

## **SILENT READING COMPREHENSION STORIES**

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## Chapter 1

# Introduction

This document contains the stories used during Comprehension training. Each story is followed by a list of the questions that the students are to answer.

Depending on the choice that was made when the program was installed, the stories that the student reads use either United States or Canadian spelling. The first half of this document contains the stories that use United States spelling. The second half contains the stories that use Canadian spelling.

The program uses two types of story topics: Junior topics and Senior topics. When they are first registered for training, students up to Grade 8 are automatically assigned Junior topics; students from Grade 9 to Adult are assigned Senior topics.

If you think that stories from a different section would suit a student better, you can change the stories that are assigned. See 'Creating or modifying a student' in the Management System online help. Changes become effective when the student starts a new group of comprehension stories.

## Chapter 2

# Junior Comprehension Stories—Level 1

Stories in this chapter:

- Pigs
- Spiders
- Skunks
- Kittens
- Sounds
- South Pole
- Whistling
- Friends
- The Missing Pie

## *Pigs*

Pigs love mud. They like to roll and dig in the mud. This helps the pigs. It helps them keep cool on hot days. It also helps to keep bugs off them. The bugs cannot crawl through the mud and bite the pigs. Now you know why pigs look so happy in mud.

- 1 What do pigs love?
- 2 What do pigs like to do in the mud?
- 3 On hot days, why do pigs roll in the mud?
- 4 Why do pigs look so happy in the mud?
- 5 What kind of things “crawl” in this story?

## *Spiders*

Spiders aren't pretty but they're fun to watch. They have eight legs and eight eyes. They have six spinnerets that make silk. All these things help them to spin their webs. If you want to watch spiders, get up before the sun does. Bring a flashlight. Spiders are busiest then. It won't take long to find one. And it won't take long to watch. A spider can finish a web in less than an hour.

- 1 Which sentence best tells us what this story is about?
- 2 A spider has six \_\_\_\_\_.
- 3 Which words in the story mean the same as "build their webs"?
- 4 Why should you bring a flashlight to watch spiders spin webs?
- 5 A spider can finish a web in \_\_\_\_\_.

## *Skunks*

Beware of the skunk. A skunk is a small black animal. It has a big white stripe on its back. It eats plants, small animals, and garbage. A skunk is most famous for its smell. When it is afraid, it sprays its enemies. The spray smells very bad. That is why we must beware of the skunk.

- 1 What color is a skunk?
- 2 What does a skunk eat?
- 3 What is the skunk most famous for?
- 4 When does a skunk spray its enemies?
- 5 What should we remember about a skunk?

## *Kittens*

In the box, there are 4 grey kittens and 5 black kittens. Four plus five makes nine kittens. There are nine kittens in all. Two black kittens jump out. Five take away two leaves three. Three black kittens are left in the box. Then, two grey kittens jump out. Four take away two leaves two. Two grey kittens are left in the box. How many kittens in all are left in the box now?

- 1 How many kittens are there in the box at the start of the story?
- 2 There are 5 black kittens. Two jump out. Then \_\_\_\_\_ are left.
- 3 Five \_\_\_\_\_ two leaves three.
- 4 There are four grey kittens in the box, and \_\_\_\_\_ jump out.
- 5 At the end of the story, how many kittens are left in the box?



## *Sounds*

We talk about sounds in lots of ways. People speak, yell, and whisper. Pigs squeal. Wolves howl. Lions and bears roar. Dogs bark and growl. Seals bark too. Sounds tell us things. A fire alarm tells us to get outside. The phone rings. That sound tells us to answer it. Words have sounds when we talk. We know what these sounds mean. Listen well. You learn a lot from sounds.

- 1 Howl, roar, growl, and squeal are all \_\_\_\_\_.
- 2 What do we call the long, high sound that pigs make?
- 3 Dogs bark and growl and seals \_\_\_\_\_ too.
- 4 The story tells us that when the phone rings, we should \_\_\_\_\_.
- 5 When \_\_\_\_\_, we know what the sounds mean.

## *South Pole*

The South Pole sits at the bottom of the world. Ice and snow cover the land all year. No trees or grass can grow. No animals can live inland. There is no food to eat. Whales and seals live in the sea. Some birds live by the shore. They can catch fish. But when winter comes, even the sea turns to ice.

- 1 Where is the South Pole?
- 2 Why do no trees and grass grow at the South Pole?
- 3 In this story, what are the two kinds of animals that live in the sea?
- 4 Why are birds able to live by the shore but not inland?
- 5 When does the sea turn to ice?

## *Whistling*

Do you whistle? Some people don't know how. Others find it easy. Only a few do it well. Some people whistle instead of singing. Others like to sound like birds. But I know when you can't whistle. Try these tricks. Suck on a lemon. I bet you can't whistle a tune. Try eating a few crackers. Can you whistle? No, you can't. But you can make a mess!

- 1 What does “whistle” mean in this story?
- 2 The story tells us that \_\_\_\_\_ people can whistle well.
- 3 People can whistle. What else can whistle?
- 4 You can't whistle a tune if you \_\_\_\_\_.
- 5 To make a mess, first put a few crackers in your mouth, and then:

## *Friends*

Sue and Mike are friends. They live on the same street. They are in the same class at school. They both love to play with Mike's dog. His dog's name is Tim. Tim has a small, red ball. They all have fun playing with the ball. After school, Mike and Sue play with Tim in the park. They throw him the ball. This makes Tim happy. He wags his tail.

- 1 Why do Mike and Sue know each other so well?
- 2 Whose dog is Tim?
- 3 What kind of ball does Tim have?
- 4 Where do Sue and Mike go with Tim after they get home from school?
- 5 Why does Tim wag his tail?

### *The Missing Pie*

Danny Duck took a blueberry pie out of the oven. It was very hot. He set it by an open window to cool. Then he left to go shopping. When Danny came home the pie was missing. He went outside and saw Freddy Fox, Penny Pig, and Billy Bear. “Did you eat my pie?” Danny asked them. They all said “No”. “I think you did,” said Danny. “Your teeth have all turned blue!”

- 1 Why was the pie hot?
- 2 When did Danny Duck discover the pie was missing?
- 3 When did Danny see Freddy, Penny, and Billy?
- 4 Why did Danny Duck think Freddy, Penny, and Billy ate the pie?
- 5 What is the best title for this story?

## Chapter 3

# Junior Comprehension Stories—Level 2

Stories in this chapter:

- Measures
- Hobbies
- Clouds
- Horses
- Moths And Butterflies
- The Violin
- Never Alone!
- Beth's Glasses
- The Mean King

## *Measures*

Where did measurements come from? Years ago, people used body parts to measure length. Here's what they found. Measure from your wrist to your elbow. Now measure your foot. They are about the same length. Measure from the tip to the first knuckle of your thumb. It is close to an inch long. Now measure a man's foot. It is about twelve inches, or one foot long. It was easy to use body parts to measure things. Many of us still use these measures today.

- 1 Which is the best title for this story?
- 2 Years ago, people used body parts to \_\_\_\_\_.
- 3 Measure from your wrist to your elbow. Your \_\_\_\_\_ will be about the same length.
- 4 The \_\_\_\_\_ on your thumb is where it bends.
- 5 A man's foot is about how long?

