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Introduction

The *Nonfiction and Fiction Comprehension Connections* series is a set of six kits of comprehension cards and lessons suitable for students from grades 2 through 8. The boxed sets provide supplementary materials to support and enhance existing reading programs. The range of levels within a box provides flexibility within the classroom and allows teachers to accommodate students' individual reading comprehension needs.

The reading cards feature both fiction and nonfiction texts, incorporating a wide variety of topics and themes. In addition, all of the reading cards are Lexile and Guided Reading leveled, and the *Teacher Resource* book activities are correlated to Common Core State Standards. Students experience fiction and nonfiction reading using a wide range of genres and subject areas, and analyze text more closely as they respond to text-dependent questions. The *Teacher Resource* book provides additional activities to strengthen students' ability to use specific strategies to build comprehension.

The questions that accompany each card incorporate three levels of comprehension (Literal, Inferential, Applied) in a multiple-choice format. They also assess 12 comprehension skills. Separate answer cards allow the students to work and progress at their own rate while keeping a record for their own and teacher reference. The variety of materials included in the *Teacher Resource* book will assist with easy implementation and maintenance of the program.



Included on the inside back cover of this book is a CD containing reproducible PDF-formatted files for all of the reading cards, all student activity pages, and the Common Core State Standards for grades 4, 5, 6, and 7. These standards can also be accessed online. Visit www.bluestareducation.com for information regarding the standards. The reading card and student activity PDF files are ideal for group instruction using interactive whiteboards.



What's Included in *Comprehension Connections*?

- 210 full-color reading cards (3 copies of 70 different titles) per kit with related comprehension questions
- 144-page *Teacher Resource* book that includes complete instructions on how to use the kit components and comprehensive, guided unit lessons that introduce students to 12 comprehension skills for reinforcing reading strategies
- 70 answer cards for student self-evaluation and teacher assessment
- CD of all reading cards and *Teacher Resource* book student activities

How This Program Meets Today's Needs

Moving Toward Close Reading

The Partnership of Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers (PARCC) defines close reading as “uncovering layers of meaning that lead to deep comprehension.” The reading cards and questions, as well as the comprehension strategies units provided in this program, help students meet this need.

Among the ideas that support PARCC and move students toward deeper understanding of text are the following: analyzing meaning; paying more attention to the text, main ideas, and supporting details; discovering the meanings of specific words and sentences as they relate to the content; generating ideas about the text, and reflecting more on the contents and the intent of the reading. The reading cards and questions, as well as the comprehension strategies units provided in this program, help students meet these demands.

Using Short Texts

With today's emphasis on reading more demanding text and the inclusion of close reading to improve comprehension, it has been suggested that approaching close reading by using short texts can be helpful—especially when dealing with a wide range of reading levels among students. By using short texts and targeting a specific set of reading strategies, students are more able to acquire the tools they need to practice close reading. The reading cards provided in *Nonfiction and Fiction Comprehension Connections* provide short texts using a wide variety of themes and topics.

Reading a Variety of Genres

The Common Core State Standards emphasize the use of a variety of genres, as well as both informational and literary reading content. The standards also encourage the use of traditional literature, such as folktales, myths, legends, and fables. They suggest introducing students to short stories, poetry, plays, biographies, personal narratives, and articles as a way of approaching close reading. In order to meet this need, a variety of genres have been included in the *Nonfiction and Fiction Comprehension Connections* kits. Among them are the following categories:

- | | | |
|------------------------|---------------|--------------------|
| -narratives | -biographies | -procedure |
| -poems | -fables | -adventure stories |
| -discussions | -recounts | -folktales |
| -science fiction texts | -reviews | -expositions |
| -myths | -fairy tales | -humorous stories |
| -informational charts | -reports | -descriptions |
| -mysteries | -explanations | |
| -legends | -fantasy | |

How to Use the Cards and Resource Book

Using Comprehension Strategies With the Cards

A total of 12 comprehension strategies are addressed in each of the kits. By introducing students to these strategies and providing practice using them, students learn to apply the strategies as they work through the reading cards. The lessons for all 12 strategies are included in this book (see pages 35–144). Teachers can choose a plan for including these practice lessons in a way that best suits the needs of their students.

