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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 6, 7, 8, and 9. 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
Aquamarine – 1	Supernatural	The Tennis Ball	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓			✓
Aquamarine – 2	Procedure	Slipping, Sliding, and Spinning	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Aquamarine – 3	Diary	January 5, 2072	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
Aquamarine – 4	Legend	The Mermaid of Zennor	✓		✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓
Aquamarine – 5	Supernatural	Why Rory was Late	✓	✓	✓			✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	
Aquamarine – 6	Legend	Legend of a Bear Lover	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Aquamarine – 7	Myth	Sedna and the Birdman	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Aquamarine – 8	Supernatural	My Extraordinary Best Friend	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓			
Aquamarine – 9	Description	The Ugly House	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Aquamarine – 10	Narrative	Messages	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

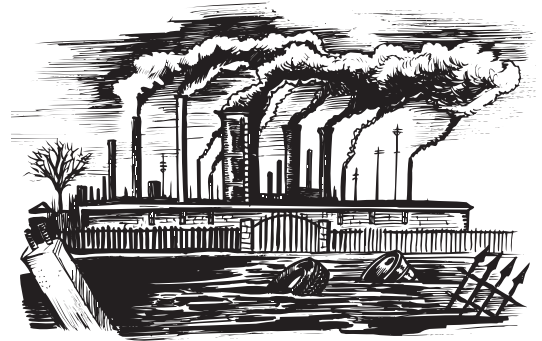
Name _____

Cause and effect is a phrase we use when one thing (a cause) makes something else happen (an effect). If you want to understand what you read, you must be able to determine the cause(s) and the effect(s) that happen in the text.

Activity: Read the passage below and complete pages 124–126.

Global Warming

1. Global warming is a serious issue that affects every single person on the planet. It may not sound like much, but Earth's surface temperature has increased by an average of 1.5°F over the past century. Scientists debate the exact cause of global warming—some suggest it is because of human activity, and others say it is a natural occurrence.
2. Earth is surrounded by atmosphere. This atmosphere is made up of different layers and helps to keep Earth at the right temperature by letting in heat from the sun and allowing excess heat to escape. One of the layers, called the ozone layer, is made up of greenhouse gases and is like a blanket for Earth, keeping the atmosphere at a comfortable 60°F. However, when humans make extra greenhouse gases by burning fossil fuels (coal and gas), cutting down forests and rainforests, and increasing the amount of methane produced, the "blanket" becomes too thick and keeps too much of the heat in Earth's atmosphere. The job of the ozone layer is to protect Earth from harmful UVB (middle wave ultraviolet light) rays from the sun. Once damaged, this layer can no longer do its job, and the harmful rays also contribute to the heating up of Earth.
3. It has been estimated that by the year 2100, the surface temperature of Earth could be around 2°F to 11°F warmer than it is today. This warming could in fact be responsible for an increase in sea levels as the water becomes warmer and expands and glaciers and sea ice melt. This would mean that coastal cities would more than likely find themselves in deep water! Some animals and plants could become extinct due to warmer temperatures, loss of habitat, and scarce availability of food. Cooler environments could become warmer and deserts even warmer. Lakes and rivers would dry up due to the higher temperatures and rates of evaporation. There may be less rainfall, causing more droughts, making crops difficult to grow, and leading to a shortage of food. Less rainfall also means less water for drinking and bathing. It is also predicted that severe storms could become more frequent as temperatures rise.
4. The United Nations (UN) is a worldwide association of governments working together to make sure everyone in the world is kept safe and treated with respect. Part of keeping everyone safe is also making sure global warming doesn't get out of hand. In 1997, the UN met in Kyoto, Japan, to talk about global warming. The Kyoto Agreement was devised to try to ensure the amount of gases produced by industry is reduced. The agreement came into force in February 2005. It is believed that we can reduce the amount of greenhouse gases by changing the way we produce power.
5. Scientists are looking into "greenpower" energy sources. Such sources would reduce the amount of greenhouse gases being pumped out into the atmosphere. Greenpower alternatives include wave power—but scientists worry this could cause too much noise in the environment and harm the animals and wind power—but some people complain the large wind turbines are an eyesore. Other alternatives include water and solar power as well as using the gas produced from rotting trash.
6. We can help with simple measures incorporated into our everyday living. We can recycle and reuse, use vegetable scraps in a compost heap, use less water, reduce electricity use, carpool or ride a bike, and buy products that have minimal packaging. Every little bit that we can do adds up and helps our environment.
7. By finding a solution to global warming, we can make Earth a wonderful place for many generations to come!



