

Table of Contents

Introduction	3
About This Program	4
How This Program Meets Today's Needs	5
How to Use the Cards and Resource Book	7
<i>About the Resource Book—Introducing the Reading Cards—Introducing the Answer Cards—Using the Reading Cards—Determining Student Placement—Monitoring and Recording Progress—Lexile and Guided Reading Levels Chart—About the Reading Card Questions—Using Comprehension Strategies With the Cards (Scope and Sequence Chart)—Student Response Sheet—Student Tracking Chart—Teacher Tracking Chart—Genre Definitions—Comprehension Strategies (Summary and Suggestions)</i>	
Reading Cards Answer Key	31
Comprehension Strategies Lessons	35
Table of Contents	36
Introduction	37
About the Units and Lessons	38
Unit 1 Notes and Lessons	41
Unit 2 Notes and Lessons	67
Unit 3 Notes and Lessons	93
Unit 4 Notes and Lessons	119

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 5, 6, 7, and 8. 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
Lilac – 1	Poetry	Who Took It?	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Lilac – 2	Fairy tale	The Singing, Ringing Tree	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Lilac – 3	Poetry	Grandma's Socks	✓	✓		✓	✓				✓	✓			✓
Lilac – 4	Science fiction	Not the Usual Bus	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓		✓	✓			✓
Lilac – 5	Legend	The Rock In the Road	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓			✓					✓
Lilac – 6	Myth	How Water Came to the Plains	✓	✓	✓	✓			✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Lilac – 7	Explanation	No Sweat?	✓	✓	✓		✓			✓	✓	✓	✓		✓
Lilac – 8	Explanation	Time Travel	✓	✓	✓				✓		✓	✓		✓	✓
Lilac – 9	Science fiction	The Picture in the Hallway	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓		✓	✓	✓
Lilac – 10	Fairy tale	Twiguntus, Cowbelliantus, and Perchnosius	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓			✓	✓	✓	✓		

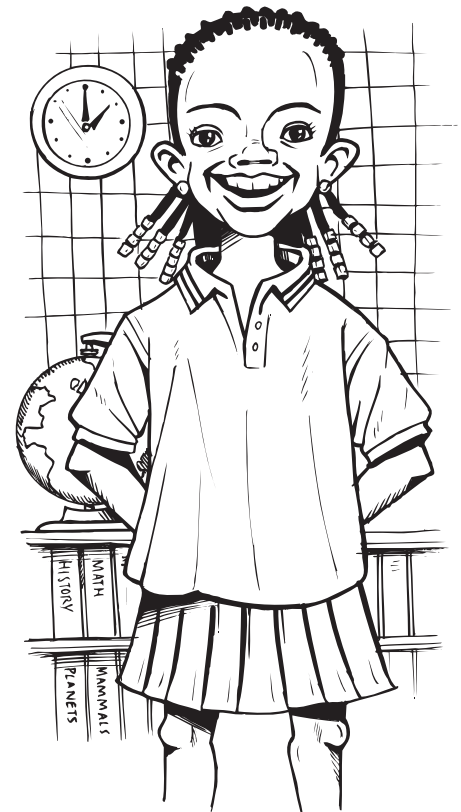
Name _____

Summarizing is giving the main ideas or facts without using many words. We need to link the important ideas and decide which are the main points.

Activity: Read the story below and complete pages 104–106.

Speech Exams

- Each year, everyone in my speech and drama class has to do a speech exam. We have to read aloud from a book, recite a poem from memory, deliver a speech, and also talk to the examiner about our selections. Some people really dislike doing speech exams and think they are a waste of time, but I think they are great and very important.
- First of all, speech exams help you to develop your confidence in speaking to a group. The exam is done in front of the whole class—which makes quite a large audience! You are expected to use effective eye contact to communicate with the whole group. The first exam you do may be quite nerve-wracking, but the more you do them, the better you get at controlling your nerves. You can also learn a lot about public speaking by watching other students—thinking about what their strong points are and what they did or didn't do to make their presentation entertaining.
- Speech exams also provide an opportunity for you to get feedback from an experienced person—other than your teacher, of course! The examiners are usually actors or professional public speakers, so they know what they are looking for. About a week after the exam, each student gets a report with a grade and comments on each section. I have always found the comments very useful, and I try to learn from them.
- I also think that speech exams will be helpful in my future. Mom and Dad say that excellent spoken communication is essential in job interviews, and what better way to show that you can speak well than by showing a potential employer your speech reports?
- Preparing for speech exams, while challenging, is also lots of fun! You are allowed to choose your own topics and texts, which means that you can choose things you feel strongly about or really enjoy. When the day comes for the exam, although I feel nervous, I feel very proud of all the work I have put in and like the fact that I can share that with an audience. When everything goes well, there is nothing like the exciting feeling of performing—it is such a buzz! If you are well-prepared, it also shows in your report. I feel that I have always passed my exams because I have been so well-prepared and tried hard.
- I think everyone should try to do at least one speech exam while they are at school—I promise that you won't regret it. Even though it requires a lot of hard work, holding that report with "Pass" written on it is a great feeling and makes it all worth it!