Below, and on pages 18–19, is a Scope and Sequence Chart that connects each reading card to the specific comprehension strategies upon which the card focuses. The chart includes the card number and color, the genre, the card title, and columns for each of the 12 strategies presented in this book.

For teaching purposes, the Scope and Sequence Chart is ideal for noting which cards address a specific strategy. For example, if students are having difficulty with a particular strategy, the teacher can reinforce it using the lesson pages for that strategy. It is also possible to choose one or more cards from the chart that address the strategy and use them as examples in a whole-class lesson. (An easy way to accomplish this is to use the cards from the PDF files on a whiteboard. For smaller groups, choose copies from the kit or reproduce and distribute copies from the CD.)

SCOPE AND SEQUENCE CHART— Cards and Strategies Correlations

Card Color and Number	Genre	Title	Understanding Words	Finding Information	Identifying the Main Idea	Sequencing	Finding Similarities and Differences	Predicting	Drawing Conclusions	Summarizing	Inferring	Cause and Effect	Fact or Opinion	Point of View and Purpose	Pronoun/Noun Agreement
Scarlet – 1	Explanation	Playing Hopscotch	✓	✓	✓							✓		✓	✓
Scarlet – 2	Explanation	Jump! Jump! Jump!	✓	✓	✓			✓						✓	✓
Scarlet – 3	Jokes	Fairytale Funnies	✓	✓	✓	✓					✓	✓			✓
Scarlet – 4	Recount	The Not So Abominable Snowman	✓	✓		✓			✓		✓	✓			✓
Scarlet – 5	Fairy tale	The Bremen Town Musicians	✓	✓	✓		✓				✓	✓			
Scarlet – 6	Fable	The Badger and the Magic Fan	✓	✓	✓	✓			✓	✓	✓				✓
Scarlet – 7	Fable	The Man, His Son and the Donkey	✓	✓	✓	✓					✓	✓			✓
Scarlet – 8	Narrative	Rumble’s Freedom	✓	✓	✓				✓	✓	✓	✓			✓
Scarlet – 9	Explanation	What’s In a Name?	✓	✓	✓						✓		✓		✓
Scarlet – 10	Narrative	Happy Harry, Sour Sally	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓		✓				

Name _____

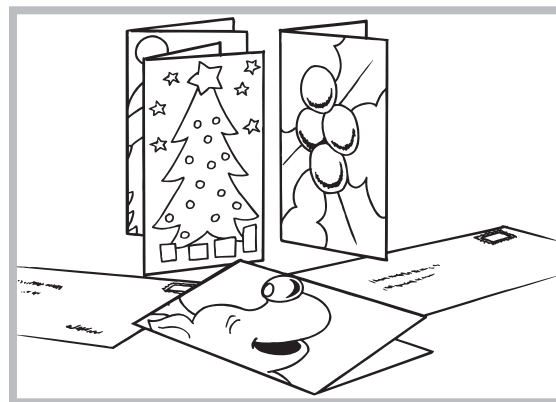
When we read, we should try to think like the writer to figure out how and what he or she feels and believes about the subject (point of view) and why he or she wrote the text (purpose).

Activity: Read the story below and complete pages 136–138.

Christmas Cards

1. I love receiving Christmas cards. I love buying or making them and then writing in them, putting on the stamps, and popping them into the mailbox one at a time. I am so excited when I find the very first Christmas card in our mailbox. I try to guess who could have sent it before I open it, read it, and put it up where everyone can see it. Christmas cards are wonderful.