## *Hobbies*

Do you have a hobby? Is there something you like to do in your spare time? It is good for you to have a hobby. One of my hobbies is fishing. I fish with my dad and brothers every summer. In the winter, I like to read in my free time. I think everyone should have at least one hobby. A hobby is something you can look forward to and enjoy.

- 1 A hobby is something that \_\_\_\_.
- 2 In the summer, the author likes to \_\_\_\_.
- 3 How many hobbies does the author tell us about?
- 4 \_\_\_\_\_ is another way of saying “spare time”.
- 5 The author thinks it’s good for you to have \_\_\_\_.



## *Clouds*

Clouds are made from very small drops of water. As the drops get bigger, the cloud turns grey. Then the drops become too heavy to float in the air. They fall to the ground as rain. When the rain stops, the wet ground begins to dry. Heat from the sun turns the water back into tiny drops. The drops rise into the sky and form new clouds.

- 1 What are clouds made from?
- 2 What happens when the drops become too heavy to float in the air?
- 3 How does the ground get dry again after the rain stops?
- 4 What happens to the drops of water that rise into the sky?
- 5 What is the best title for this paragraph?

## *Horses*

Horses are handsome and strong animals. They love to run. They can run far and fast. When they are running with other horses, they all want to be in the lead. They are like people in a race: each one wants to run the fastest. If you ride on a horse that likes to run, hang on tight!

- 1 In this story, what do horses love to do?
- 2 What do most horses want when they are running with other horses?
- 3 How are horses and people alike in this story?
- 4 What special word is used to say that horses are good-looking?
- 5 Why do you need to hang on tight if you ride a horse that likes to run?

### *Moths And Butterflies*

A moth and a butterfly are different. A moth flies at night. Porch lights make it fly in circles. This might be because the moth uses moonlight to guide it. A moth is thick and hairy. Its antennae look like feathers. But a butterfly flies during the day. It's not hairy like a moth. Its antennae are long and often have little knobs on the ends. When a moth rests, it lays its wings out flat. A butterfly folds them up. It's not hard to tell them apart.

- 1 A porch light makes a moth fly in circles. Maybe the moth thinks the light is \_\_\_\_\_.
- 2 What do a moth's antennae look like?
- 3 Some look like feathers. Some have little knobs on the ends. What are they?
- 4 When do butterflies fly?
- 5 A moth and a butterfly do different things with their wings when they \_\_\_\_\_.

## *The Violin*

A violin is a stringed musical instrument. To play it, you hold one end under your chin. It has four strings. You play it by drawing a bow across these strings. Your right hand holds the bow. You press down on the strings to make notes. You do this with the fingers of your left hand. But the notes will not sound until you use the bow. To make loud notes, you press firmly with the bow.

- 1 What is a violin?
- 2 Where do you put the violin to play it?
- 3 How many strings does a violin have?
- 4 What makes the notes sound?
- 5 What would you do to play quiet notes?

### *Never Alone!*

Think of this. Wild animals live in our homes with us! Spiders, mice, and ants are some of them. But there are other insects that eat food, fabric, and wool. Mites, as big as specks of dust, eat flour. Silverfish live in dark cracks and come out to eat at night. Moths eat wool and fur, as do carpet beetles. Termites eat wood. We are never alone!

- 1 Why does the author say that we are never alone?
- 2 What is one of the creatures that eat our food?
- 3 What do moths eat?
- 4 In what way are mites like “specks of dust”?
- 5 What kind of insect eats wood?

## *Beth's Glasses*

Beth went to school and left her new glasses at home. She didn't like the way they made her look. The teacher put some writing on the board. Beth found it hard to see the letters. At lunchtime, the teacher told Beth to stay in and fix her work. Beth told the teacher she could not see well. She said she would bring in her glasses the next day.

- 1 Why did Beth go to school without her glasses?
- 2 What did the teacher put on the board?
- 3 Why did Beth find it hard to see the letters on the board?
- 4 Why did the teacher have to ask Beth to fix her work?
- 5 When did Beth say she would bring her glasses?

### *The Mean King*

A long time ago, a mean king told his subjects that it was a crime to laugh. He said the penalty for this was death. Suddenly, a man started to laugh. The king told the man that he must die because of his outburst. He asked the man how he wanted to die. The man answered, “I’d like to die of old age.” The king burst out laughing, and then all his subjects laughed, too. And so ended the law.

- 1 What was the king’s new rule?
- 2 What kind of king would say it was a crime to laugh?
- 3 When the king asked the man how he wanted to die, what did the man answer?
- 4 Why was the doomed man’s answer to the king so clever?
- 5 What happened right after the man answered the king?

## Chapter 4

# Junior Comprehension Stories—Level 3

Stories in this chapter:

- On the Beach
- Snakes
- Ant Picnic
- The Sun
- Puzzles
- Dawn of Time
- The Hawk
- Riddles
- Dinosaurs



### *On the Beach*

Sue and Bob like to be on the beach in the summer. They walk on the wet sand and collect the shells that are left behind by crabs and snails. Some shells are round and shaped like spinning tops while others are shaped like small saucers. One time at the ocean, they noticed a spurt of water shooting out of the sand. They hurried over and dug into the sand. Guess what they found? It was a live crab!

- 1 Why do the children like to be on the beach?
- 2 Where do the shells come from?
- 3 How can shells be like tops?
- 4 Why did the sand spurt water?
- 5 What did the children do when they saw the spurt of water?

## *Snakes*

Have you ever seen a snake stick out its tongue? It does not use its tongue to taste things like humans do. A snake uses its tongue to help it smell. When a snake sticks out its tongue, tiny particles from the air stick to it. The snake then brings its tongue back into its mouth. Here it quickly smells the particles to know what is around. If it picks up the scent of an enemy, it will quickly slither away, but if it smells food, it will attack. So you see, a snake's tongue has an important job.

- 1 What does a snake use its tongue for?
- 2 When a snake sticks out its tongue, what gets stuck on it?
- 3 What do you think a snake would do if it smelled a human?
- 4 What will a hungry snake do if it smells something it can eat?
- 5 What does the word "scent" mean in this story?

### *Ant Picnic*

One lazy summer day, Fred the Ant went for a walk. He saw a family on a picnic. On a blanket under a tree, Fred spied a feast fit for a king. There was a large watermelon, apple pie, cookies, and best of all, chocolate cake. He ran home to tell his friends. They had the best ant party ever. Fred and his friends went home very full that night!

- 1 What did Fred the Ant see when he went for a walk?
- 2 What food did Fred see on the blanket?
- 3 When Fred saw the food, what did he do?
- 4 He had a piece of chocolate cake.
- 5 Why did Fred and his friends have such a great party?

## *The Sun*

The sun is a star. Like all stars, it is made of hot, shining gases. It looks much bigger than the other stars we see at night. This is because it is much closer to us. During the day, the bright sunlight hides the light from the other stars. Without the light and heat from the sun, no one would be able to live here.

- 1 What is the sun?
- 2 What is the sun made of?
- 3 Why does the sun look bigger than other stars?
- 4 Why can't we see the other stars during the day?
- 5 Why is the sun important to life on earth?