Name _____

Follow the steps below to learn how to identify the main points and summarize text.

- Make sure you understand the question and underline the keywords.
- Look for information in the text, and decide what is important and how it is connected.
- Omit any unnecessary or unconnected information.
- Always check all the possible answers before making a decision.

1. Which sentence best summarizes how speech exams can help to develop someone's confidence?
 - (a) They allow you to get feedback from an examiner.
 - (b) You have to recite a poem from memory.
 - (c) They are easy to prepare for.
 - (d) You have to control your nerves to be able to speak in front of a large audience.
2. Choose the best answer. Think about each choice carefully.
 - (a) Receiving feedback from an examiner would not necessarily help you to develop confidence, especially if the feedback was negative. This is not a good answer.
 - (b) The writer states that you do have to recite a poem from memory, but does not say that this helps you to develop confidence. This is not the best answer.
 - (c) The writer says that preparing for speech exams is challenging, so this cannot be the correct answer.
 - (d) In the second paragraph, the writer gives reasons why speech exams can help you to develop confidence and discusses how you need to control your nerves to speak in front of a large audience. This is the best answer.

1. Which sentence would you leave out of a summary of reasons why the writer likes to do speech exams?
 - (a) She enjoys the buzz of performing.
 - (b) She feels proud of all the work she has put in.
 - (c) She enjoys meeting the examiners.
 - (d) She enjoys receiving her reports.
2. Choose the best answer. Think about each choice carefully.
 - (a) The writer says that she likes the buzz of performing, so this would need to be included in the summary.
 - (b) The writer says that she feels very proud of her hard work on the day of the exam, so this would also need to be included in the summary.
 - (c) The writer doesn't say anything about enjoying meeting the examiners. She only says that they are professionals and that their comments are useful. This is probably the best answer.
 - (d) The writer says at the end of the text that holding the speech report is a great feeling, so this should also be included in the summary.

Name _____

Use the strategies you learned to practice summarizing. Use the clues in the “Think!” boxes to help you.

1. Which description best summarizes the sort of people who could be speech examiners?
 - (a) people who have done speech exams before
 - (b) people who have acted or spoken professionally in front of an audience
 - (c) professional actors
 - (d) professional public speakers

Think!

Look in paragraph 3 to find the description of speech examiners, and consider how all the possibilities are best summarized.

2. Write a sentence that summarizes the writer’s reasons for why doing speech exams might be useful for the future.

Think!

You will find the main points for this summary in paragraph 4.

3. Which group of words best summarizes how the writer feels on the day of a speech exam?
 - (a) scared, nervous, unprepared
 - (b) proud, unwell, shy
 - (c) excited, happy, energetic
 - (d) nervous, proud, excited

Think!

Read paragraph 5 carefully to help you decide which group of words covers all the feelings of the writer on the day of an exam.

4. How could the writer’s overall attitude to speech exams be summarized?

Think!

The overall tone of the text should tell you the writer’s attitude, but also look carefully at paragraphs 1 and 6 for clues.

5. Write a sentence to summarize your opinion about doing speech exams.

Name _____

Use the strategies you have been practicing to help you summarize text.

1. Which phrase best summarizes what a speech examiner does?
 - (a) conducts speech exams
 - (b) writes speech reports
 - (c) conducts speech exams and writes a report for each student
 - (d) decides if students pass or fail their speech exams

2. Which sentence would you leave out of a summary of reasons why speech exams might be nerve-wracking?
 - (a) You have to decide on what topics and texts you will perform.
 - (b) You have to recite a poem from memory.
 - (c) You have to speak in front of an audience.
 - (d) You have to speak in front of a speech examiner.

3. Summarize what a student is expected to do on the day of his/her speech exam.

4. Write a summary of the main reasons why the writer thinks speech exams are worthwhile.

Name _____

Activity: Read the passage below and complete page 108.

