, of | natural - relating to nature<br>secretarial - like a secretary |
| -ance, -ancy | act, quality, state | admittance - being allowed entrance<br>consistency - state of being the same; being dependable |
| -ant, -ent | performing agent, one who | servant - a person who serves<br>dependent - one who depends upon another |
| -ary | relating to | dietary - relating to what you eat |
| -ate | cause, make | segregate - cause a group to be apart from others |
| -cian | having a certain skill | musician - one skilled in music |
| -en | made of, to become or cause to be | silken - made of silk<br>weaken - cause to be weak |
| -ence, ency | state of, quality | difference - state of being different<br>urgency - needing immediate attention |
| -ese | a native of | Japanese - someone who was born in Japan |
| -ful | full of | helpful - full of help |
| -ion, tion | act or condition of | multiplication - act of multiplying |
| -ist | one who does or uses | scientist - a person who uses science |
| -ity | state of, quality | captivity - state of being captured |
| -ive | causing, making | abusive - causing abuse |
| -ize | make | publicize - make known to the public |
| -less | without | fearless - without fear |
| -ly | like, manner of | fearlessly - done without fear |
| -ment | result of, action | enjoyment - result of enjoying something |
| -ness | state of, condition | lifelessness - having no life |
| -ous | full of, having | spacious - full of space<br>mysterious - having an air of mystery |
| -ship | state of, quality | ownership - state of owning something |
| -ward | in the direction of | eastward - toward the east |
| -y | inclined to, tend to | cheery - inclined to be cheerful |

## Precise Language: Using Specific Words to Convey Exact Images and Feelings

One way that a writer creates a precise image in a reader's mind is by using specific rather than general words. Look at the following examples.

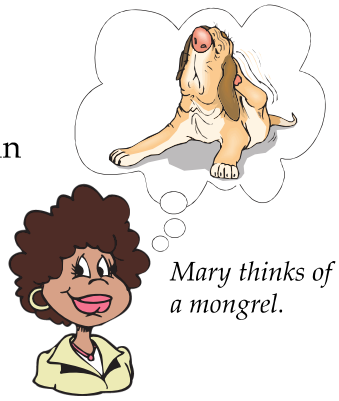
Latoya noticed the dog sitting on the curb.

Latoya noticed the mongrel sitting on the curb.

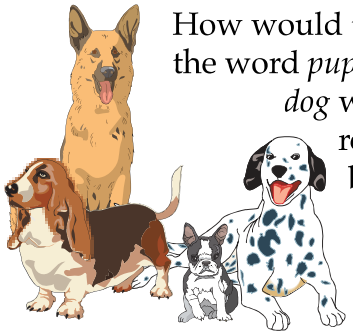
*Mary owned a small brown dog.*

Each person who reads the first sentence will create his or her own image about what the dog looks like. Such images are often based on what we have directly experienced. For example, if you have always owned a small brown dog, then you will probably imagine that a small brown dog is sitting on the curb.

In the second sentence, the writer has changed the general word *dog* to the specific word *mongrel*. The word *mongrel* means "an individual resulting from the interbreeding of diverse breeds." Seeing the word *mongrel* might make the reader think of a dog that is a mixed breed, mangy, and homeless. Using a more specific word forces the reader to see the same thing the writer sees. It also forces the reader to feel the same way the writer feels about the subject.



*Mary thinks of a mongrel.*



*What connotation do you think of when you think of puppy, pooch, or hound?*

How would the meaning have changed if the writer had used the word *puppy*, *pooch*, or *hound*? Each of these synonyms for *dog* would create a different mental image for the reader. Writers should select their words carefully because many words have **connotations**: meanings that come from the emotions or ideas readers associate with particular words.

Some words have positive or *favorable connotations* and some have negative or *unfavorable connotations*. For example, if you say that someone is *relaxing*, it sounds favorable; however, if you say the person is *loafing*, it sounds unfavorable.

## The Main Idea: Getting the Big Point

A good reader's goal is to respond critically to a particular selection. Before doing that, she or he must know the **main idea** of the material. The *main idea* is the most important idea of the reading selection. As you search for the main idea, consider the following four points.

1. the purpose of the author
2. key words which signal important ideas (*the best*, *most important*, *in conclusion*, etc.)
3. the opening and closing sentences of a paragraph, and the opening and closing paragraphs of an essay or story
4. the idea to which all the examples relate

Help yourself understand what you are reading by asking yourself the following "5W-How" questions:

- **Who** is the material primarily about?
- **What** is the material primarily about?
- **Where** do the events in the material take place?
- **When** do the events in the material take place?
- **Why** are the ideas, events, or situations in the material crucial?
- **How** do the ideas, events, or situations in the material connect to one another?

Sometimes the answers to the 5W-How questions (*Who? What? Where? When? Why? How?*) are not given directly, as in the following passage:

> *The sun shone brightly over the snowcapped peaks. Hikers had already started down the trail to the lake at the bottom of the valley. Allen didn't notice them. He sat quietly on a large boulder, his shoulders slumped and his head in his hands.*

The answers to the 5W-How questions are not directly stated in this passage. However, we do know that the story takes place in the morning because the sun is shining and the hikers have left early. We know that Allen is preoccupied because he doesn't notice the hikers. We know he is either sad or in deep thought because he is sitting with "his head in his hands" and "his shoulders slumped." We also know this story takes place in the mountains because it mentions "snowcapped peaks." Although we need to do a little detective work, we can find the answers to the 5W-How questions by using the details or clues in this passage.


By using the *indirect context clues* of the passage above we can answer the W questions.