## *Puzzles*

Brain teasers are a type of puzzle. While the teasers are both challenging and fun, their answers may surprise you. Try to solve this puzzle. I have a jar full of wet sand and a jar full of dry sand. Both jars are exactly the same size. Which one is heavier? If you guessed that the dry sand weighs more, you are correct. There is an explanation for this surprising answer. Wet sand contains water, which takes up space. The water weighs less than sand, making it lighter than dry sand. If you don't believe me, try it out for yourself.

- 1 What is this story mainly about?
- 2 Which fact is true?
- 3 The jar of wet sand is \_\_\_\_\_ than the jar of dry sand.
- 4 \_\_\_\_\_ tells you why or how something happened
- 5 Brain teasers are a type of \_\_\_\_\_.

## *Dawn of Time*

Long ago, people lived in caves. In those days, it wasn't safe to be outside your cave after dark. Early humans used the sun to tell them when to get back. They saw that the sun always rose in the east. It seemed to travel across the sky during the day. Then it always went down and disappeared in the west. These early humans saw their shadows changed size, depending on where the sun was. They used all of these facts to help them know what time of day it was. This was how they began, long ago, to keep track of time.

- 1 What did early humans use to tell the time of day?
- 2 The sun always appears to rise in the east and set in \_\_\_\_\_.
- 3 Early humans thought the sun seemed to \_\_\_\_\_ during the day.
- 4 What made the cave people's shadow change size?
- 5 Choose the best title for this paragraph.

### *The Hawk*

There is a soft gentle breeze  
Which blows the snow-capped trees.  
All is quiet and still  
As the hawk stalks his kill.  
His sleek brown body tenses,  
Alive and alert are his senses.  
And out comes the mouse walking,  
Unaware that the hawk is stalking.  
A flap of wings, the hawk must dive.

And now, only one remains alive.

- 1 What blows the snow-capped trees?
- 2 Which word in the poem rhymes with the word “senses”?
- 3 Which word tells how carefully the hawk is hunting?
- 4 What happens to the mouse?
- 5 What is the title of this poem?

## *Riddles*

Why is a pig in the kitchen like a house on fire? The sooner they're put out, the better. Why is a cat sitting on a fence like a penny? It's because it has a head on one side and a tail on the other. When is a boy like a pony? It's when he's a little hoarse. The humor of riddles often comes from a play on words. This happens when two words sound the same but have different spellings and meanings. We call these words homonyms. Their meaning depends on context. The context is the words that come immediately before and after. Do you know any riddles like these?

- 1 The humor of riddles often comes from \_\_\_\_\_.
- 2 \_\_\_\_\_ are words that sound the same but have different meanings.
- 3 Find the homonyms.
- 4 One word can have many different meanings; the meaning will depend on the \_\_\_\_\_.
- 5 What is the main idea of this paragraph?



## *Dinosaurs*

Dinosaurs lived many millions of years ago. They were reptiles. Some were very large. Others were the size of a dog or cat. Some ate meat, while others ate only plants. Sometimes they ate each other. Dinosaurs could not live in the cold. Some experts think that they all died when the weather suddenly got very cold. Today, we can see dinosaur bones and learn more about them in some museums.

- 1 What do some experts think was the reason why dinosaurs died?
- 2 Dinosaurs were “reptiles”, this means they were like \_\_\_\_\_.
- 3 What did the dinosaurs eat?
- 4 Today, we can see real dinosaur bones \_\_\_\_\_.
- 5 What is this paragraph mainly about?

## Chapter 5

# Junior Comprehension Stories—Level 4

Stories in this chapter:

- Scary Story
- Komodo Dragon
- An Accident
- Rainforests
- The Citizen
- The Sentence
- Descriptions
- Sharks
- Basketball

### *Scary Story*

The night was clear and dark as the boys stepped out into the woods. Their hearts pounded but they wanted to test their courage. A branch cracked and a giant shadow drifted from a treetop. What was it? The “who-who” call told them it was just an owl. As the boys moved closer together, they noticed small, dark creatures swooping and darting in the air above their heads: only bats on their nightly hunt. But what were those flashes of light in the bushes? Then, from the deepest woods came crashing and panting sounds. As they frantically raced back into their house, their father asked, “Where’s the dog?”

- 1 Why did the boys go into the woods?
- 2 What was the “giant shadow that drifted from a treetop”?
- 3 What did the boys hear just after they saw the bats?
- 4 What was most likely crashing and panting through the deep woods?
- 5 What kind of feeling probably sent the boys racing home?

## *Komodo Dragon*

The Komodo dragon is the largest of all lizards. It is a member of the monitor lizard family. It is a tropical lizard, which means it likes a hot, humid place to live. It has very thick brown or black skin. Its legs are as thick as small tree trunks and it has a long neck. This lizard can grow as long as ten feet and weigh as much as three hundred pounds. The Komodo dragon is a good swimmer. It likes to eat fish, eggs, and animals such as deer and wild pigs. The Komodo dragon is a very scary lizard!

- 1 What is the Komodo dragon?
- 2 Where do you find these tropical lizards?
- 3 How large can the Komodo dragon grow?
- 4 What does the dragon's large size allow it to eat?
- 5 Why does the writer say that the Komodo dragon is a very scary lizard?

### *An Accident*

Mike and Dan jumped on their bikes and headed down an old country road. It was early October and the leaves on the trees were aflame with color. Dan was looking at the woods and not the road. Just as Mike was about to warn him, a truck pulled out from a hidden driveway. Dan was so surprised he slammed on his brakes, skidded his bike and fell onto the road. The owner of the truck hurried over to help Dan. When he saw that Dan was not hurt, he advised him to be more careful and to always watch where he's going. Dan knew that he could have avoided the accident by paying more attention to the road. He learned a valuable lesson.

- 1 Why was Dan looking at the woods?
- 2 What is meant by: "the leaves were aflame with color"?
- 3 What surprised Dan?
- 4 What was Mike about to do just as the truck pulled out from the hidden driveway?
- 5 What is the main message in this story?

## *Rainforests*

Rainforests are found in parts of the world that are very wet and hot. They are home to half the animals and plants of the earth. The plants give us many of the drugs needed to cure sickness. They also play a huge role in making the air we breathe. Yet much of the land is being burned to make room for farms and houses or logged for wood. Without the trees to hold the soil, it erodes, or wears away. Soon, nothing can grow or live on the land. Unless something is done soon, the rainforests will become only a memory.

- 1 Where are rainforests found?
- 2 What are two reasons given for the importance of plants in the rainforests?
- 3 What is happening to the rainforests?
- 4 When does the soil erode, or wear away?
- 5 What does the paragraph mean when it states: "Unless something is done soon, the rainforests will become only a memory"?

### *The Citizen*

Maria was so excited she could hardly sleep. It had been a strange day. Just this morning she was Mexican, but now she was American! The change happened shortly before lunch. Maria and her parents went to a ceremony at the Citizenship Court. There were many people there from all around the world. There was a girl from Greece and a boy from Chad. The judge recited the Citizenship Oath. She spoke in English and Maria had to listen closely and repeat the judge's words. Maria was promising to be a good citizen. She was then presented with her citizenship card. The ceremony ended by singing the National Anthem.

- 1 What ceremony did Maria go to?
- 2 When was the ceremony?
- 3 What is an oath?
- 4 In what language did the judge speak?
- 5 Where do Maria and her parents live now?

