



# Introduction



Comprehension is the primary goal of any reading task. This *Nonfiction Reading Comprehension* box will help students develop the comprehension skills necessary for a lifetime of learning through the use of nonfiction passages followed by questions that require vital reading and thinking skills.

Each card in the *Nonfiction Reading Comprehension* box covers a grade-level appropriate topic. The cards are arranged in order of readability, ranging from 5.0 to 5.9. The reading level is based on the Flesch Kincaid Readability Formula. This formula determines readability by calculating the number of words, syllables, and sentences. The reading level is given at the bottom left-hand corner of each card. Occasionally the levels have been adjusted due to proper nouns or numbers which tend to skew the reading level. When this is the case, it is noted with an asterisk.

The activities are time-efficient, allowing students to practice the skills often. Independent and group practice should begin early in the school year.



# Card Index



- |    |   |    |                                    |
|----|---|----|------------------------------------|
| 1  | A Changing Matter: Water                  | 15 | Raincoats                          |
| 2  | Democratic Animals                        | 16 | The Rosetta Stone                  |
| 3  | Fire in Australia                         | 17 | Surprise in the Sewer              |
| 4  | Galapagos Islands Animals                 | 18 | Blue Jeans                         |
| 5  | Ladybugs to the Rescue                    | 19 | Reining in Wild Horses             |
| 6  | The Man Who Peacefully<br>Changed America | 20 | Smoking on the Big Screen          |
| 7  | The Paralympics                           | 21 | Tony Hawk, Professional Skater     |
| 8  | The American Bald Eagle                   | 22 | Vietnam's Story                    |
| 9  | Behind the Scenes at the Zoo              | 23 | A Century in the Sky               |
| 10 | For the Record                            | 24 | Geothermal Power                   |
| 11 | Greetings                                 | 25 | Hippopotamuses                     |
| 12 | The History of Figure Skating             | 26 | Our 43rd President: George W. Bush |
| 13 | Horses with Pull                          | 27 | We All Scream for Ice Cream        |
| 14 | Oil Spill Near the Galapagos Islands      | 28 | Where Are the Monkeys?             |



## Card Index *(cont.)*



- |    |  |    |   |
|----|--|----|---|
| 29 | Young Sailor Makes History             | 43 | The Bermuda Triangle                      |
| 30 | America's Big Fat Problem              | 44 | The Black Plague                          |
| 31 | Arctic Ground Squirrels                | 45 | Earth's Frozen Past                       |
| 32 | Building a Medieval Castle             | 46 | Helping Refugees                          |
| 33 | Comic Books: An American Art Form      | 47 | Peanut Butter                             |
| 34 | The Country of Brazil                  | 48 | Photographs from Space                    |
| 35 | The Eiffel Tower                       | 49 | Rain, Rain, Don't Go Away!                |
| 36 | Elizabeth Blackwell, Physician         | 50 | Sir Ernest Shackleton, Antarctic Explorer |
| 37 | A Famous Feline                        | 51 | Susan B. Anthony, Civil Rights Activist   |
| 38 | Leonardo da Vinci, Artist and Inventor | 52 | Twisters                                  |
| 39 | Waterspouts                            | 53 | Walt Disney, Imagineer                    |
| 40 | An Wang, Inventor                      | 54 | Zoological Gardens                        |
| 41 | Apples                                 | 55 | Child Labor                               |
| 42 | Aquifers                               | 56 | Colin Powell, U.S. Secretary of State     |



## Card Index (cont.)



- |    |   |    |                                   |
|----|---|----|-----------------------------------|
| 57 | Dandelions                                  | 72 | Taste Is Based on Where You Live  |
| 58 | Sidewalk Surfing                            | 73 | Baseball                          |
| 59 | The Everglades in Trouble                   | 74 | The <i>Columbia</i> Is Lost       |
| 60 | The Panama Canal                            | 75 | The Dead Sea Scrolls              |
| 61 | Ice Age Fossils                             | 76 | Egypt Today                       |
| 62 | Ice Ball in Space                           | 77 | Finding Underwater Gold           |
| 63 | The History of Earth Day                    | 78 | Is Pluto a Planet?                |
| 64 | Library Books                               | 79 | Mermaids                          |
| 65 | Making Chocolate Bars Isn't a Piece of Cake | 80 | Remembering Fallen Heroes         |
| 66 | Mia Hamm, Soccer Star                       | 81 | Stalactites & Stalagmites         |
| 67 | Scrabble                                    | 82 | The Sucuriju: Fact or Fiction?    |
| 68 | Shirley Temple, Child Star                  | 83 | Taipei 101                        |
| 69 | Should We Go Metric?                        | 84 | Thomas Hopkins Gallaudet, Teacher |
| 70 | The Unbreakable Code                        |    |                                   |
| 71 | An Unusual Inmate                           |    |                                   |