- **Who** is the material about? *Allen*
- **What** is the material about? *a man sitting on a boulder thinking*
- **Where** does the passage take place? *the mountains*
- **When** does the passage take place? *midday*
- **Why** are the details crucial to the material? *Even though Allen is surrounded by beautiful scenery and other people, he doesn't notice.*
- **How** are the details important to Allen? *Allen misses the beauty and people that surround him.*

**Remember:** Use direct and indirect clues to help you understand what you are reading.

## Literal and Figurative Language: Language That Points and Language That Paints

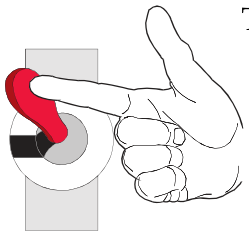
Authors use different kinds of language to give meaning to what they have written. The kind of language they use depends on the purpose for their writing. Writers use **literal language** if the purpose is to give directions or explanations. Writer's use **figurative language** if the purpose is to help the readers "see" or "feel" what they are writing.

*Literal language* uses words for their exact, direct meaning. You will find a literal meaning if you look in the dictionary for a definition of a word. Literal language is used in material that is written to give information, directions, or explanations.

*Figurative language* uses words in such a way that the reader sees something special or feels a particular way. You will find figurative language in cartoons, poetry, tall tales, and other literature. Figurative language, or figures of speech, make ideas vivid for your readers.

Notice the different meanings for the words *red* and *push* in the following two sentences:

> He knew how to push in the red lever.
>
> He knew how to push her buttons and make her see red.



*He knew how to push in the red lever.*

The first sentence uses literal language. The word *push* means "to press against," and the word *red* means a color. This sentence means exactly what it says.

The second sentence uses figurative language. The phrase *push her buttons* does not mean "to physically push buttons on this girl." Rather, it means "to make her upset." The word *red* does not mean "the color red." The girl will not see the color red when her buttons are pushed; instead, she will become upset and angry.

*He knew how to **push** her buttons and make her see **red**.*

Figurative language includes special figures of speech. These include **similes**, **metaphors**, and **personification**. These figures of speech help readers to see, feel, and experience more exactly what the writer wants them to see, feel, and experience. Another figure of speech is called **onomatopoeia**. It is a term used for words that sound like their meanings, such as *buzz* or *cuckoo*.

## Similes and Metaphors: Making Comparisons

*Similes* and *metaphors* are comparisons. Notice the strong images created by the following simile and metaphor.

A *simile* uses the word *like* or *as* to make a comparison

**Simile:** "Kudzu looks *like* a tunnel of twisting green vines and leaves."

The above simile uses *like* to compare the high vines of kudzu to a green tunnel of leaves and vines.

A *metaphor* implies a comparison *without* using the words *like* or *as*.

**Metaphor:** After the death of his wife, Elbert's heart was pure stone.

The above metaphor implies a comparison—without using *as* or *like* between a man's feelings, his heart, and stone. A person's heart is not a stone.

*…Elbert's heart was pure stone.*

## Personification: Adding Life to the Lifeless

*Personification* gives human qualities to lifeless objects or ideas.

**Personification:** The sun <u>smiled</u> on the children as they played.

The sun cannot smile; people smile. However, the reader understands that the writer is indicating that the sky was filled with pleasant sunshine—not too hot or too bright. Personification allows the reader to see ideas and objects in new ways.

*The sun smiled… .*

## Onomatopoeia: Using Words for Their Sounds

*Onomatopoeia* appeals to the reader's imagination by using words that sound like their meanings. Some examples of onomatopoeia are *ooze*, *slurp*, *thud*, *splash*, and *sizzle*.

**Onomatopoeia:** The wind and rain whooshed through the open window.

The sound of the word *whooshed* is similar to the sound of the wind and rain coming through the window.

*The wind and rain whooshed… .*

## Understanding Visual References: Reading the Guides

You are surrounded by **visual references**. You are given a list of the shops in the mall by a directory. You find out how to change the ink cartridge in your printer with a diagram. You know when to watch your favorite television program by looking at a schedule. On a daily basis, you gain information from maps and signs.

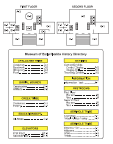
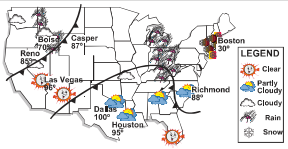
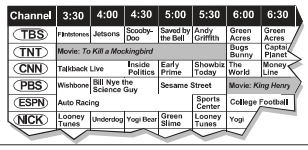
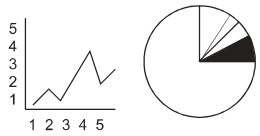
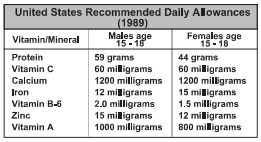
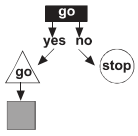
| Channel | 3:30 | 4:00 | 4:30 | 5:00 | 5:30 | 6:00 | 6:30 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| TBS | Flintstones | Jetsons | Scooby-Doo | Saved by the Bell | Andy Griffith | Green Acres | Green Acres |
| TNT | Movie: *To Kill a Mockingbird* | | | | | Bugs Bunny | Captai Planet |
| CNN | Talkback Live | | Inside Politics | Early Prime | Showbiz Today | The World | Money Line |
| PBS | Wishbone | Bill Nye the Science Guy | | Sesame Street | | Movie: *King Henry* | |
| ESPN | Auto Racing | | | | Sports Center | College Football | |
| NICK | Looney Tunes | Underdog | Yogi Bear | Green Slime | Looney Tunes | Yogi | |

*You know when to watch your favorite television program by looking at a schedule.*

Reading materials are filled with these and other types of *visual references*, including tables and graphs. These references shorten messages, making them easier to read. Visual references are often used to summarize written information. They also add to the written text, making it easier to understand.

The table on the following page is an example of a visual reference. Study it carefully. It explains and illustrates visual references.