2. Some people complain that cards are too expensive. They say they cost too much to buy and that the money spent on stamps is wasted when an email is free. But some people, like my grandparents, don't have a computer. Anyway, a computer message is so dull and boring. I think Christmas cards are worth the cost. I don't buy expensive ones, and I usually make most of my cards. Even the post office understands how important Christmas cards are because it offers special Christmas stamps every year, and they are just gorgeous.



3. Other people are concerned about the time it takes to write individual cards when you can very quickly email the same message to all your friends and family. I think cards should be made or bought specially for each person and that the messages in them should be meant just for that person, too. The time that cards take to be delivered also worries some people, but I can't see that it is a problem; you just have to get started earlier. Anyway, I think you should make time for people you care about.

4. Christmas cards are beautiful. They are so colorful and come in so many different shapes and sizes. I love the traditional ones, especially those with snow scenes and those that come from other countries. Some of them are so unique and interesting. They make me realize that Christmas is celebrated in many faraway places and in various ways. I have so much fun figuring out different ways of displaying them.

5. Christmas is a time for giving and sharing with all people, especially the ones who are important to us. There are lots of people I only hear from at Christmastime when they send me a card and tell me what's been happening in their lives. Often they include a photo, and I enjoy seeing their smiling faces again. Some of my friends make Christmas cards using a family photo. I think this is a really great idea.

6. I can't imagine Christmas without cards because for me . . . they are one of the great joys of this special time. There is no way in the world that the cost or the time involved will stop me from sharing them with the people I care about.

Name _____

Follow the steps below to learn how to identify the writer's point of view and his or her probable purpose for writing the text.

- Writers don't always just tell you what they think or believe or why they have written the text. Sometimes, you have to try to think like they do and come to this conclusion based on what you have read.
- In the text, there are details and information related to the question for you to find, underline, and use in making your choices.
- Always consider all possible answers before making a decision.

1. The writer believes that:

- (a) emails are better than Christmas cards because they save time.
- (b) emails are more personal than Christmas cards.
- (c) everyone should send emails at Christmastime.
- (d) Christmas cards are worth the extra time.

2. Choose the best answer. Think about each choice carefully.

- (a) It is true that in paragraph 3 the writer does say that emails are quicker than cards, but not that they are better, so this is not a good answer.
- (b) The writer says that cards are more personal because you need to make or buy them and write an individual message inside. This is not a good answer.
- (c) The writer says that emails are not as good as cards. He or she wouldn't want people to send them. This is not the correct answer.
- (d) The writer says Christmas cards take longer and that people should make time to do them. This is the best answer.

1. The writer likely wrote the text because he or she:

- (a) hates computers.
- (b) is worried that people are going to stop sending Christmas cards.
- (c) likes Christmas cards.
- (d) likes the "good old days."

2. Choose the best answer. Think about each choice carefully.

- (a) The writer doesn't say she hates computers, just that cards are better than emails. This is not the right answer.
- (b) The writer likes Christmas cards and wants people to send them; he or she could be worried that people will stop sending them. This is a possible reason for writing the text. This is a very good answer, but you must consider all of them.
- (c) It is true, the writer does like Christmas cards, but this doesn't fully explain his or her reason for writing the text. This is not the best answer.
- (d) There is nothing in the text about "the good old days." This is not the best answer.

Name _____

Use the strategies you learned to practice identifying what the writer believes about the subject and why he or she wrote the text. Use the clues in the “Think!” boxes to help you.

1. List some of the things the writer enjoys about receiving Christmas cards.

Think!

Read all of the text and underline any information about receiving cards before starting your list.

2. Which of these is **not** what the writer believes?

- (a) Christmas cards are worth the time and the money they cost.
- (b) Christmas cards are very attractive.
- (c) Christmas stamps cost too much.
- (d) Christmas cards from other countries are interesting.

Think!

There are keywords in each sentence that will help you to find the details you need in the text.

3. Explain how the writer thinks Christmas cards help people to keep in touch.

Think!

Read paragraph 5 carefully.

4. Explain your own point of view about Christmas cards.

Think!

How do you agree and disagree with the writer?