## *The Sentence*

One of the groups of words in this paragraph isn't a sentence. See if you can find it as you read through. A sentence is a group of words that expresses a complete meaning. A simple sentence always has one subject and one verb. In writing, you begin a sentence with a capital letter. You a sentence with a period.

A verb is the action word in the sentence and the subject is who or what does the action. The following is a simple sentence: "The students finished their homework." Ask yourself, "Who did what?" The "who" part is the subject and the "did" part is the verb.

Did you spot the incomplete sentence?

- 1 The action word in a sentence is \_\_\_\_\_.
- 2 In a sentence, the person or thing that did the action is \_\_\_\_\_.
- 3 Here is a simple sentence: The students finished their homework. What is the subject?
- 4 Here is a simple sentence: The students finished their homework. What is the action word?
- 5 This is not a sentence: "You a sentence with a period." The word "end" is missing. This word is the \_\_\_\_\_.



### *Descriptions*

From the top of the old wooden bridge, I can feel the soft, cool breeze. It causes ripples in the river below. There is a smell of wet and rotting wood and it overpowers any other smell that might be floating in the air. The boards are moist and rough on my bare legs. I look down and see the gentle current pushing the fallen leaves like boats on a river. Up above, the sky is a soft blue with swirls of cottony clouds. This is my favorite place. This is where I come to think and figure things out and feel good.

- 1 What causes the ripples in the river below?
- 2 The smell of wet and rotting wood comes from \_\_\_\_\_.
- 3 The writer compares the fallen leaves to \_\_\_\_\_.
- 4 What is the writer describing?
- 5 Which of these senses did not provide any impressions for the writer of this story?

## *Sharks*

The shark is one of the most feared fish in the sea. This is because it is an eating machine. Most sharks take large bites and swallow without chewing. Some large sharks, such as the Great White, can tear a person in half with one bite. Even though sharks are scary, most sharks are harmless to people. People can swim safely with some sharks if they leave them alone. Swimmers must take special care, however, when they swim near man-eating sharks.

- 1 Why do so many people fear sharks?
- 2 Swimmers must take care when they are around what kind of sharks?
- 3 It is \_\_\_\_\_ for people to be afraid of all sharks.
- 4 Who is most likely to be the victims of a shark attack?
- 5 Why do we call sharks “eating machines”?

## *Basketball*

People play basketball all over the world. In fact, it is the world's most popular indoor sport. People play it outdoors too. James Naismith invented it in 1891. Naismith was a gym teacher from Canada teaching in the United States. He wanted his students to play a fun, competitive sport during the cold New England winters. So he created basketball. He nailed two peach baskets to the gym walls. Players had to throw a soccer ball into them. Naismith made thirteen rules that we still use today. As time passed, the new sport grew more and more popular. The equipment and rules got better. No more peach baskets. Now, millions of people love to play and watch the game. Thanks, James.

- 1 Why do many people know James Naismith?
- 2 When were peach baskets first used for basketball?
- 3 Why did Naismith invent basketball?
- 4 Where did Naismith invent basketball?
- 5 How many of Naismith's rules do we still use today?

## Chapter 6

# Junior Comprehension Stories—Level 5

Stories in this chapter:

- Decision Making
- Puns
- Migration
- Guessing Game
- The Moon
- Special Questions
- New Words
- A Friend
- Money

## *Decision Making*

There are five main steps in making a decision. The first step is to look at the decision to be made and a list of your choices. Next, you should examine all of the different options. You must decide if each one is really a way to get what you want. The third step is to take each option and think it through. Which ones are possible, and what will be the results of each? You must think of all the advantages and disadvantages for each option. Then you can make your decision based on the best option. Lastly, you have to stand by your choice and feel good about it. When making a decision, you have to investigate it thoroughly.

- 1 What is listed in this paragraph?
- 2 What is the first step in making a decision?
- 3 What step comes next after you list your choices?
- 4 Which pair of opposites in this paragraph means good points and bad points?
- 5 Why must you look at the advantages and disadvantages of each option?

## *Puns*

A pun is called a “play on words” and is a form of humor. A pun is made from a sentence with at least one word that has more than one meaning. For example, in the pun that follows, the word “drill” can mean a tool or a march to train a soldier.

The dentist joined the army because he liked to “drill”.

The humor results when both meanings of the key word, in this case “drill”, give the sentence a twist. The next pun will use a key word that has a different spelling for each of its two meanings.

Seven days without food makes one “weak”.

- 1 What is a pun?
- 2 What must the key word in a pun have?
- 3 How do the two different meanings of “drill” produce the humor in the first pun?
- 4 What is the meaning for the other word that sounds like “weak” but has a different spelling?
- 5 What is the best title for this paragraph?

## *Migration*

During the fall, when days grow shorter and colder, many birds migrate south. They must leave their northern nesting grounds because food becomes scarce. How they are able to find their way has always been a puzzle. Birds that migrate in flocks may teach the route to their young but those that fly alone must use other ways. Landmarks or the position of the sun and stars may serve as guides. It is also thought that some birds may sense the earth's magnetic field the way a compass does. Migration is one of nature's wonders.

- 1 When do many birds migrate south?
- 2 How might birds that migrate in flocks learn the migration route they have to follow?
- 3 What might migrating birds see that could serve as a guide along the way?
- 4 In what way might a migrating bird and a compass be alike?
- 5 Which of these titles best tells what the paragraph is about?

## *Guessing Game*

Try to guess the names of these animals. Each animal's name begins with the letter "c". What is the name of a small, tailless, intelligent ape often found in zoos? What is the name of a snake that can lift up the skin behind its head so that it looks like a hood? What is the name of a humped mammal that is a beast of burden in scorching deserts? What is the name of a tall, graceful bird with a long neck and long legs? What is the name of an animal, between a wolf and a fox in size, that howls and yaps at night? If you managed to answer all of them, you did remarkably well.

- 1 What do all the names of the animals described in this paragraph have in common?
- 2 A cobra is the name of a \_\_\_\_\_ that can lift up the skin behind its head.
- 3 A crane is the name of a \_\_\_\_\_.
- 4 Which of these animals has a name that starts with a sound that is different from the others?
- 5 Which of these animals is not described in this paragraph?



## *The Moon*

The moon is a satellite. A satellite is any heavenly body that moves in an orbit around any planet. Our moon moves around the earth from west to east. A complete orbit takes about 30 days. This period of time roughly matches a month on our calendar. The moon appears to shine but not in the same way as the sun. It shines because it reflects light from the sun. That is, sunlight bounces off the moon and then bounces back to earth. Moonlight helps us to see at night, especially when the moon is full and the sky is clear.

- 1 Which one does not move in an orbit around a planet?
- 2 What does the word “satellite” mean in this story?
- 3 What word or words used in the paragraph mean “a natural object in space”?
- 4 The moon we see at night is the earth’s \_\_\_\_\_.
- 5 Light from the sun bounces off the moon. We say that the moon \_\_\_\_\_ light.