## Visual References

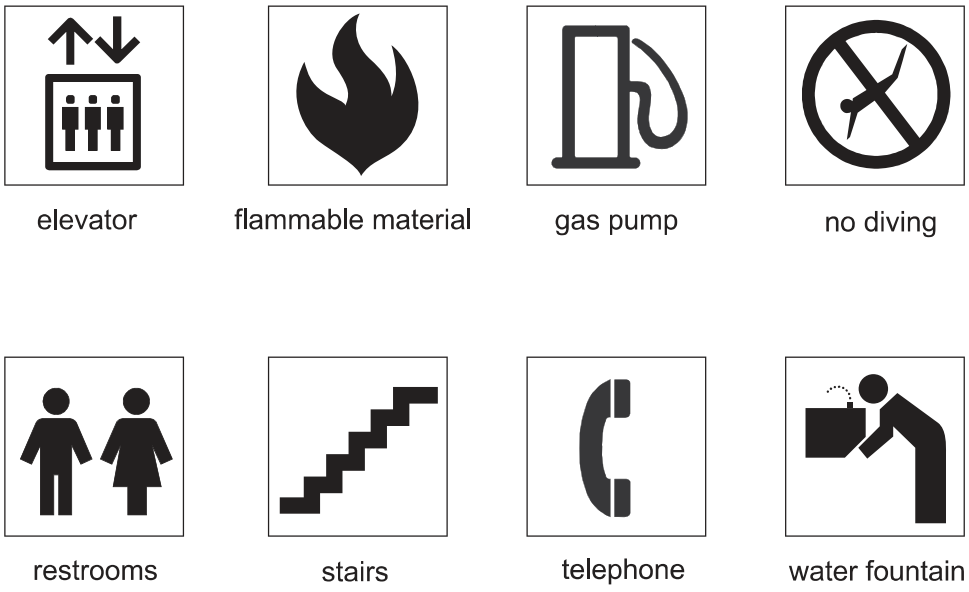
| Reference | Symbol | Concept | Location |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Directory** |  | • a plan or layout of a building or buildings<br>• a list of phone numbers in alphabetical and regional order | Department stores<br>Archeological sites<br>Supermarkets<br>Malls<br>Historical buildings<br>Museums |
| **Map** |  | • a representation in outline of a geographical area | Brochures<br>Guide books<br>History books<br>Atlases |
| **Schedule** |  | • a table which gives information on when and where something takes place | Bus and Train stations<br>Airports<br>TV guides<br>Movie guides<br>Schools |
| **Sign** |  | • a symbol used to represent something instead of, or with, words | Roads<br>Hospitals<br>Appliances<br>Product labels<br>Vehicles<br>Mathematics books |
| **Graph** |  | • a symbolic diagram representing a comparison of quantities | Climate reports<br>Medical books<br>Business reports<br>Classrooms |
| **Table** |  | • a chart giving information in column or list form | Magazines<br>Business reports<br>Maps |
| **Diagram** |  | • a picture showing a process, parts of a whole, how something works | Instruction books<br>Manuals<br>Science books |

## Understanding Signs

Certain information can be a matter of life or death. For example, we need to know when a bottle contains harmful liquid. We also need to know when to stop at an intersection or to avoid diving into shallow water. *Not* knowing these details can be very dangerous.

For this reason, a set of universal signs and symbols have been devised. These symbols require no certain language or reading ability. They are easily recognized by their shape and design. Look, for example, at the following.

**Universal Signs and Symbols**



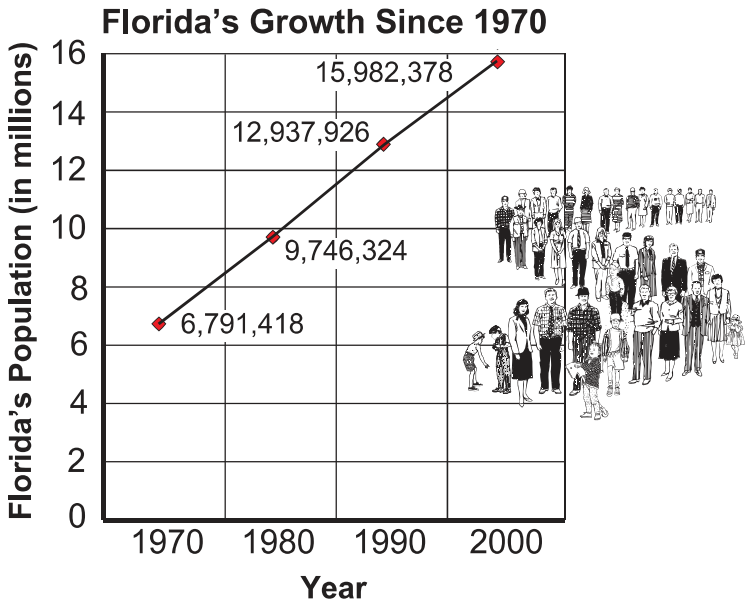

Many of you recognize these easy to understand signs. They are simple and well-designed. They present information more clearly than words alone.

## Understanding Graphs

A graph is another way that information is given in picture form. The information on a graph is called *data*. Graphs are usually divided into three kinds: line graphs, pie graphs, and bar graphs.

### The Line Graph

Most people are familiar with the line graph. A *line graph* shows how things *change over time*. Below is an example.




This is a graph of Florida's population growth. It covers the time between 1970s and the mid 2000s. The line graph begins with an L-shaped grid.

The *vertical line* (↕)of the grid shows the *subject of the data*. The above example shows numbers from 0 to 16 million. Each of these numbers represents an increase of two million people.