Name _____

Use the strategies you have been practicing to help you identify the writer's point of view.

1. What does the writer think people should do to make sure their cards arrive on time?

- (a) start earlier
(b) buy, not make all their cards
(c) not send so many cards
(d) send emails instead

2. Which sentence would the writer most likely disagree with?

- (a) Christmas is a time for friends and family.
(b) It's great to hear news about people who are important to us.
(c) The best thing about Christmas is the vacations.
(d) Christmas is a happy time.

3. (a) Think of four words you could use to describe the writer.

(b) Explain why you think this (your point of view).

4. The writer described emails as "dull and boring."

(a) Do you agree? Yes No

(b) Explain your point of view.

5. The writer's purpose in writing the text was to persuade people to keep sending cards. How well do you think he or she achieved this purpose?

- (a) very well
(b) somewhat well
(c) not well
(d) not at all

Name _____

Activity: Read the poem below and complete page 140.

1. Fridays—
They should be
Our allowance days.
2. Payment
For working
From Monday to Sunday.
3. My sis
Gets paid always.
She buys things—she saves!
4. But for me
There's another story.
I'm the poorest of all!
5. If I don't
Hang my clothes up,
My money is less.
6. If I'm late
Home for dinner,
It goes down—how did you guess?
7. If my manners
Are not perfect,
Or I'm not acting fair,
8. My money
Goes down 'til
My pockets are bare!
9. Daily I wish—
And some days I pray—
That one Friday will be
My allowance day!

Allowance Day



Name _____

Use the strategies you learned and practiced in *Christmas Cards* to help you identify the writer’s point of view and purpose.

Remember:

- Writers don’t always just tell you what they think or believe or why they have written the text. Sometimes you have to try to think like they do and form a conclusion based on what you’ve read.
- In the text, there are details and information related to the question for you to find and use in making your choices. (These could be underlined.)
- Always consider all possible answers before making a decision.

1. What does the writer most likely think about his sister?
 - (a) She doesn’t deserve to get allowance.
 - (b) She doesn’t have to do jobs.
 - (c) She gets allowance, and he doesn’t.
 - (d) She should work harder.

2. What would be the best reason the writer wrote this poem?
 - (a) He wanted to make people laugh.
 - (b) He wants people to sympathize with him.
 - (c) He is happy.
 - (d) He wants people to dislike his sister.

3. What would the writer have to do to get allowance on Fridays?
 - (a) Be more organized and polite.
 - (b) Help his sister.
 - (c) Think of more jobs he could do.
 - (d) Be happy.

4. Explain why the writer’s parents don’t give him allowance.

Think!

Read the part about his sister, then think carefully about each answer.

5. Explain your point of view about kids getting allowance.

Name _____

Activity: Read the letter below, and use pages 142–144 to show how well you can identify cause and effect, fact or opinion, and point of view and purpose.

LETTER FROM SHANE

Dear Mom and Dad,

1. This school camp I've been looking forward to for months is a disaster.
2. I am cold, wet, hungry, and miserable; you have to come down and get me right away. If you don't, it will be too late. By the time camp ends next Friday, I will probably have caught the flu and be dead or at least be really sick and stuck in the local hospital. So please come and rescue me now.
3. This place is such a long way from home, and we seemed to have traveled all day to get here. The bus trip started okay, but we weren't allowed to have food on the bus. By the time we finally stopped for lunch, we were weak with hunger. Mr. Jeans had organized sandwiches, fruit, and bottled water. Miss Weston found the potato chips and chocolate bars we'd hidden in our pockets and took them away. Was that really necessary?
4. When we arrived at camp, they said we had to put up our tents before lunch. Taj, Simon, and I wandered off and found some big rocks and threw them into the lake. They said lunch was ready. We were starving, but they wouldn't let us eat because our tent wasn't up yet. We were really mad, so we decided to go and look around the lake. There are some flat rocks near the edge, and we ran and jumped on them. They were slippery, and we ended up in the water. Boy, was it cold!
5. On the way back it started to rain. All our gear was wet. They hadn't even put it away in their tents for us. Then, Mr. Jeans made us put up our tent by ourselves out in the rain. The tent was all wet and hard to handle. How mean was that? Everyone stayed in the dry, warm, comfortable hall playing fun games while we were outside, dripping wet, trying to sort out the tent. How unfair was that?
6. When we had finished and put our soggy, muddy gear away inside our tent, Mr. Jeans said we could take a shower. Just because we left the showers running and flooded the place while we took turns to skate across the slippery floor, he said we had to stay in our tent until morning. Then, he said that if we were very good, he might remember to bring us something to eat later. I think this is called torture; it's against the law, isn't it?
7. So, Mom and Dad, I'm sitting in this cold, wet tent feeling hungry and miserable, writing in the dark with only a small flashlight. It is all so unfair. I can't understand why they keep picking on me. Please, please come and rescue me before these unfair people treat me worse.