Clowning Around

1. Clowns have been around since ancient times and have appeared in different forms in most cultures. One type of early clown was known as a “jester.” There are records of jesters performing in the courts of ancient Egypt and China, as well as in European courts in the Middle Ages. Jesters had a special privilege—they were the only people who had the freedom to make jokes about politics or other sensitive topics. Jesters in the Middle Ages wore bright costumes and could dance, juggle, and perform acrobatics.
2. The first circus clown appeared in the late 1700s in England. His name was Philip Astley, and he was also the creator of what is considered to be the first circus. Astley’s clown character was called Billy Buttons. The act involved Billy trying to ride a horse. The Billy Buttons routine soon caught on and became a familiar act in other circuses. But it was British pantomime actor Joseph Grimaldi who really made clowns popular. Often called the father of modern clowning, Grimaldi used colorful makeup over a white painted face. Interestingly, Grimaldi never appeared in a circus—he was strictly a theatrical performer.
3. Today, there are three major types of clowns in a circus. These are “auguste,” “whiteface,” and “tramp” or “hobo” clowns. Auguste is a German word meaning “fool.” Auguste clowns wear baggy costumes and bright makeup. They do not usually have a white makeup base—their skin is bare and only their eyes and mouth are highlighted. The character of an auguste clown is usually that of a clumsy joker or troublemaker. He or she is often given instructions by a whiteface clown but pretends to have trouble following them.
4. Whiteface clowns traditionally use white makeup to cover their faces and necks, and then paint red or black features over the top. Their costumes are colorful, and they often wear a ruffled collar and pointed hat. Their character is often bossy and confident, and sometimes has an elegant manner.
5. The tramp and hobo clowns were developed in North America. Tramp clowns are generally sad characters, whereas hobo clowns are happy. Both characters are “down on their luck” and are supposed to be traveling around looking for work. They wear tattered and torn clothing and have makeup similar to that of the auguste clown.
6. Whichever type of clown a performer chooses to portray, he or she is expected to uphold a range of customs and traditions. For example, every clown’s makeup should be unique, and he/she must not copy that of another clown. Also, many superstitions are associated with clowning, including avoiding the use of blue face paint because it means bad luck.



Name _____

Use the strategies you learned and practiced in *Speech Exams* to help you summarize information.

Remember:

- Make sure you understand the question and underline the keywords.
- Look for information in the text, decide what is important and how it is connected.
- Omit any unnecessary or unconnected information.
- Always check all possible answers before making a decision.

1. Which sentence best summarizes how Philip Astley contributed to the development of circus clowns?

- (a) His clown character, Billy Buttons, tried to ride a horse.
- (b) He created the first circus and his character Billy Buttons was the first circus clown act.
- (c) He made clowns popular in other circuses.
- (d) He created the first circus in the 1700s.

Think!

Read about Astley, and decide how his contributions could best be summarized.

2. Based on the passage, which sentence would best be left out of a summary of what jesters did?

- (a) They juggled.
- (b) They danced and performed acrobatics.
- (c) They told jokes.
- (d) They played tricks.

3. Write a summary of the differences between auguste and whiteface clowns.

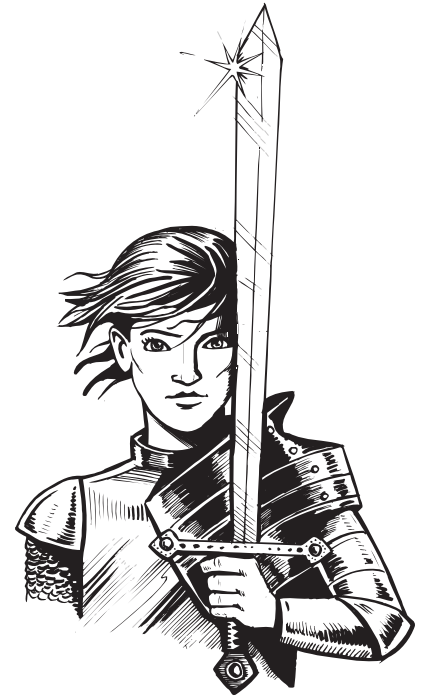
4. Summarize all the traditions that a tramp clown would be expected to follow.

Name _____

Activity: Read the passage below, and use pages 116–118 to show how well you can draw conclusions, summarize, and make inferences.