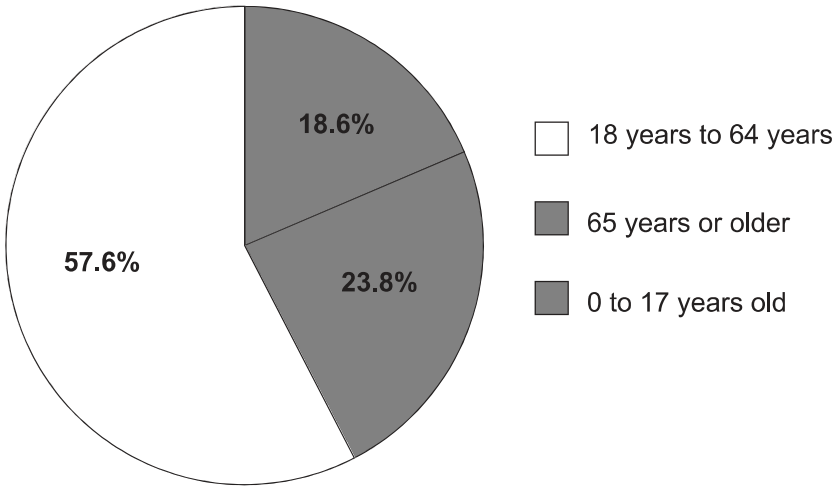
The *horizontal line* (↔)shows *time*. This graph is divided into 10-year segments.

During what year did Florida experience its largest growth? Its lowest?

## The Pie Graph

A *pie graph* is in the shape of a *circle*. The circle represents the *whole pie*. This *whole pie* can be an entire country. It can be the total amount of products sold. The *whole pie* below stands for 100 percent of Florida's population in 1995.

**Florida's Total Population in 1995**

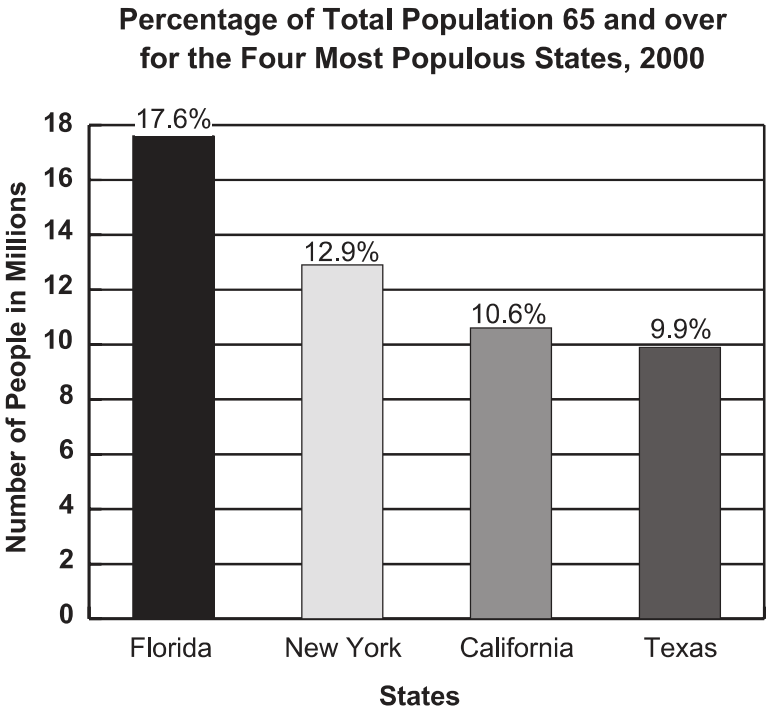



A pie graph shows proportions. In the pie graph above, you can see that in 1995, 57.6% of Florida's population was between the ages of 18 and 64. This percentage is represented by a *slice* of the whole pie. You can also see that 18.6%, the population was 65 or older. The youngest group, ages 0 to 17, made up 23.8% of the population.

Which group is the smallest?

## The Bar Graph

The *bar graph* uses *bars*. These bars show how several items *compare* to each other at the same time.




The above example also deals with population. This graph compares the population of people 65 and over for the four most populous states in 2000.

The bars show how the different state populations of people over 65 compare to each other.

## Understanding Tables

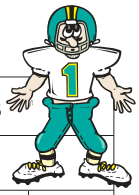
A table is similar to a graph. Both are information in picture form. Tables present words and numbers in an organized way. A *table* uses rows and columns to organize information. This allows you to see how these words and numbers relate to each other.

- The *rows* in a table are presented *horizontally*.
- The *columns* in a table are presented *vertically*.

Some common types of tables include comparison tables, distance tables, and conversion tables. You can also custom make a table to fit your needs.

### The Comparison Table

The table below is a *comparison table*. This table shows you information on different college football team uniform colors. (A • means that a college football team uniform has that color.)



**College Football Team Uniform Colors**

| College | Football Team Uniforms Colors | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Red/Garnet | Blue | Orange | Yellow/Gold | Green |
| University of Florida | | ● | ● | | |
| Florida A&M University | | | ● | | ● |
| Florida State | ● | | | ● | |
| University of South Florida | | | | ● | ● |

## The Distance Table

A *distance table* shows mileage from one point to another. Finding this distance is simple. Find your starting point in one row or column. Then find your destination in the other direction. Find where the row and column meet. This is the distance between locations.

**Mileage Table**

| | Jacksonville | Miami | Orlando | Pensacola |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Atlanta, GA** | 345 | 665 | 440 | 325 |
| **Montgomery, AL** | 375 | 695 | 470 | 165 |
| **New Orleans, LA** | 545 | 865 | 640 | 200 |
| **Savannah, GA** | 140 | 485 | 280 | 495 |

What would be the longest journey on the table? What would be the shortest?

## The Conversion Table

The *conversion table* is very useful. It helps you change information from one form to another. The table below converts standard United States measurements to metric measurements.