## *Special Questions*

We usually ask a question to get information. When you ask a question, you expect an answer, don't you? Well, this isn't always the case. There is a special kind of question to which no answer is expected. This is a rhetorical question. We use these questions for effect or style. We use them to make statements rather than to get answers. "Do you think I was born yesterday?" and "What else can go wrong?" are two examples of rhetorical questions. Make sure you don't answer them. You might sound a little silly.

- 1 We usually ask a question to \_\_\_\_.
- 2 What is the special name for a question that we use for style and effect?
- 3 Do people who ask a rhetorical question expect an answer?
- 4 You don't answer a rhetorical question because you don't \_\_\_\_\_.
- 5 Pick the question that is most likely a rhetorical question.

### *New Words*

Some people like to make a game out of learning new words. They make an effort to learn at least one completely new word every day. They may pick an unfamiliar word from a book, a television show, or even a conversation. Then, they find out what it means. The best way to do this is to look it up in the dictionary. Then, they try to use the word at least three times a day. Of course, they try to use the word correctly. They fit it into their conversations with others. They might also use it in writing. This game is not only entertaining, it is also a great way to build your vocabulary.

- 1 This paragraph is mainly about a good way to \_\_\_\_\_.
- 2 Your \_\_\_\_\_ is the list of words you understand and can use.
- 3 If you want to learn a new word, you first find an unfamiliar word. The next thing to do is:
- 4 We use a dictionary to \_\_\_\_\_.
- 5 Try to use the new word at least three times a day but be sure to \_\_\_\_\_.

## *A Friend*

One of my best friends is only four years old. His name is Arthur. He sleeps on a rug by my bed. Every morning, we go for a long run together. He is always excited about this outing and he never makes any excuses about not wanting to go. He eats the same thing for breakfast every morning - never any complaints. Whenever we're together, he never wants to be more than a few steps away. Whenever we're apart, he misses me and he's always happy to see me again. He never seems to want much from me even though he's always there for me. He loves me and I love him back.

- 1 How do we know that Arthur likes to go for long runs?
- 2 What emotion is not talked about in this story?
- 3 What does Arthur never complain about?
- 4 Who do you think Arthur is?
- 5 How old is Arthur?

## *Money*

Before there was money, it was hard for people to get the things they needed from others. People had to trade goods and services with each other. But once there was money, they didn't have to look for someone to trade with. They could go to merchants. Merchants sold many things for money. Over time, money was taken in the form of shells, precious stones, gold, coins, and paper. Credit cards have become another form of money. Whether it is paper, plastic, or just a computer transaction, people will always use money. It is truly one of humankind's most useful inventions.

- 1 Why is money one of humankind's most useful inventions?
- 2 Why was it difficult for people to get things before there was money?
- 3 People didn't have to find others to trade with when they were able to \_\_\_\_.
- 4 Early merchants probably sold things for money in the form of \_\_\_\_\_.
- 5 What is the best title for this paragraph?

## Chapter 7

# Junior Comprehension Stories—Level 6

Stories in this chapter:

- Knuckle Cracking
- Vampire Bats
- Adverbs
- Word Problems
- Fairy Tales And Fables
- Environment Boy
- Digging to China
- Babysitting
- An Adventure

## *Knuckle Cracking*

Most people know how to crack their knuckles but no one can crack them twice within a few minutes. Doctors recently discovered that the popping noise that you hear when you crack your knuckles is caused by tiny exploding gas bubbles. They found that the fluid in your joints contains dissolved gases. When you stretch the joint, you reduce the pressure. This lets the gas bubbles “pop” out of the fluid. The same thing happens when you open a bottle of soda. But the gas in the knuckle can’t escape and eventually dissolves back into the joint fluid. This takes about fifteen minutes. This has to happen before you can crack your knuckles again.

- 1 What causes the popping noise when you crack your knuckles?
- 2 Liquid in your body is called body \_\_\_\_\_.
- 3 The fluid in your joints contains \_\_\_\_\_ gases.
- 4 What does not happen when you crack your knuckles?
- 5 What happens first when you crack your knuckles?

## *Vampire Bats*

Some say that all bats acquired their bad reputation from the vampire bat. Vampire bats live in South and Central America. They feed only on blood from cattle, pigs, horses, or large birds and not on humans. They lap up blood from tiny wounds that they make with their front teeth. But they are not a real menace. They make up only a small part of the world's bat population. There are about 900 species of bats. Most of them play a very important role in the ecosystem. They eat huge numbers of insects. They spread plants by carrying and dropping seeds from one place to another. Today, in the hope of attracting bats, some people even build bat houses in their backyards.

- 1 Why do vampire bats give all bats a bad reputation?
- 2 There are about 900 \_\_\_\_\_.
- 3 What is one important role that bats play in the ecosystem?
- 4 How does a bat help spread plant life?
- 5 People build bat houses because they want to \_\_\_\_.



## *Adverbs*

You can increase your writing powers by understanding how to use different parts of speech. Let's examine adverbs. Adverbs modify verbs, adjectives, and other adverbs. They describe how, when, or where. Consider these sentences: "Enter quietly." "Janet arrived early." "I left my pencil here." The words "quietly", "early", and "here" are adverbs. Adverbs don't have a fixed position in a sentence. In fact, you can alter the meaning by changing the adverb's position. Read these sentences and notice how the position of the adverb "only" affects the meanings:

- 1 He whispered to me that he loved only me.
- 2 What is the main topic of this paragraph?
- 3 What do adverbs modify? Pick the most precise answer.
- 4 According to this passage, you can alter the meaning in a sentence by \_\_\_\_\_.
- 5 An adverb is not \_\_\_\_\_.
- 6 Find the word used in the paragraph that means "to change".

## *Word Problems*

To solve a word problem in math, first read it carefully. Look for special phrases that tell what operations you need to do. For example, “how many in all” and “find the total” tell you to add. Learn to recognize that some of the facts in what you read are unnecessary to the solution. Don’t let them mislead you. Then, express the problem in your own words. Include only the necessary facts and the question you must answer. You may have to put the facts in order. This is most important when two or more steps are needed to solve the problem. Next, do the number operation. Remember that it may take two or more operations to solve the problem. Keep in mind too that you should estimate what a reasonable answer would be. Finally, answer the question. Check the estimate to be sure your answer makes sense.

- 1 What is the first thing you should do to solve a word problem in math?
- 2 When a problem says to “find the total”, you should \_\_\_\_.
- 3 Why should you learn to recognize that some of the facts in the problem are unnecessary facts?
- 4 When you try to solve a math problem, you should remember to estimate what a reasonable answer would be. This will help you \_\_\_\_.
- 5 Which of these is the final step when you solve a word problem in math?

## *Fairy Tales And Fables*

Fairy tales are special stories for children. They're full of make-believe, magic, and happy endings. They're about witches, monsters, and dragons. They're about handsome heroes and brave heroines. "Beauty and the Beast" is a famous fairy tale.

Fables, however, are a little different. Fables are stories about animals that act like people. Often the animals can think and talk. Fables are supposed to teach us a lesson. We say they have a moral. They don't always have happy endings. The animals often get punished for being bad, mean, or lazy. Have you read the famous fable "The Hare and the Tortoise"?

- 1 What kind of story usually has a happy ending?
- 2 What is a fable?
- 3 Fables are supposed to \_\_\_\_\_.
- 4 "Slow and steady wins the race" is the \_\_\_\_\_ of "The Hare and the Tortoise".
- 5 "Beauty and the Beast" is \_\_\_\_\_.