Joan of Arc

1. In 1412, a peasant girl named Jeanne ("Joan" in English) was born to Catholic parents in a small village in France. At the time of Joan's birth, a war was taking place between two factions of the French royal family—the Armagnacs and the Burgundians. In 1415, this unrest allowed the English, who had long been at war with France, to invade. With the help of the Burgundians, they defeated the Armagnacs, and by 1429, they occupied Paris and much of northern France. The King of England even began to claim that he should be the ruler of France.
2. As a child, Joan was deeply religious. Around the age of 12, she told people that she could hear the voices of saints giving her messages from God. The saints told her that she had been chosen to free her country from the English and help Charles VII, the son of the French king, to be crowned as the ruler of France in the city of Reims. This had not been able to take place because Reims was located in the English-occupied part of France.
3. At the age of 16, Joan traveled to the town of Valcoeurs to ask the captain of the French army to allow her to speak to Charles VII. At first, the captain laughed and refused, but eventually he allowed her to go, dressed as a man. Joan spoke to Charles and convinced him that she should lead an army against the English, as she believed he was the rightful king of France. At first, the male soldiers were reluctant to take orders from her, but soon they agreed. In fact, many men actually volunteered to join the army and fight for her.
4. Joan's first task was to ride with the army to the town of Orleans to fight the English. Legend has it that she was unarmed and carried only a banner. The French, led by Joan, won the battle and continued fighting the English in other parts of northern France. The battles left thousands of English casualties but only a few losses for the French. In 1429, the triumphant French army reached Reims, and Charles was crowned king with Joan by his side.
5. Joan continued to fight, but in 1430, she was captured by the Burgundians, who sold her to the English. She was imprisoned then tried and found guilty of witchcraft and heresy (having beliefs that were in conflict with the Catholic faith). In 1431, she was burned at the stake in the town of Rouen, although some legends claim that another person died in her place. In 1455, Joan's family requested a new trial, and this time, Joan was found to be innocent.
6. The war between France and England raged on until 1453, when England was eventually driven out of France. In 1920, Joan was declared to be a saint by the Catholic church.



Name _____

Remember:

- Make sure you understand what it is you are drawing conclusions about.
- Look in the text to find the facts and details and underline them.
- Make decisions about what they mean.
- Always check all possible answers before making a decision.

1. Charles needed to be crowned in the city of Reims. What can you conclude from this?

- (a) Reims was located in the English-occupied area of France.
- (b) French queens and kings were usually crowned in Reims.
- (c) He liked Reims.
- (d) Joan thought this is where he should be crowned.

2. Why can you conclude that Joan's family members were concerned for her reputation?

3. You can conclude that Joan's first trial was not run properly because:

- (a) the trial was over quickly.
- (b) she was imprisoned.
- (c) her family didn't believe she was guilty.
- (d) she was found innocent at a second trial after her death.

4. What sort of person do you think Joan of Arc was? Explain how you reached this conclusion.

Name _____

Remember:

- Make sure you understand the question and underline the keywords.
- Look for information in the text, decide what is important and how it is connected.
- Omit any unnecessary or unconnected information.
- Always check all the possible answers before making a decision.

1. Which sentence best summarizes the events that happened after Joan's death?
 - (a) Her family requested a new trial for her.
 - (b) People felt sorry for her.
 - (c) She was found innocent in a new trial and was declared a saint by the Catholic church.
 - (d) The war between England and France began.

2. Write a summary of reasons why Joan of Arc wanted Charles VII crowned as the king of France.

3. Write a brief summary of Joan of Arc's life from the age of 16 until her death.

4. Which sentence best summarizes Joan's childhood?
 - (a) She was a peasant child who was deeply religious.
 - (b) She liked going to church.
 - (c) She was born to Catholic parents.
 - (d) She lived in a French village.

Name _____

Remember:

- The answers are usually not in the text, but there is information to give you clues to think about. (This could be underlined.)
- Find the answer that makes the most sense and is supported by text details.
- Always consider all possible answers before making a decision.

1. What would be the best reason for why Joan of Arc was put on trial the first time?
 - (a) She was a girl.
 - (b) The king requested it.
 - (c) She had told stories about receiving messages from God.
 - (d) The English wanted to punish her for leading an army against them.
2. Most likely, why might the men have volunteered to join Joan of Arc's army?
 - (a) They loved France.
 - (b) She was a convincing speaker and a strong personality.
 - (c) They were impressed that a teenage girl was leading an army.
 - (d) They wanted to travel.
3. The King of England began to claim he should be the ruler of France around 1429. Why do you think he claimed this?

4. What is the best reason why the captain of the French army made Joan dress as a man before she was allowed to speak to Charles VII?

5. Circle the year that would have been the most peaceful to live in France.

1453
1415
1429

Why do you think this?