**Metric Conversion Chart**

| When You Know | Multiply by | to Find |
|---|---|---|
| 1 ounce | 28 | 1 gram |
| 1 pound | 0.45 | 1 kilogram |
| 1 teaspoon | 5 | 1 milliliter |
| 1 cup | 0.24 | 1 liter |
| 1 quart | 0.95 | 1 liter |

## Custom-Made Tables

Tables can show any kind of information. Using a table helps organize information you have found. The table below shows how average class size in Florida has changed during the past five years.

| Average Class Size, Florida Public Schools, 1995-1996 and 2000-2001 | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Grade Level** | **Subject Areas** | **2000-2001** | **1995-1996** | **5-Year Change** |
| **K-5** | | 23.3 | 24.1 | -0.8 |
| **6-8** | Math | 25.5 | 24.7 | +0.8 |
| | Science | 27.1 | 26.6 | +0.5 |
| | Social Studies | 27.0 | 26.6 | +0.4 |
| | Language Arts | 24.8 | 23.1 | +1.7 |
| **9-12** | Math | 25.7 | 24.5 | +1.2 |
| | Science | 26.9 | 26.0 | +0.9 |
| | Social Studies | 27.8 | 26.5 | +1.3 |
| | Language Arts | 25.4 | 21.6 | +3.8 |

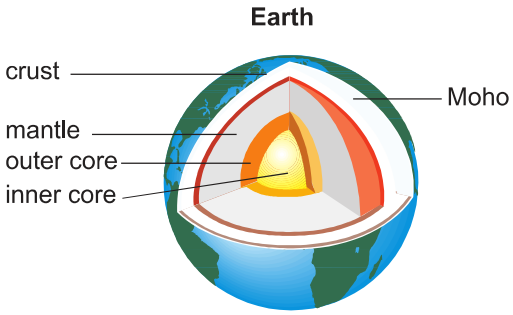
What class has seen the largest growth? Which one has seen the smallest?

## Understanding Diagrams

A *diagram* is a special type of drawing that can show you several things. It can show you how something is put together, or how parts relate to each other. It can also show you how something works. The two most common diagrams are the picture diagram and the line diagram.

### The Picture Diagram

A *picture diagram* is just what it sounds like. It is a picture or drawing. The picture can show the subject in different ways. Sometimes, parts are left out. Other parts might be enlarged. This allows the writer to emphasize and discuss certain parts. Below is a diagram of the Earth. The outer section has been cut away. This lets you see the different layers. You can see how they compare to each other in thickness. You can also see where they are located.



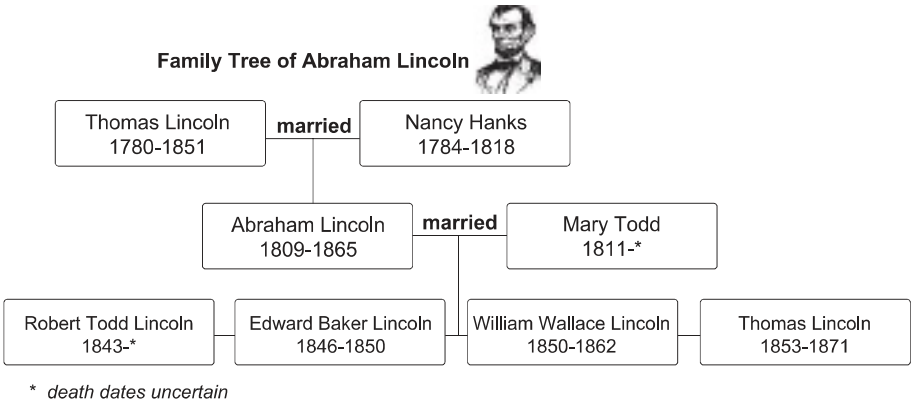

**crust**
**mantle**
**core** ▶ three major layers of Earth

**Moho** ▶ boundary between the Earth's crust and mantle

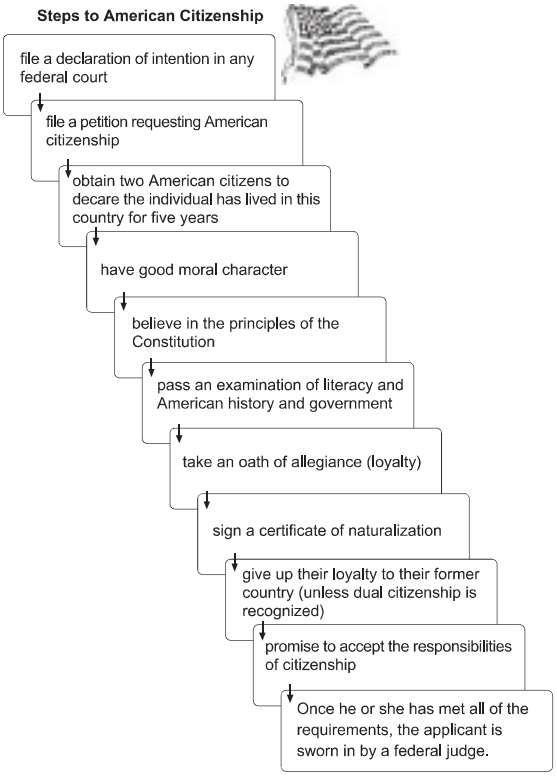
## The Line Diagram

A *line diagram* shows the relationship between ideas or events. It uses lines, symbols, and words to do this. The line diagram below shows the family members of Abraham Lincoln.

Here, the different boxes are on the different levels. This indicates different generations. However, the boxes are of equal size. This means each division is equal in importance.




Sometimes, a line diagram will show a process. Usually, the diagram will show steps from top to bottom. You will know where to begin and where to end from looking at the diagram. Look at the diagram to the right. This diagram illustrates the steps to American citizenship.



## Finding Information: Identifying the Right Source

Historians are calling this the Information Age. We are flooded with information from many sources. These include computers, television, cable networks, radio, videos, compact discs, faxes, and good old books. From the time we get up to the time we nod off, we'll have read thousands of words. We will have ignored many more.

*We are flooded with information from the television.*

Words and messages are a constant part of our daily lives. They call to us from road signs, computers, food packages, calendars, and schedules. They tell us what is good for us and what we should buy. They influence what we should believe and what we should know.

We are, at times, overcome with information. Which messages are important? Which ones do we ignore? How can we tell the difference?

We tell the difference by becoming discriminating readers and listeners. Such consumers understand what they read and hear. They know which messages are valuable and which are not.