## *Environment Boy*

I read a story in the school newspaper about a boy. This boy was worried about the environment. He had not had a bath or shower in two weeks. Our dwindling fresh water supply concerned him, so he cleaned himself with a sponge and a pail of water. He also washed his clothes by hand. He tried to put all of his ideas and feelings about the environment into action. That was why he recycled everything he could. He planted trees in his backyard and helped clean up his neighborhood. He also spent a lot of time reading, looking for new ways to help the environment.

- 1 The boy was concerned about our fresh water supply because it is \_\_\_\_.
- 2 What did the boy do to save water?
- 3 What is one of the ways the boy put his feelings about the environment into action?
- 4 How is this boy a model environmentalist?
- 5 What is a good title to express the theme in this paragraph?

### *Digging to China*

I was watching television one day when I saw a cartoon rabbit dig into the earth until he reached China, on the opposite side of the world. I thought I could do the same, so I took a shovel and started digging. I dug for the next two hours and made a small hole about four feet deep. I was very hot, so I took a break and went into the house to get a glass of water. My mother asked me why I was making a hole in the backyard. I told her my plan to dig to China. My mother then got a book and showed me how impossible my plan was to achieve. She explained that I would have to dig for at least forty lifetimes, through the earth's crust, the mantle, and finally the earth's molten core before I would get to China. So I gave up and went back to watching cartoons on television!

- 1 Where did the writer get the idea to dig to China?
- 2 What was the writer doing before he went into the house to get a glass of water?
- 3 What did the mother use to show him how impossible his plan was?
- 4 Why could nobody ever dig all the way through the earth?

## *Babysitting*

Pat stomped into the house and threw her schoolbooks on the floor. She didn't want to miss going shopping with Liz, but her mom had asked her to baby-sit her little brother after school. Pat walked over to the window and glared down the street looking for Matt. The wind was blowing drifts of snow over the sidewalks and the sky was growing dark. After twenty minutes, Pat started to get worried. Finally, she saw Matt's small form plodding through the deep snow, slowly making its way up the street. Pat was so relieved to see him, she no longer cared about missing a shopping trip.

- 1 How was Pat probably feeling when she came into the house?
- 2 Why couldn't Pat go shopping with Liz?
- 3 What was the weather like outside?
- 4 What caused Pat to start getting worried?
- 5 Why was Pat relieved to see Matt?

### *An Adventure*

Nino grasped the handlebars more tightly, and pedaled faster and faster. Down the hill he sped, past the house with the bright blue door. The wheels went round and round. He selected another gear, then shot by the mailbox and over the railroad bridge, the wind whistling in his ears. Just as he reached the dangerous bend in the road by the maple tree, his wheels left the pavement, and he soared into the air. Nino screamed in delight as a startled blackbird squawked and fled the treetop. But in that moment of lost concentration, he also lost his balance. As he tumbled towards the ground, he heard his alarm clock.

- 1 In this story, what does the word “grasped” mean?
- 2 What was Nino riding?
- 3 What happened just as Nino reached the dangerous bend in the road?
- 4 What kind of sound did Nino make as his wheels left the ground?
- 5 Explain the importance of the information you get at the end of this story.

## Chapter 8

# Junior Comprehension Stories—Level 7

Stories in this chapter:

- The Apostrophe
- Childhood Memory
- Learning
- Sponges
- History of Fashion
- Heroes
- Writing
- Fitness
- Dinosaurs



## *The Apostrophe*

The apostrophe has three very important uses in writing. When we leave out a letter in certain words, we use the apostrophe instead of the missing letter. We call this “contracting words”. So, instead of writing “are not”, we leave out the “o” and write “aren’t”. For the sake of clearness, we use the apostrophe plus “s” (’s) to form the plural of letters and numerals. So we write, “make your 5’s clearer” and “Dot your i’s”. We also use the apostrophe to show possession. For a singular noun, add apostrophe plus “s”: the man’s hat. For a plural noun, ending in “s”, just add the apostrophe: the boys’ shoes. We never use the apostrophe for possessive pronouns such as hers, theirs, or its.

- 1 \_\_\_\_\_ means the same as “it is”.
- 2 The apostrophe is used to mark \_\_\_\_\_ in a contracted word.
- 3 The apostrophe is important \_\_\_\_\_.
- 4 For the sake of clearness, use an apostrophe plus “s” (’s) to \_\_\_\_\_.
- 5 Which of these shows “books belonging to the girls” correctly?

## *Childhood Memory*

My mother tells me that I was usually a very well behaved child. But as a four-year-old, I remember playing a trick on her. I hid in the doghouse in my backyard all morning long and watched clearly as my mother searched and called my name. She grew increasingly frantic as more and more neighbors joined in the search. Finally, my favorite aunt appeared on the scene. When I ran out to greet her, she immediately whisked me away. She realized that, under the circumstances, the other adults probably had mixed feelings about finding me. I can't even remember what made me play that trick. But, as a mother today, I try to remember that kids sometimes do silly things without really meaning any harm.

- 1 What trick did the child play on her mother?
- 2 Why did the child in this story finally come out of the doghouse?
- 3 What does the phrase "whisked away" mean in this story?
- 4 What were the mixed feelings that the adults in this story most likely had when they found the child?
- 5 What does the writer try to remember from this childhood incident?

## *Learning*

Learning still puzzles scientists. Some compare learning to the way a computer functions. All that we know and experience comes in through our senses. We call this input. Any input that we pay attention to then moves into short-term memory. This is like a small filing cabinet with room for about seven files. As new files are put in, old ones are pushed out. These files are either forgotten or they move into long-term memory. How our “computer” prepares information for long-term storage affects how easy it will be to remember. If we chunk new pieces of information together, or associate them with old information, we make it easier to retrieve them. We can learn how to use this linking of information and practice it. Then it will be easier to call information to mind when we need to remember it.

- 1 In this paragraph, scientists compare learning to \_\_\_\_\_.
- 2 When we pay attention to anything we experience through our senses, the information will move into \_\_\_\_\_.
- 3 This writer compares \_\_\_\_\_ to a small filing cabinet.
- 4 Information is easier to remember when we \_\_\_\_\_.
- 5 When we “retrieve” information, we \_\_\_\_\_.

## *Sponges*

A sponge is a collection of sea creatures that attaches itself to an underwater rock. Sponges come in all different sizes, shapes, and colors. Because they have no heart, lungs, or brain, and because they don't move around, people once thought they were plants. Now, scientists believe that one sponge is really thousands of animals that live together in a colony. Each sponge has a hollow tube that allows water to flow through. This water is full of tiny plants and animals, some of which becomes food for the sponge. Perhaps you use a sponge for bathing or for washing cars. Actually, what you are using is the dried skeleton of a sponge colony.

