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# Introduction

The old adage “practice makes perfect” can really hold true for children and their education. The more practice students have with concepts being taught in school, the more success they are likely to find. For many parents, knowing how to achieve this goal and support their child’s learning can be frustrating. This book is designed to eliminate the guesswork for parents using it at home, while also being a valuable resource for educators using it in the classroom.

*Here’s how:* By pairing page-long texts in three different categories (fiction, nonfiction, and informational) with comprehension questions, students will get practice in encountering different text types and showing that they fully understand what they have read.

For Grade 6, *Practice Makes Perfect: Reading Comprehension* covers the following skills:

- using various reading strategies to comprehend text
- using context clues to determine the meaning of unknown words
- skimming text to quickly locate information
- locating the main idea of a text as a whole or of a part (paragraph, etc.) of a text
- making inferences and predictions based on information given

## Inside This Resource

**Reading Passages and Comprehension Questions** (pages 4–39) — There are 18 reading passages that have been divided into three categories: fiction, nonfiction, and informational. These passages can be read sequentially or can be done out of order, as needed.

**Practice Tests** (pages 40–45) — There are 3 practice tests, one each for fiction, nonfiction, and informational texts.

**Answer Sheets** (pages 46–47) — These optional sheets provide a similar format to those found on standardized tests. These “bubble-in” answer sheets can be used in the classroom or at home.

**Answer Key** (page 48) — This key provides the answers for all of the comprehension questions that accompany the passages.

## Helpful Tips

- Establish consistency by setting up a certain time of day to work on these practice pages. Look for times in your day or week that are less hectic and more conducive to practicing skills.
- Keep practice sessions short, positive, and constructive. If your child becomes frustrated, set the book aside and look for another time to practice.
- Provide extra guidance and support in the areas in which your child is struggling. Look for ways to apply these skills to real-life situations.

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

# Diving In

As he stepped to the edge of the high platform, Josh's knees went weak. The water in the pool below looked as if it were a thousand feet down. This was the third time he had come up here, and it was also the third time he turned around and walked back to the ladder. Josh could feel the stares from his classmates, friends, and teachers on the back of his head, and he knew what they were thinking. He'd better make the dive the next time.

Would there even be a next time? This was just an intramural diving team that had been put together by the swimming coach at the junior high school. Josh had made good dives at lower levels, and Coach Barry had even said that he didn't need to dive from the high platform if he didn't want to.

He wanted to do it, though. He had wanted to feel like a part of the team ever since that first afternoon when he had seen the other swimmers at practice. He enjoyed the water, and he was a good swimmer. When the diving team was started, he leaped at the opportunity to join. When tryouts were posted, his name was the first on the list.

Standing on the ground, Josh stared up at that high dive platform that now seemed to loom so far above him. He looked around the pool at the other swimmers. He felt sure that he had never seen any of them hesitate on the high dive.

Suddenly, the coach began walking toward him. "How are you doing, Josh?"

"I'm all right, Coach Barry. I just got a little nervous up there," Josh said.

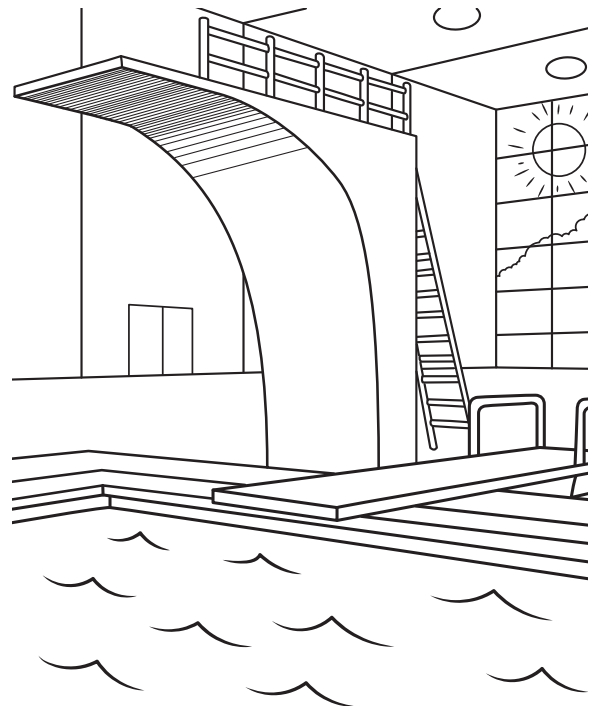
"Don't worry about it, Josh. When I was young, I was downright scared up there," Mr. Barry said.