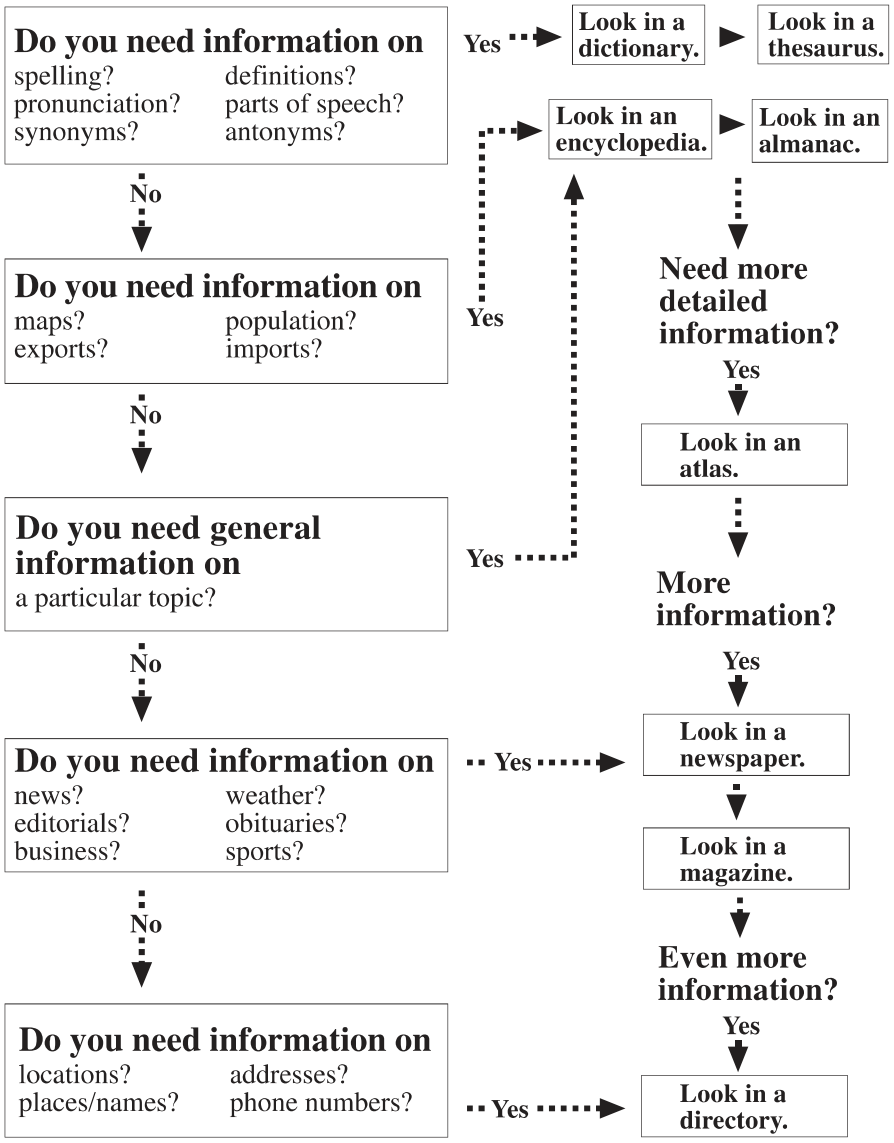
Individuals who lack these reading and listening skills are not so fortunate. They will be unable to determine what information is useful and what is not. As a result, they will become less desirable job applicants. In addition, these consumers will be vulnerable to advertisers and easily influenced by the media.

*We need to become discriminating readers.*

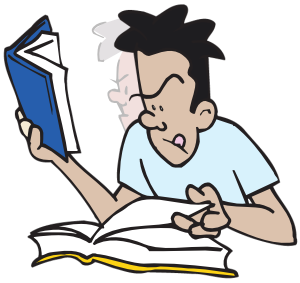
The amount of information available to us grows every day. Since the time of your great grandparents, humankind has gone to the moon and invented the computer. For every new idea, product, or process, there is a massive amount of information created. One of the most important skills you can acquire is to learn how to find, understand, and use information.

The chart below includes a variety of resources and the kinds of information found in each. Many of these sources may be found in your home, online, and in your school or local library.

## Identifying Types of Resources



## Using the Parts of a Book



Now you have located the right source of information. Your next step is to learn to locate specific information within that particular source. Most books contain the following parts.

**Title Page.** The *title page* is usually the first page. Here, you will find the following:

- the book's title
- the author's name
- the publisher's name
- the place of publication.

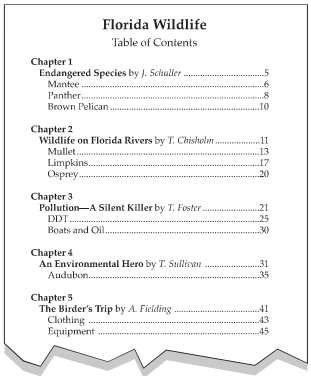
**Copyright Page.** The *copyright page* follows the title page. Usually it is printed on the back of the title page. The copyright date tells you when the book was published. If you need up-to-date research, this is important. Look for books with recent copyright dates.

**Preface, Foreword, or Introduction.** One or more of these often comes next in a book. In a *preface*, *foreword*, or *introduction* you can find the following:

- information about why the book was written
- acknowledgments: thank-you messages to people who have been helpful.

**Table of Contents.** The *table of contents* shows how the book is organized. It tells you the following:

- titles or names of chapters or book sections
- page numbers where these begin.



**Florida Wildlife**

Table of Contents

**Body.** The *body* is the main text of the book.

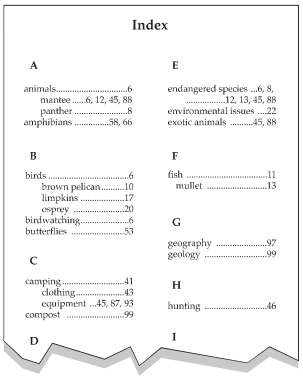
**Appendix.** An *appendix* sometimes follows the body. In the appendix you will find extra material that helps you understand the text. You might find the following:

- maps, tables, or charts
- copies of letters or official documents
- other special material.