- 1 Where does a sponge live?
- 2 People once thought that sponges were:
- 3 Find a word used in the paragraph that means "a group of plants or animals that live together".
- 4 Choose the function that is served by the hollow tube in a sponge.
- 5 When we use a sponge to wash a car, we may actually be using:

### *History of Fashion*

Because Jean planned to be a fashion designer after she left school, she often researched different aspects of fashion. To her surprise, she learned that many of our fashion and grooming habits began more than one thousand years ago! Jean read that at first buttons were used as jewelry. When buttonholes were invented in the 1500's, buttons then were used to fasten clothes. Ancient Greeks and Romans made perfume by soaking flowers, leaves, and roots in oils. They applied these oils to their bodies to mask unpleasant odors. Jean also learned that the first shoes were made by hand thousands of years ago out of animal skins and grasses. Only one hundred years ago, factories began to make shoes in a variety of sizes. Her next investigation was going to be the history of make-up.

- 1 Why was Jean interested in fashion?
- 2 What does the word "research" mean?
- 3 What did the ancient Greeks and Romans use to mask unpleasant odors?
- 4 What does Jean plan to research next?

## *Heroes*

What makes a hero? There are many people who, faced with a crisis, rise to the occasion and find courage and inner strength that they never knew they had. If you pick up a newspaper on any given day, you will likely be able to find an article about someone who behaved heroically in the face of grave danger. You may read of a man who pulls a person out of a crushed vehicle just before the vehicle bursts into flames. What is it that made that man risk his life to save a stranger? Do we all have the potential to be a hero, or is it a characteristic that only some of us possess?

- 1 When faced with a crisis, what do many people find?
- 2 Which words in the paragraph would provide a definition for the word “fortitude”?
- 3 What example is given of the type of hero story you might read about?
- 4 This passage asks if we all have the potential to be a hero. What does the word “potential” mean here?
- 5 What makes a hero?

## *Writing*

Do you know how writers bring stories to life? The answer can be found in this basic rule of writing: “Show; don’t tell”. The difference between showing and telling is like the one between playing in a game and watching it from the sidelines. Writers give their readers a sense of “being there” by describing the people, places, and events in the story based on their own detailed observations of the world around them. All five senses are used to give precise, clear pictures to the readers. For example, they are not just told, “it was a cold day”; instead, specific details, like “billows of frosty vapor” or “the snow squeaked when we walked on it”, are used to give the feeling of a cold day. Writers bring a story to life when they show the readers what it’s like to be there.

- 1 In writing, there is a difference between showing and telling. What is this difference compared to?
- 2 Why is it important for writers to closely observe the world around them?
- 3 What do writers use to provide precise, clear pictures for their readers?
- 4 What were the specific examples of details used to give the feeling of a cold day?
- 5 What is supposed to happen when writers follow this basic rule of writing: Show; don’t tell?

## *Fitness*

Physical fitness, for both young and old alike, is known to improve people's health and outlook on life. Daily exercise strengthens muscles, not only in the arms and legs, but also in the heart. With each beat of a fit heart, more blood is pumped through the body. This means it doesn't have to work as hard and a person has more staying power. Many people also enjoy how daily exercise increases the rate at which the body burns calories. As long as they don't change the way they eat, they will start to lose weight. People feel better, and have energy and self-esteem when they are active. When one looks at the benefits that daily exercise can bring, it is hard to see why everyone doesn't make the effort to keep fit.

- 1 What is known to improve a person's health and outlook on life?
- 2 How does strengthening the heart muscle improve a person's staying power?
- 3 Why will people lose weight without changing the way they eat if they exercise daily?
- 4 How can being active improve a person's outlook on life?
- 5 What makes it hard to understand why everyone doesn't make the effort to keep fit?



## *Dinosaurs*

Even though dinosaurs have never been seen, experts conclude many things from their fossilized bones, like their size and shape. Where they find the bones and how the bones are laid out also tell a story. For example, in one location, scientists found fossils of a large number of dinosaurs of the same species. The skeletons all pointed in the same direction. How did they die? Why were so many found in one place? Now, the kinds of rocks found in that area showed that the place used to be a large river. In modern day, caribou sometimes drown trying to cross fast flowing rivers in the spring. Since they move in herds, many die together. Their bodies have been found along riverbanks, all pointing in the direction of the strong current. Using this analogy, scientists say that the riverbed fossils were probably from a migrating species that moved in herds and died crossing a river.

- 1 When experts find fossils, why is it important for them to note how and where they find them?
- 2 In this story, what did the experts find that puzzled them at first?
- 3 What told the scientists that the area where they found the fossils of so many dinosaurs used to be a river?
- 4 How does the behavior of some modern-day caribou shed light on how the dinosaurs in this story died?
- 5 What is an “analogy”?

## Chapter 9

# Junior Comprehension Stories—Level 8

Stories in this chapter:

- Essays
- Word Categories
- A Novel Review
- Storms
- Steroids
- The Continents
- Bad Conscience
- The Paragraph
- Job-shadowing

## *Essays*

When you write an essay, you often read a lot to get ideas and facts. You may find material in books, magazines, encyclopedias, the Internet, or perhaps from television and radio programs. This research makes your essay informative and interesting. Sometimes you quote the material that you find. That is, you cite the actual words of the original work in your essay. Sometimes you cite the material in your own words. In either case, you should make an exact reference to the source. A reference includes the names of the author and publisher, the title of the book, the year of publication, and the exact page where the information can be found. A bibliography is a list of all sources that you have cited in your essay. This list should appear at the end of your essay.

- 1 What is the main idea of this paragraph?
- 2 If you “quote” someone else’s material, you:
- 3 If you use someone else’s material, you should always:
- 4 Find the word that means the same as “use someone else’s ideas, either in their words or in your own words”.
- 5 The \_\_\_\_\_ should appear at the end of your essay.

## *Word Categories*

Here is a list of words: trombone, piano, violin, accordion. These words are similar because they all name musical instruments. Here is another list of words: opera, organ, orchestra. Which of these words belongs with the first list? Look at the meaning of each word and then ask yourself if any are musical instruments. An opera is a play where singing is accompanied by musical instruments, while an orchestra is a group of musicians playing musical instruments. An organ can be part of an animal but it is also the name of a musical instrument. Here is another list of words: mix, combine, blend. These words are similar because they all mean the same thing. Which of these, then, belongs with that group: stir or confuse? Again, it is the one that shares a similar meaning. Grouping words into categories like this can help you learn about word meanings.

- 1 Which of these words belongs with the list of musical instruments?
- 2 Which word belongs in this list: mix, combine, blend?
- 3 Grouping words into categories is a good way to:
- 4 In this paragraph, we grouped words into categories by:
- 5 What is the best title to tell what this paragraph is about?

### *A Novel Review*

“The Outsiders”, a fascinating novel about teenagers, was written by a teenager. The author, S.E. Hinton, was only seventeen years old when she wrote a moving and perceptive novel about a rough gang of longhaired teenagers who came from the wrong side of the tracks. She wrote about things that are important to teenagers. The story is filled not only with drama and violence but also with sensitivity, understanding, and hope. The story is told by the main character, a fifteen year-old boy. He starts his story as he comes out of a movie theater. Here, he begins to tell the readers about his world, a world of “greasers” from the poor side of town. These friends and fellow gang members are not part of what is called “mainstream”; they are truly “outsiders”.

- 1 According to this review, what was unusual about the author of “The Outsiders”?
- 2 What did S.E. Hinton want to write about in her novel?
- 3 From whose point of view is the story in the novel told?
- 4 Find the label in the passage that describes teenagers as rough and tough, with long, slicked back hair.
- 5 Why did the author call her story “The Outsiders”?