Love,
Shane

Name _____

Remember:

- A cause leads to an effect, and they are connected.
- You will be told one, and you will need to identify the other.
- Look for keywords in the question and underline them.
- Find words in the text that are connected to the keywords in the question.
- Check all possible answers before making a decision.

1. What does Shane think will happen if his parents don't come and get him?
(a) He will be happy. (b) He will be very sick or even dead.
(c) His teachers will be angry with him. (d) His friends will all hate him.
2. Why did Shane and his friends fall into the lake?
(a) They didn't look where they were going. (b) They wanted to have a swim.
(c) They got pushed in. (d) They slipped on slippery rocks.
3. Explain why the three boys had difficulty putting up their tent.

4. List some of the effects caused by the boys not putting up their tent when they first arrived.

5. What caused Shane's teachers to punish him?
(a) They didn't like him. (b) He didn't do as he was told.
(c) He wanted to go home. (d) He was a bully.

6. What caused Miss Weston to take the potato chips and chocolate bars?

Name _____

Remember:

- A fact can be checked and proven to be correct.
- An opinion is what someone *believes* to be true, but it can't be proven.
- Always check all possible answers before making a decision.

1. Which sentence states an opinion?

- (a) It started to rain.
- (b) Mr. Jeans was mean to us.
- (c) There are some flat rocks near the edge of the lake.
- (d) We put our gear in the tent.

2. Which sentence is a fact?

- (a) They threw rocks into the lake.
- (b) This place is a long way from home.
- (c) The tent was hard to handle.
- (d) The camp is a disaster.

3. Which sentence is **not** an opinion?

- (a) If you don't come, it will be too late.
- (b) The bus trip started okay.
- (c) It is all so unfair.
- (d) Mr. Jeans said we could take a shower.

4. (a) Is this sentence from the text a fact or an opinion?

We ended up in the water.

(b) Explain why you think this.

5. Write one fact and one opinion from this sentence from the text.

By the time we finally stopped for lunch, we were weak with hunger.

Fact:

Opinion:

Name _____

Remember:

- Writers don't always tell you what they believe. You may have to form a conclusion based on what you've read.
- There are details and information you can find, underline, and use to help you choose the correct answer.
- Always consider all possible answers before making a decision.

1. What is the main reason why Shane wrote this letter?

- (a) He was unhappy. (b) He didn't want to stay at camp.
(c) He wanted his parents to come get him. (d) He thought everyone was picking on him.

2. Which sentence would Shane most likely disagree with?

- (a) Teachers are mean. (b) Camping is no fun.
(c) School camps should be banned. (d) It is important to be responsible and to look after your own things.

3. Shane's teachers probably think that he:

- (a) is a responsible student. (b) needs to be more responsible.
(c) is a bad person. (d) should go home.

4. (a) Think of four words to describe Shane.

- _____ • _____
• _____ • _____

(b) Explain why you think this (your point of view).

5. (a) Do you think Shane believes other people should look after him?

- Yes No

(b) Explain why you think this.