**Glossary.** A *glossary* sometimes is included. A glossary is a type of dictionary. It lists and defines words used in the text.

**Bibliography.** A *bibliography* often is included. A bibliography is a list of materials about the same subject as the book.

**Index.** The *index* appears at the end of the book. This is a listing of important topics found in the book. The index is given in alphabetical order. The index also lists the page number(s) where the topic appears.



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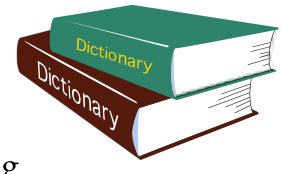
## Checking a Dictionary




A dictionary is the best source for finding word meanings. One word of caution: words often have more than one meaning. Read them all. Dictionary entries are arranged in alphabetical order. The following will be helpful as you use a dictionary.

**Guide Words.** *Guide words* are at the top of each page. They list the first and last words found on a page.

**Entry Words.** *Entry words* are the words being defined. They are listed in bold print. Entry words appear in alphabetical order.

**Syllable Divisions.** *Syllable divisions* show where each word can be properly divided into syllables.

**Parts of Speech Labels.** Labeling the different *parts of speech* of a word shows you all the ways a word can be used. For example, you will find out if the word can be used as a verb or noun. Often words can be used more than one way.

**Pronunciations.** *Pronunciations* respell words phonetically. This means they spell them the way they sound.

**Spelling and Capital Letters.** Often a word can be spelled more than one way. The dictionary shows this. If an entry is capitalized, you should *capitalize* it by using an uppercase letter.

**Illustrations.** *Illustrations* are sometimes provided. An illustration could be a picture or diagram used to make the definition clearer.

**Accent Marks.** *Accent marks* show which syllable should be stressed when you say a word.

**Synonyms.** *Synonyms* are words with similar meanings.

**Antonyms.** *Antonyms* are words with opposite meanings.

**Etymology.** *Etymology* is the history of the word. A word's history may trace the origin of the word and tell which languages it came from. This information is placed in brackets.

**Pronunciation Key.** The *pronunciation key* explains the symbols used to help you pronounce the words.

Dictionary Page

Guide words

Entry word

Syllable divisions

Definition with two closely related meanings

Pronunciation

Spelling and capital letters

Accent mark

Parts of speech (principle parts of the verb)

Etymology

Synonyms

Antonyms

griddle - grieve

**grid•dle** (grĭd′l) n. A heavy, flat metal plate with a handle used for cooking. [ME *gridel*, gridiron < ONFr. *gredil* < Lat. *craticula*, dim. of *cratis*, hurdle, lattice.]—**grid′dle** *v.*

**grid•i•ron** (grid′ī′ərn) *n.* **1.** Football. **a.** The field of play **b.** The game itself. **2.** A metal structure high above the stage of a theater, from which ropes or cables are strung to scenery and lights. **3.a.** A flat framework of parallel metal bars for broiling food. **b.** An object resembling a griddle. [ME *gridirne*, alteration of *gridere*, alteration of *gridel*. See GRIDDLE.]

**grid•lock** (grĭd′lŏk′) *n.* **1.** A traffic jam in which no vehicular movement is possible. **2.** A complete lack of movement or progress. —**grid′lock′** *v.* —**grid′locked′** *adj.*

**grief** (grēf) *n.* **1.** Deep sorrow; great sadness. **2.** A source of deep mental anguish, cause or source of sorrow. **3.** Archaic. A grievance. [ME < OFr. < grever, to harm. See GRIEVE.]

**Grier** (grîr), **Robert Cooper**. 1794-1870. Amer. jurist; associate justice of the U.S. Supreme Court (1846-70).

**griev•ance** (grē′vəns), *n.* **1.a.** A circumstance seen as just cause for protest. **b.** A complaint or protestation based on a grievance. **2.** Indignation or resentments stemming from feeling wronged. [ME *grevaunce* < OFr. *grevance* < *grever*, to harm. See GRIEVE.]

**grieve** (grēv), *v.* **grieved**, **griev•ing**, **grieves**.—*vt.* **1.** To cause grief or sorrow to. **2.** To feel or express grief. [ME greven, to harm < Lat. gravare, to burden < gravis, heavy.]

***Syns:*** *grieve*, *lament*, *mourn.*

***Ant:*** *rejoice*

griddle

G

**Pronunciation key**

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| ă | fat | o͝o | foot |
| ā | day | ŭ | fun |
| âr | care | ûr | urge |
| ä | barn | th | thin |
| ĕ | bet | th | this |
| ĭ | bit | hw | which |
| ō | note | zh | usual |
| ô | more | | |

ˈ primary
ˌ secondary

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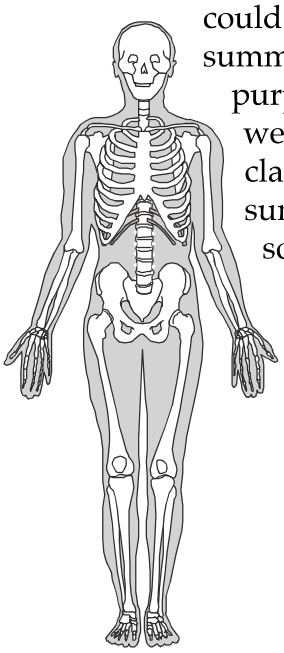
## Responding to What You Read: Interacting with Material

Part of the reading process is responding to what you are reading. There are many ways you can respond to something you have read. You can make a list of important ideas, write a **summary** or abstract, write a paragraph or essay in response, draw a picture that illustrates a concept, or rewrite an ending to a story or play. In this section you will respond to what you are reading by summarizing information and evaluating the material.