"You were? So how did you ever get up the nerve to dive off?" Josh asked.

"I decided that I had to stop thinking about it. I figured that if I could get myself to dive off the board just once, I would know what it actually felt like instead of just imagining what it would feel like. So one day, I just climbed up the ladder, walked to the end, and dove off."

Josh nodded. That made sense to him. He had been imagining the feeling he would get in his stomach when he stepped off the high platform and how the water might look as it rushed toward him. He thought about how it might feel like he was flying and the way the air would turn silent as he fell.

Josh took a deep breath, turned around, and started walking back to the ladder that led to the high dive platform. He knew it was something he wanted to do, and he knew he would do it someday. He began to feel like today might be that day.



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

# Diving In

After reading the passage, answer the questions. Fill in the bubble beside each correct answer.

1. The author tells us that Josh’s name was the first on the tryout list. This shows that
  - (A) Josh was very eager to be on the team.
  - (B) There were few people on the team.
  - (C) Josh was scared to dive.
  - (D) Josh was in junior high.
  
2. According to the story, which of these statements is true about the diving team?
  - (A) Diving from the high dive was required.
  - (B) The coach was an Olympic champion.
  - (C) The team practiced every afternoon.
  - (D) It was a junior high intramural team.
  
3. What did Josh do before he walked back to the high dive for his next attempt?
  - (A) He signed up for tryouts for the diving team.
  - (B) He watched a teammate dive.
  - (C) He practiced on a lower diving board.
  - (D) He spoke with his coach about his fear.

Here is a story about diving. Some words are missing. For questions #4–6, choose the word that best fills each blank in the paragraph.

Diving is a \_\_\_\_\_ (4) activity. The sport is a \_\_\_\_\_ (5) of gymnastic and swimming skills. In the 17th century, gymnasts would move their equipment to the beach. The gymnasts would perform their exercises over the water. This \_\_\_\_\_ (6) activity became the diving that we enjoy today.

- |  |  |  |
|--|--|--|
| <p>4. (A) thorough<br/>(B) thrilling<br/>(C) thankful<br/>(D) thoughtful</p> | <p>5. (A) definition<br/>(B) combination<br/>(C) congestion<br/>(D) solution</p> | <p>6. (A) common<br/>(B) reserved<br/>(C) severe<br/>(D) unusual</p> |
|--|--|--|

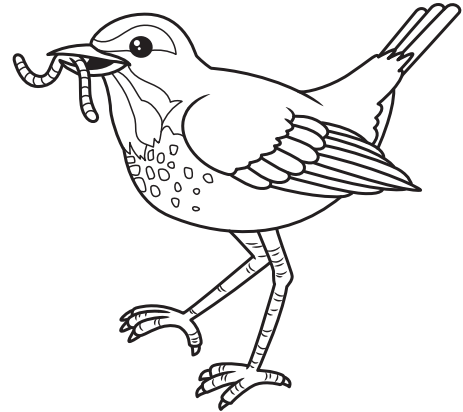
Name: \_\_\_\_\_

# Protecting Nature and Ourselves

The choices humans make can have an enormous effect on the natural world. One person who was most instrumental in opening our eyes and our minds to this truth was Rachel Carson. In the decades that followed World War II, Carson was one of many great scientists who suspected that the chemicals humans used to make their lives easier were also doing great harm to our planet and to the animals and plants we share it with. What truly set Carson apart from the other scientists was her great skill as a writer. She was able to communicate her expertise to millions of people in a way that inspired them to care and to fight for change.

Carson's 1962 book *Silent Spring* is one of the most influential books about man's impact on our environment. She showed how man-made pesticides such as the once-popular DDT do more than just kill harmful insects. The chemicals work their way up the food chain, threatening bird and fish populations and ultimately entering the human population. Carson made it clear and understandable that we are not separate from nature; we are a part of it, and any poisons we put in nature may come back to poison us.

*Silent Spring* is considered Carson's greatest achievement, but before its release she had spent decades working as a marine biologist, studying habitats from the oceans to the treetops, and shining a light on what needed to be done to protect animal and human lives. Carson passed away less than two years after the publication of *Silent Spring*, but her words and warnings live on.