## Card Index *(cont.)*



- |    |   |     |                                     |
|----|---|-----|-------------------------------------|
| 85 | Tigers Make a Comeback                            | 99  | Stephen Hawking, Scientist          |
| 86 | Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart,<br>Musician and Composer | 100 | Valentine's Candy                   |
| 87 | Changing Change                                   | 101 | Vegetarians                         |
| 88 | Columbus Didn't Discover<br>America               | 102 | The Biggest Bang                    |
| 89 | Electricity                                       | 103 | Gymnastics                          |
| 90 | Football  | 104 | Hanami: A Celebration of<br>Flowers |
| 91 | The Chinese Calendar                              | 105 | Humidity                            |
| 92 | Iroquois Native Americans                         | 106 | Moth or Butterfly?                  |
| 93 | The Library of Congress                           | 107 | Mudflow Buries Town                 |
| 94 | The Lost Continent                                | 108 | Parking Ramps                       |
| 95 | State Fairs                                       | 109 | Picture Book Art                    |
| 96 | The Modern Olympics                               | 110 | The Pyramids                        |
| 97 | Pumpkin Is Not Just for Pie                       | 111 | Taxes                               |
| 98 | The State of the Union Address                    | 112 | Unity in the Classroom              |



## The Paralympics

You've probably watched some of the Olympics on TV. If not, you've at least heard of the famous games that take place every four years. However, you may not have heard of the Paralympics. The Paralympics are very much like the Olympics, but they are for people with disabilities. Some of the athletes are blind. Others may be unable to move their legs. Many are missing an arm or a leg. They play against people who have the same kinds of problems.

The Paralympics always take place right after the Olympic Games (summer) or the Olympic Winter Games. They are held in the same place. The top three athletes in each sport win medals. More than 4,000 people took part in the 2004 Paralympics.



# The Paralympics



1. Which disability would qualify an athlete to be in the Paralympics?
  - a. reading problems
  - b. a bad sinus infection
  - c. missing a foot
2. In the Special Olympics for the mentally challenged, everyone wins a medal. How are the Paralympics different?
  - a. The people competing in the Paralympics don't have any problems.
  - b. Only the top three Paralympic performers in each event earn medals.
  - c. All Paralympians earn one of three types of medals.
3. Of the following choices, which happens last?
  - a. The Olympics opening ceremony.
  - b. The Paralympics opening ceremony.
  - c. The Olympics closing ceremony.
4. A doctor started the Paralympics after World War II. He probably
  - a. had treated disabled soldiers who wanted to compete as athletes.
  - b. was the grandfather of twelve children.
  - c. was the head of the art department at a college.



## Blue Jeans

In 1849 Levi Strauss boarded a ship. He traveled to open a store for gold miners on the West Coast. He talked to the men on board. They said they wanted sturdy pants that could endure the stress of mining. When they docked, Strauss had a tailor make pants from some rolls of brown canvas. Word spread about their *durability*, and the pants sold fast. The next batch of jeans was made from dark blue cloth called “serge de Nimes” from Genoa, Italy. “Jeans” is a mispronunciation of Genoa.

Today almost every American owns a pair of jeans. People worldwide purchase more than 425 million pairs each year. Levi jeans still look much like the originals. They even have the original trademark of two horses trying to pull apart a pair of jeans.





## Blue Jeans



1. The first blue jeans were not subjected to the stress of
  - a. carrying heavy rocks in the pockets.
  - b. going through a dryer's tumble cycle.
  - c. kneeling on rough ground.
2. The first pairs of pants that Strauss sold were
  - a. brown.
  - b. dark blue.
  - c. black.
3. The word *jeans* came from the word
  - a. Strauss.
  - b. Genoa.
  - c. serge de Nimes.
4. The word *durability* means
  - a. fashionable.
  - b. flimsy.
  - c. ability to last a long time.