## Summarizing Information: Telling the Main Points

A *summary* is to a piece of writing what a skeleton is to a body. It outlines in brief the structure and central ideas of the writing. From a skeleton you could summarize the form and purpose of the body. From a summary you should be able to understand the content and purpose of a piece of writing. Being able to summarize well is a skill that will benefit you in your high school classes, in college, and in the work place. A good summary can provide you with a useful easy-to-use source of information for essays, papers, test preparation, letters, and other documents you may need to write in your future jobs.



*A summary is to a piece of writing what a skeleton is to a body.*

When you write a summary you will use two important skills: understanding what you read and reorganizing important information. Once you understand what you have read, recognize the main ideas and supporting details, and reorganize your information, you are ready to put the writing into your own words. A good summary is *not a list of quotations from the original material.*

Before you begin to write your summary, read the passage twice. Read it the first time to get an overview of the passage. Read it a second time to discover the details that support the main idea. Pay careful attention to introductions, conclusions, **topic sentences**, subtitles, and specific details during the second reading.

During or after your second reading, take notes on essential information. (See Unit 3 for ideas on taking notes.) One way to recognize essential information is to see if the passage would make sense without it. If you removed the spine from a skeleton, the body would look very peculiar and probably collapse! If information is essential to a passage, the passage would not make sense without it. Information that may not be essential to a passage includes examples, anecdotes, stories, words in parentheses, and minor details. Your summary should be about one-quarter of the length of the original passage.

The last step in preparing a summary is to reread it and compare it to the original passage. Make sure you have not left out anything essential or have not added anything that was not there to start with.

**Preparing a Summary**

1. Record the title of the chapter or article and the author.

2. Record the name of the source containing your selection and the date it was published. This could be the name of a book, magazine, newspaper, movie, or other original source.

3. Preview the reading selection.

4. Read the selection to get an overview.

5. Reread the passage carefully for essential information. Write down any unfamiliar words, and use the dictionary or context clues to find out what they mean.

6. On a planning sheet, write down the following:

    a) what you think the main idea of the selection might be

    b) the most important facts you learned from reading the selection. Record facts using fragments or phrases: *Do not copy complete sentences or paragraphs*. Set off each fact with a number, letter, or bullet.

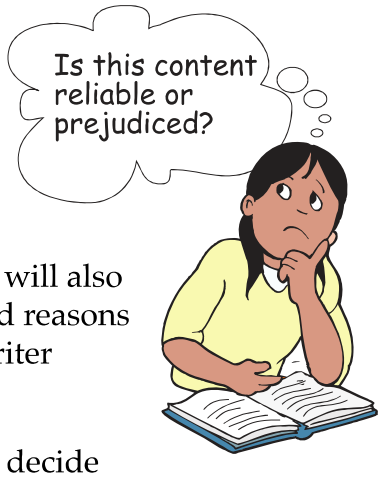
7. Note the method used to present information: listing of facts, comparison or contrast, chronological order, illustration, cause and effect, and order of importance.

8. Use this information to write a summary of your selection. Make sure to turn your notes into complete sentences as you write.

The following chart lists some key words and phrases you should look for when you are reading and use when you are summarizing.

| Examples of Key Words Indicating Key Points | |
|---|---|
| A vital factor | A major reason |
| A central concern | Most importantly |
| In conclusion | Because of |
| Essentially | In response to |

## Evaluating What You Read: Recognizing Fact and Opinion




Much of what you read has been written by people who hope to convince you that one particular opinion, idea, or commercial product is better than another. Many of these writers are quite skillful with words. For this reason, you must learn to *evaluate* reading materials in order to determine whether the content is *reliable* or *prejudiced*. Such evaluations will also help you to understand the writer's purpose and reasons for presenting information in the manner the writer presents it.

In order to evaluate a piece of writing you must decide whether what is being said is true or not. A good reader draws upon her knowledge in order to decide if something is true or not. Each time you read, you bring your store of knowledge to the facts and ideas expressed in the selection you are reading. You are constantly comparing what you know with what you read or hear. After making this comparison, you decide if a statement is true or false.

Consider the following statements:

> The first bicycle was invented by Karl D. von Sauerbronn in Germany in 1816.
>
> The new NP 9000 automobile fits everyone's lifestyle and everyone's pocket.

Even though you may not know for sure that the first statement is true, you could easily check by looking it up in an encyclopedia or almanac. Your previous knowledge probably told you that this statement is probably true because the facts are verifiable.

The second sentence is probably not true. It would be very hard to check this statement for accuracy. In order to do so you would have to match the car to every single person's lifestyle and income. Even without checking, your previous knowledge probably told you that not everyone can afford a car nor would one car ever be able to fit everyone's wants and needs.

Ask yourself the following questions when evaluating something you are reading:

1. What is the author's purpose in writing?
    - Is the author trying to convince you to change your mind about something?
    - Is the author angry about an injustice and hoping to have this injustice corrected?
    - Is the author attempting to sell or promote a product or idea?
2. Are the statements true?
    - How do these statements compare to what you already know?
    - What facts does the author use to support or justify the statements?
    - Do these facts justify the author's opinion?
    - Is the author qualified to make these statements? If so, how?
3. Do the statements make sense?
    - Does the author recognize the other side of the position?
    - Can you tell which side of the argument or position the author favors?
    - Are the reasons for favoring this position understandable and clearly stated?
4. What techniques does the author use to convince you of her point of view?
    - Does the author appeal to your vanity?
    - Does the author assume that the reader has certain biases and prejudices?
    - Does the author emphasize or leave out important facts in an effort to influence your thinking?
5. How effective are the techniques the author uses?
    - Do you feel inclined to agree with the author's argument?
    - Do you feel insulted or angry in any way because the author assumed you possessed certain biases or opinions?
    - Has the author touched on certain likes, dislikes, or fears that you have about a certain subject?