## Taking Sides

*Silent Spring* caused a great uproar and inspired strong opinions. On the one side, Carson was attacked by the chemical industry. They spoke negatively about Carson's personal life and her abilities as a scientist. They tried to spread fear about a future without pesticides in which the world was overrun by destructive insects. On the other side, the public believed Carson's message and began to push for laws banning some pesticides. President John F. Kennedy also took Carson's words seriously. He started an advisory committee to look into the use of pesticides. Carson's work and the ideas it inspired eventually led to the creation of the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) in 1970 and the banning of the use of DDT in 1972.

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

# Protecting Nature and Ourselves

After reading the passage, answer the questions. Fill in the bubble beside each correct answer.

- Which of these events happened first?
  - President Kennedy started an advisory committee on pesticides.
  - Rachel Carson's book *Silent Spring* was published.
  - Rachel Carson worked as a marine biologist.
  - The chemical industry warned of a future full of harmful insects.
- Which of these events happened last?
  - The Environmental Protection Agency was created.
  - The use of DDT was banned.
  - President Kennedy started an advisory committee on pesticides.
  - Rachel Carson passed away.
- What is another word for *instrumental*, as it is used in the first paragraph?
  - music without words
  - natural
  - chemical
  - significant
- Which of these is *not* a part of the natural world?
  - fish populations
  - harmful insects
  - chemicals such as DDT
  - ocean habitats
- What was *not* a reaction the chemical industry had to Rachel Carson and *Silent Spring*?
  - They praised her work and banned the use of DDT.
  - They said bad things about Carson's personal life.
  - They tried to create doubt about Carson's abilities as a scientist.
  - They said that without DDT, the world would be overrun by insects.
- Which of these is an example of a food chain?
  - Insects eat leaves, dogs eat dog food, and people eat ice cream.
  - Insects eat leaves, birds eat insects, and mammals eat birds.
  - Birds, bears, and humans all eat fish.
  - Everything in the environment relies on water to survive.

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

# Leader of the Pack

Tired of breaking your back carrying school books?  
Tired of crumpled homework, crushed lunches, and smashed tablets?

**We've got the solution!**

Get a  
**JETTPACK!**

**Only \$44**  
until August 25th

Every JettPack is made with durable, organic denim and double stitched with industrial-strength nylon thread. Multidirectional wheels allow you to spin and roll your pack everywhere you go. And when you do choose to wear your JettPack, plush straps will make your shoulders sigh with comfort.

Heavy-duty zippers and closures are easy to open when you need them to be (and stay closed the rest of the time).

In every JettPack you'll find . . .

- A cushioned closeable pouch that will cradle your laptop or tablet in comfort and security.
- A spacious main compartment to hold books, gym clothes, jackets—you name it!
- A tough and stretchy side pocket that can hold up to a 32-ounce water bottle.
- Seven interior and exterior smaller pockets to keep you organized while you're on the go.

This is the only backpack you'll ever need!



**Available in 5 "WOW!" Colors**

Flamingo Pink • Mango Orange • Ruby Red • Mean Green • Mellow Yellow

Become a leader of the pack with your own **JETTPACK®** today!

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

# Leader of the Pack

After reading the passage, answer the questions. Fill in the bubble beside each correct answer.

1. What information are we given about getting a Jettpack for \$44?
  - (A) You'll need to go to the company's website.
  - (B) You'll need to make your purchase by August 25.
  - (C) You'll need to use the attached coupon.
  - (D) You'll need to choose a color and style.
  
2. Why do the backpacks have a cushioned closeable pouch?
  - (A) to protect your water bottle
  - (B) to help relieve muscle strain
  - (C) to secure a laptop or tablet
  - (D) to keep you organized while you're on the go
  
3. The reader can assume from the description that the nylon thread used for the stitching is
  - (A) extra strong.
  - (B) extra colorful.
  - (C) extra organic.
  - (D) extra comfortable.
  
4. In which of these colors is the Jettpack available?
  - (A) Jet Black
  - (B) Mystic Blue
  - (C) Mango Orange
  - (D) Perfect Purple
  
5. Why does the author begin this ad with some questions?
  - (A) to give information
  - (B) to express an opinion
  - (C) to answer questions the company has been asked
  - (D) to show how the product can make life better for the reader
  
6. What would be the main benefit of a backpack having "multidirectional" wheels?
  - (A) It can be rolled down ramps.
  - (B) It can be rolled and spun in any direction.
  - (C) It can be easier to carry.
  - (D) It can be more heavy duty and sturdy.