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About This Book

The primary goal of any reading task is comprehension. *Document-Based Questions for Reading Comprehension and Critical Thinking* uses high-interest grade-level nonfiction passages, related documents, and critical thinking assessment practice to help you develop confident readers who can demonstrate their skills on standardized tests. In addition, you will build the comprehension skills necessary for a lifetime of learning.

There are five topic areas with six or seven lessons in each. Each lesson consists of three pages: a passage, a related document, and an assessment practice page containing multiple choice, true/false—explain, and short-answer document-based questions. This gives your students practice in all of the question types used in standardized testing. The students respond to the document-based questions based on the information gleaned from the passage plus its related document. Such questions improve a student's ability to apply prior knowledge, integrate information, and transfer knowledge to a new situation.

Readability

These passages have a 4.0–4.9 reading level based on the Flesch-Kincaid Readability Formula. This formula, built into *Microsoft® Word™*, determines readability by calculating the number of words, syllables, and sentences. Average readability was determined for each of the five topic areas. The topics are presented in order of increasing difficulty.

The documents are not leveled. Many of them are historical pieces and therefore replicated with the exact wording. Some terminology may be challenging, but your students can handle difficult words within the context given.

Preparing Students to Read Nonfiction Text

One of the best ways to prepare students to read expository text is to read a short selection aloud to them daily. Reading expository text aloud is critical to developing your students' ability to read it themselves. Since making predictions is another way to make students tap into their prior knowledge, read the beginning of a passage, then stop, and ask them to predict what might occur next. Do this at several points throughout your reading of the text. By doing this, over time you will find that your students' ability to make accurate predictions increases.

Your questions will help students, especially struggling readers, focus on what's important in a text. Also, remember the significance of wait time. Research has shown that the amount of time an educator waits for a student to answer after posing a question has a critical effect on learning. So after you ask a student a question, silently count to five (ten if you have a student who really struggles to put his or her thoughts into words) before giving any additional prompts or redirecting the question to another student.

Talking about nonfiction concepts is also important. Remember, however, that discussion can never replace reading aloud because people rarely speak using the vocabulary and complex sentence structures of written language.

Around the World in 71 Days

On February 17, 2005, a British woman set a world record. She sailed around the globe in the fastest time ever. Ellen MacArthur went 27,000 miles in 71 days, 14 hours, 18 minutes, and 33 seconds. She beat the prior record by more than 32 hours.

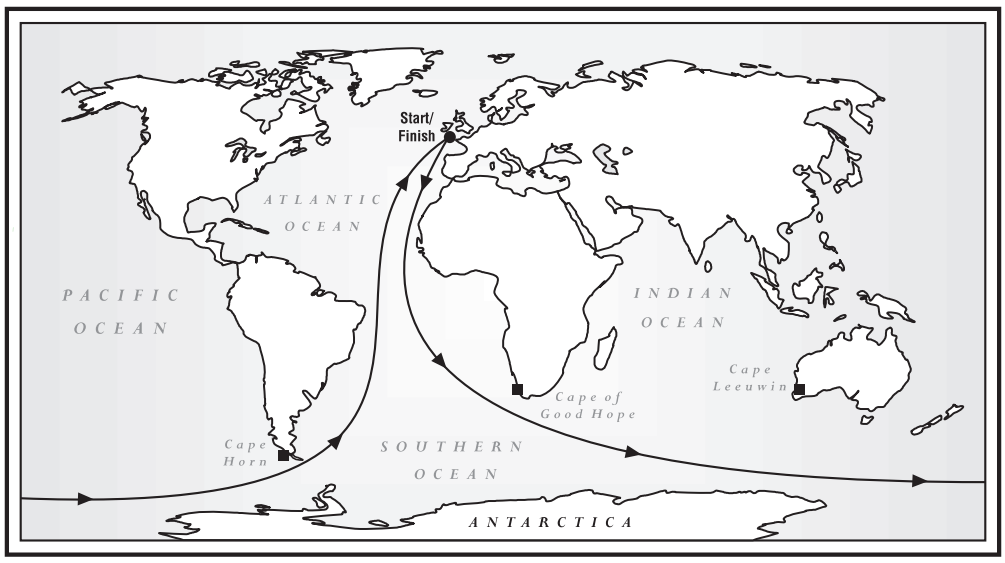
MacArthur was alone on her boat. Sailing solo took real skill. Based on changes in wind speed and direction, she had to steer the boat and trim the sails. A full crew usually does such tasks. She had to pay attention to navigational charts and weather conditions in order to use the weather to her advantage. And she had to be able to fix anything on board. To do all that, MacArthur had to stay awake. So each day she slept for just four hours in 30-minute naps. She had freeze-dried meals to which she was could add boiling water. But she only got water to boil twice on her single-burner stove. So she ate most of the meals dry. She drank desalinated seawater.

When MacArthur set sail on November 28, 2004, she knew that a dangerous journey lay ahead. She faced the swells of 30-foot-high waves. She had to dodge huge icebergs. And in the stormy Southern Ocean, gale force winds almost flipped her boat. Fortunately she had had her 70-foot-long vessel, the *B & Q*, designed with such challenges in mind.

She dealt with other problems, too. When the *B & Q* was close to the equator, it was hot and humid. At other points of the trip, MacArthur shivered from the cold. Sometimes strong winds made things fly around the cabin. Several times wild waves caused her to fall and hit her head.