Name _____

Follow the steps below to learn how you can identify cause and effect.

- 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.
- Always check all possible answers before making a decision.

1. What causes lakes and rivers to dry up? (paragraph 3)
 - (a) too much snow and rainfall
 - (b) too many animals drinking the water
 - (c) severe storms suck up all the water
 - (d) higher temperatures and evaporation rates

2. Choose the best answer. Think about each choice carefully.
 - (a) Snow and rainfall would actually help to fill the lakes and rivers, so this would not be the right answer.
 - (b) Could you imagine how many animals would have to drink from a lake or river to cause it to become empty? Way too many, so this would not be a good answer.
 - (c) Yes, the text said there would be severe storms, but these would more than likely cause water to be added to lakes and rivers. This is not the best answer.
 - (d) The text talks about higher temperatures and rates of evaporation working to dry up rivers and lakes. This would be the best answer.

1. What is the effect of damaging the ozone layer?
 - (a) Our blankets make us too hot at night.
 - (b) UVB rays contribute to the heating of Earth.
 - (c) Greenhouse gases increase.
 - (d) Fossil fuels would cause more damage.

2. Choose the best answer. Think about each choice carefully.
 - (a) The blankets on our beds would have no effect on the environment, so this would not be the right answer.
 - (b) The text says if the ozone layer is damaged, the effect is that it cannot protect Earth from UVB rays, which contribute to its heating. This is a good answer, but be sure to check all answers.
 - (c) The increase in greenhouse gases causes the problem with the ozone layer, not the other way around. This is not the right answer.
 - (d) Burning fossil fuels causes greenhouse gases to increase. This doesn't explain the effect of damaging the ozone layer. This is not the right answer.

Name _____

Use the strategies you learned to practice identifying cause and effect. Use the clues in the “Think!” boxes to help you.

1. What is a possible effect of using wave power?
 - (a) Surfers wouldn't be able to surf the waves because of the generators.
 - (b) People think it would be too much of an eyesore.
 - (c) The animals would no longer be able to swim in the sea.
 - (d) Scientists worry it would generate too much noise and harm the animals.

Think!
Some answers are downright silly. Read paragraph 5 and look for the keywords **wave power**.

2. If you walk or ride a bike to school rather than getting someone to drive you, how are you helping the environment?
 - (a) I would be getting regular exercise.
 - (b) I would be helping to reduce fossil fuels being burned and reducing the amount of greenhouse gases.
 - (c) I would be able to help save money on gas.
 - (d) I would get a chance to spend time in the fresh air.

Think!
All the answers are true, but the question relates specifically to the environment.

3. If countries follow the Kyoto Agreement, what will be the possible outcome?

Think!
What is the **Kyoto Agreement** all about? Read paragraph 4.

4. What do scientists debate is the exact cause of global warming?

Think!
Look for the keywords **debate**, **exact cause**, and **global warming** in paragraph 1. Then read on to find the answer.

5. What does the writer think the effect of finding a solution to global warming will be?

Think!
Find keywords in paragraph 7.

Name _____

Use the strategies you have been practicing to help you identify cause and effect.

1. What would cause coastal cities to flood?
 - (a) too much rainfall
 - (b) people leaving their faucets running
 - (c) all the extra storms that would be happening because of global warming
 - (d) higher temperatures causing the water to expand and sea ice to melt

2. What would be the effects of more droughts for farmers?
 - (a) There would be less water to bathe in and drink.
 - (b) Crops would be difficult to grow, causing a food shortage.
 - (c) We would have water restrictions and wouldn't be able to water our lawns.
 - (d) Cooler environments would become warmer.

3. Explain some possible effects of global warming.

4. Explain what would happen if more people tried to do their part for the environment.

5. What is the cause of some people complaining about wind power?

- (a) They think it costs too much money.
- (b) They think the wind turbines are too tall.
- (c) They think the wind turbines spoil the scenery.
- (d) They think the wind turbines make it windier.

Name _____

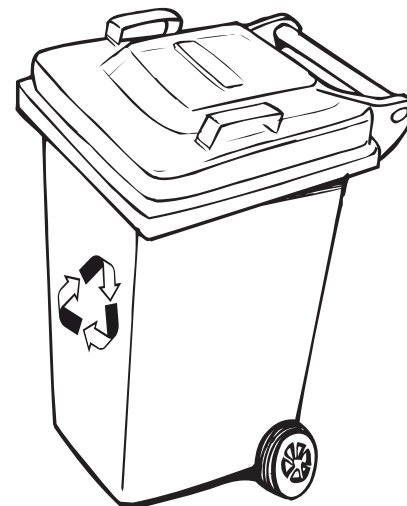
Activity: Read the letter below and complete page 128.

Letter to the Principal

October 24

Dear Principal Wood,

The student council would like to put forward a proposal to make our school “environmentally aware.” We believe this would benefit all students in our school as well as the local environment. We have calculated that our school produces about 30 tons of trash each year—that’s a lot! We think the school should work together in the following ways:



1. Recycling

By supplying each classroom with two different-colored bins, students can easily sort recyclable trash. This would reduce the amount of trash the city would need to collect.

General school trash can be recycled by labeling our wheeled bins as *glass*, *plastic*, *aluminium*, and *paper* and moving them into a central area.

Some paper could be made into new paper by the third-grade and fifth-grade students as a joint project. The newly made paper could be used by art students to make holiday or birthday cards to sell as a fundraiser for the school.

2. Worm farm

We can set up a school worm farm between buildings. The fifth-grade and the sixth-grade students could work together to maintain it. We could use some of the food scraps, cardboard, paper, and bark to further reduce our waste. The castings from the worm farm could be used by the school gardener to improve the soil.

3. Compost

We could have a special bin for food scraps, which can be made into compost. By placing the bin near the lunch area during recess and lunch, students can empty their food scraps into it. Any clippings from the garden could also be added to make the compost, which can then be used to improve the soil and make the plants healthier.

4. The no-packaging lunch box

We also think it would be a good idea to encourage students to reduce the amount of packaging they bring to school in their lunch boxes. We could have a class competition to calculate which class had the least amount of packaging in their lunch boxes, and they could win a class prize.

5. Waste officers

To make things run smoothly, we think it would be a good idea to have a “waste officer” in each class. It would be that person’s job to make sure electricity isn’t wasted and recycling is happening in his or her class. This could reduce the electricity costs for our school.

We hope you take the time to think about our ideas. It would mean spending some money on new resources to begin with, but it would be money well spent, and our environment would certainly benefit.

Kind regards,

The Student Council

Name _____

Use the strategies you learned and practiced in *Global Warming* to help you identify cause and effect.

Remember:

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

1. What would be the effect of the no-packaging lunch box idea?
 - (a) Children would eat healthier foods.
 - (b) Classes would win a special award.
 - (c) There would be a reduction in the amount of trash brought to school.
 - (d) There would be more trash to recycle.

Think!
Think about how it would help the environment.

2. What would cause the school garden soil to improve?
 - (a) watering the garden longer
 - (b) adding worm castings and compost to the garden
 - (c) adding clippings to the garden
 - (d) keeping the garden free of trash

3. Explain the possible effects of creating compost.

4. (a) What effect does the student council want to achieve by writing this letter?

(b) Do you agree with the student council? Yes No

(c) Describe the effect this letter had on you.

Name _____

Activity: Read the passage 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.

Tropical Rainforests

1. Tropical rainforests are found in warm climates with heavy rainfall, sometimes as much as 2.5 cm each day. They are found in Australia, Asia, Central and South America, and Africa, in the belt that lies between the Tropic of Capricorn and the Tropic of Cancer. Tropical rainforests would have to be the most beautiful biome on the planet.
2. Tropical rainforests are home to more than half of the world’s plant and animal species, including many endangered species. They are the most biologically diverse biomes on the planet. The stunning plants and remarkable animals that live in the rainforest have evolved over millions of years and have developed ways of working together to benefit and help each other. This is known as a *symbiotic relationship*.
3. Many different species of animals call the tropical rainforest, with its unique climate and habitat, home. The climate helps to provide plenty of food for the animals living there; the habitat is actually many different types of habitats within one. The canopy and the forest floor are very different and attract diverse types of animals, providing plenty of opportunity for various species to thrive.
4. The plants that have evolved and adapted to the rainforest environment are amazing—they are responsible for producing 40 percent of Earth’s oxygen and stabilizing the climate on the planet. The plants absorb carbon dioxide, and therefore help to reduce the amount of this gas in the atmosphere. Through transpiration, the rainforests also contribute to the balance of the water cycle. They are responsible for adding water to the atmosphere, which then falls back to Earth as rainfall—without this process, more drought would occur. One-quarter of all medicines that we use to save lives and improve our health come from rainforest plants. The contribution made by rainforest plants to food and medicine cannot be matched by the plants in any other biome on the planet.
5. Only a few thousand years ago, tropical rainforests covered about 12 percent of Earth’s land surface. Today, tropical rainforests cover only 2 percent of Earth’s land surface. Around 80,000 acres of rainforest disappear each day, while another 80,000 acres are degraded beyond use by land clearing. The extremely destructive practice of logging is clearing rainforests. Timber is a highly sought-after commodity used in the building of homes and furniture as well as for firewood. Farmers clear the land for agriculture to grow crops or raise cattle, while large areas of rainforests are also cleared to make way for roads and major highways to improve accessibility to remote areas.
6. The problem with all this rainforest destruction is that less rainforest areas means more problems for Earth. When the tropical rainforests are destroyed, fewer trees convert carbon dioxide into oxygen. That means there is a build-up of carbon dioxide in the atmosphere, which contributes to global warming. Fewer trees means less transpiration, which means less rainfall, which contributes to the serious issue of drought. This impacts the entire planet by altering climatic conditions around the world. Fewer trees also means fewer roots holding the soil together. As a result, erosion increases and makes the land useless. The soil sometimes ends up in the river system, altering water levels and impacting the habitat of water life. Fewer tropical rainforests often means the extinction of plants and animals. In many instances, animals need to find new homes and are unable to survive in their new surroundings when having to compete for food and a home with unfamiliar species.
7. It is imperative for the survival of our planet to find a way to stop the destruction of such large areas of our most beautiful and hard-working biome on the planet—the tropical rainforest.