The generator broke down. Fumes leaked into her cabin. While trying to fix it, she burnt her arm. Twice the mast was damaged. Both times she had to climb it to do repairs. Strong winds whipped her and the rigging around. She came down feeling beaten and badly bruised. Then, on her 63rd day, she nearly ran into a large whale.

The 28-year-old sailor crossed the finish line tired but happy. For her courage and skill, the queen gave her the female form of knighthood. Now she is Dame Ellen MacArthur.

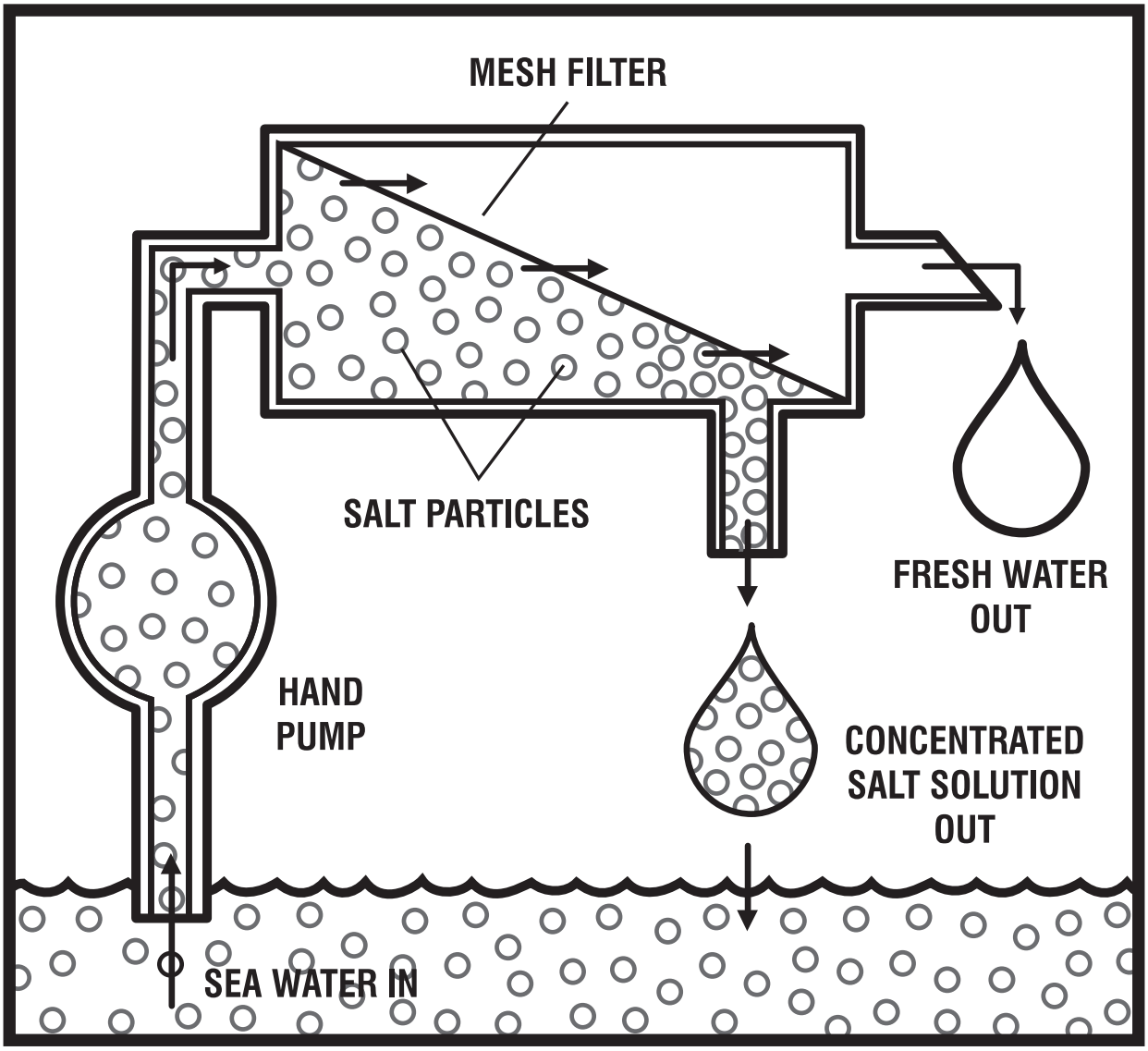


Around the World in 71 Days

You know that the ocean's water is salty. But did you know that drinking salt water can kill a person? The human body cannot stand too much salt. The body's cells give off water in an attempt to dilute the saltiness of the sea water. As the cells lose water, the body dehydrates (gets too dry).

But sea water can be made safe to drink. It can be changed into fresh water through a desalination pump. It takes 1,000 pumps by hand to get one cup of fresh water!

Desalination Pump



Around the World in 71 Days

1. While racing around the world, Ellen MacArthur slept every day for

a. 30 minutes.
b. 1 hour.
c. 4 hours.
d. 8 hours.

2. What happened on the *B & Q* twice during the race?

a. Its mast was damaged.
b. It nearly ran into a whale.
c. Its generator broke down.
d. MacArthur fell overboard and had to struggle to get back on board.

3. MacArthur beat the prior record for solo sailing around the world by

a. less than an hour.
b. less than a day.
c. more than a day.
d. almost a week.

4. Ellen MacArthur set out to go around the world in her sailboat in February 2005. True or False? Explain.

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5. Look at the diagram of the desalination pump. What part of it traps the salt particles?

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6. For safety's sake, should a desalination pump be required on every ocean-going ship and boat? Why or why not?

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