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.
- Check all possible answers before making a decision.

1. What happens to the tropical rainforest when land is cleared for agriculture or to raise cattle?
- (a) The rainforest plants grow even bigger.
 - (b) The rainforest animals stay behind to live with the cattle.
 - (c) The rainforest is destroyed, which leads to problems for the planet.
 - (d) Erosion occurs, which helps the farmers when planting crops.

2. Without rainforest plants, we would have:
- (a) more oxygen in the atmosphere.
 - (b) to find alternative medicines to help us when we are sick.
 - (c) less drought and more rain.
 - (d) plenty of open spaces for rainforest animals to live.

3. What effect do rainforests have on the water cycle?

4. What is the cause of rainforests having diverse types of animals?

5. Large areas of rainforests are cleared to make way for roads and highways. What effect does this have on humans?

6. What is the cause of some animals being unable to survive in new surroundings when their rainforest home is destroyed?

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) Through transpiration, the rainforests also contribute to the balance of the water cycle.
- (b) This impacts the entire planet by altering climatic conditions around the world.
- (c) As a result, erosion increases and makes the land useless.
- (d) Tropical rainforests would have to be the most beautiful biome on the planet.

2. Which sentence is a fact?

- (a) Tropical rainforests would have to be the most beautiful biome on the planet.
- (b) It is the most biologically diverse biome on the planet.
- (c) The plants in the rainforest are stunning.
- (d) The animals in the rainforest are remarkable.

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

- (a) Tropical rainforests are beautiful.
- (b) Animals and plants in a tropical rainforest have a symbiotic relationship.
- (c) The plants in a tropical rainforest are stunning.
- (d) The rainforest biome is the most precious biome on the planet.

4. Read this sentence from the text.

The contribution made by rainforest plants to food and medicine cannot be matched by the plants in any other biome on the planet.

This sentence is . . . a fact. an opinion.

Explain why you think this.

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

The plants that have evolved and adapted to the rainforest environment are amazing—they are responsible for producing 40 percent of Earth's oxygen and stabilizing the climate on the planet.

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 to do this.
- Always consider all possible answers before making a decision.

1. Most likely, why did the author write this report?

- (a) The writer wants people to keep destroying tropical rainforests.
- (b) The writer is a farmer and wants to explain why it is important to clear the land.
- (c) The writer wants to inform people of the importance of tropical rainforests to our planet.
- (d) The writer wants people to visit a tropical rainforest.

2. Which sentence would the author probably disagree with?

- (a) Rainforests help to balance the climatic conditions on our planet.
- (b) It is important to reduce global warming.
- (c) It is important that industry keeps logging to make the economy strong.
- (d) Rainforest plants are important for our survival.

3. The author would probably like to see:

- (a) the animals in the rainforests moved to the zoo for protection.
- (b) the tropical rainforests be saved.
- (c) the tropical rainforest plants grown in nurseries and sold to the public.
- (d) global warming increase.

4. (a) Think of four words to describe a tropical rainforest.

I think a tropical rainforest is . . .

(b) Explain.

5. (a) Do you think the author has a great appreciation for tropical rainforests?

Yes No

(b) Explain why you think this.