## *Storms*

Have you ever been in a fierce storm? All over the world, there are different kinds of storms. Lightning storms can form wherever there is a mix of warm and cool air. Strong swirling winds sometimes develop into tornadoes or cyclones. These twisters can pick up and destroy anything in their paths. Hurricanes and typhoons pound tropical areas with high winds and flooding. Blizzards, which are severe snowstorms, have very strong winds and create zero visibility. All these storms can create natural disasters. So, wherever you live, you must learn about the types of storms that might threaten your area and what precautions to take before and during those storms.

- 1 Which part of the world is never threatened by fierce storms?
- 2 When do lightning storms form?
- 3 A cyclone is sometimes also called \_\_\_\_\_.
- 4 \_\_\_\_\_ tend to strike Florida because of its tropical location.
- 5 What causes “zero visibility” during a blizzard?

## *Steroids*

Sports are becoming more competitive all the time. Athletes are being forced to excel at extremely high levels. This pressure on athletes has sometimes led to the use of steroids. The major concern with steroid use is the potentially damaging side effects. Steroids may cause problems such as liver disease, tendon injuries, increased aggression, loss of scalp hair, and high blood pressure.

Another major risk is the chance of getting caught with traces of steroids in the body and being banned from competitive sports. Steroid use is not worth all the trouble it causes. It has ruined the lives of many athletes, both through scandal and through harmful bodily disorders. The best athletes are clean athletes who know that training, hard work, and determination are the best ways to excel in any sport.

- 1 What has put pressure on some athletes to use steroids?
- 2 What are some of the bodily disorders caused by steroid use?
- 3 Besides harming an athlete's body, what is another major problem caused by steroid use?
- 4 Which word in the passage means "shame" or "disgrace"?
- 5 What is the theme of this passage?

## *The Continents*

Have you noticed how the shapes of the continents look as though they could fit together, the way jigsaw puzzle pieces do? Scientists believe that, millions of years ago, the continents were joined together in one giant land mass called Pangea. The evidence suggests that Pangea split apart and the pieces slowly moved to where they form the continents of today. This is thought to have happened because the Earth's crust, or outer layer, is made up of pieces that are always moving. The pieces of crust are called plates and they are pushed and pulled by the flowing molten rock that lies beneath them. Today, the continents continue to move with the plates they are associated with. Perhaps, some time in the distant future, they will form a new Pangea!

- 1 In what way are the continents like jigsaw puzzle pieces?
- 2 What was Pangea?
- 3 Why did Pangea split apart?
- 4 How might a new Pangea form in the distant future?
- 5 What is the best title for this paragraph?



### *Bad Conscience*

Jim could feel his stomach begin to twist into knots as he glanced nervously around the brightly lit store. He saw the clerk busily engaged with a customer and knew this would be a good time to slip the earrings into his pocket. He had never stolen anything before and knew he really should use the money he'd saved to buy the earrings. If he got caught, it wasn't going to be much of a birthday present for his mom. If only Peter hadn't come along and persuaded him to use his money for the movies tonight. Jim looked out the window at Peter, who was waiting outside, and realized he was the only one responsible for his actions. Removing his wallet from the back pocket of his jeans, Jim walked over to the cash register and waited to pay the clerk. He knew he was doing the right thing.

- 1 The paragraph states that “Jim could feel his stomach begin to twist into knots”. What does this sentence tell you about how Jim was feeling?
- 2 When did Jim think it would be a good time to slip the earrings into his pocket?
- 3 Why was Jim interested in getting earrings?
- 4 What did Jim realize he was responsible for?
- 5 What did Jim finally do?

## *The Paragraph*

In order to convey an idea in writing, without having the reader miss the point, the paragraph form is used. Many people have a lot of ideas to write about, but their writing is not always meaningful because it is not well constructed. A paragraph expresses only one main idea and readers learn what it is when they read the topic sentence. This is often the first thing people read and it should catch their interest. The body of the paragraph develops the main idea by adding supporting details. These are written in an order that makes sense and each sentence must flow smoothly into the next. Once all the details have been covered, the paragraph closes by summing up the main idea. To write well, one must master the craft of paragraph writing.

- 1 Why is some writing not meaningful?
- 2 What should you find at the beginning of a good paragraph?
- 3 How should the details in the body of the paragraph be written?
- 4 What is another name for “the main idea” in a piece of writing?
- 5 Which title best tells what this paragraph is about?

### *Job-shadowing*

“Now tell me about your job-shadowing,” said Mrs. Green, to her class. “I helped a dental hygienist. I really enjoyed meeting people, and being in a medical environment,” announced Kathy. “Well, I shadowed an accountant who was auditing off-site. I liked the idea of visiting, and working in many different offices, but I don’t think I’ll enjoy checking other people’s math,” said Radha. “I had a blast with the firefighters,” grinned Pierre. “I liked the sense of adventure.” He turned to Sue, who shyly admitted, “I’m going to be a veterinarian.” “I shadowed a project manager,” chipped in Andy. “I thought there was too much budgeting and scheduling, but I like the fact that he travels all around the world.” “Now I want you to make a list of your likes and dislikes about the jobs and environments you’ve just observed. Use it when you’re thinking about careers,” concluded Mrs. Green.

- 1 How would you describe job-shadowing?
- 2 Why did Kathy like helping the dental hygienist?
- 3 Why do you think Pierre might also consider a job with the army?
- 4 Which of Mrs. Green’s students probably likes animals the most?
- 5 With what suggestion did Mrs. Green conclude the discussion?

## Chapter 10

# Junior Comprehension Stories—Level 9

Stories in this chapter:

- History of Sports
- UFOs
- The Garbage Problem
- Career Choices
- Crime Detection
- Emotions
- Figurative Language
- Singapore
- Polar Bears

## *History of Sports*

Do you realize that some of today's sports began thousands of years ago? They originated with prehistoric humans and their skills in hunting for food. When people began to live in communities and to farm, they turned their hunting skills of running and throwing weapons into sports - activities done for entertainment and exercise. Later, the soldiers of Ancient Greece, trained to run, throw, and jump, held athletic competitions in the city of Olympia to test their skills. Today, these competitions are called the Olympic Games and attract thousands of amateur athletes from around the world. However, for most of us, sports are simply a part of our daily routine. We may cycle, jog, golf, play baseball or basketball, engaging in both individual and team sports for pleasure and fitness. The sports we play now may change with the seasons but they are a vital part of our lives.

- 1 What does the word "originated" mean?
- 2 When did the skills needed by early humans for survival develop into entertainment skills?
- 3 Where did the Olympic Games originate?
- 4 What are good reasons to take part in some form of sports?
- 5 How do modern humans differ from prehistoric humans in their need to develop physical skills?

## *UFOs*

The debate over whether or not UFOs (Unidentified Flying Objects) exist is a mystery that may never be solved. There are people who say that they have seen UFOs. Some researchers believe that these people really just saw airplanes, falling stars, or even light reflecting off various planets that are close to earth. Other experts believe that it is quite possible that UFOs exist. They think that there are other forms of beings in the vast universe who fly these craft. Such life forms may be more intelligent than humans on earth in that they may already be studying us! There have been too many unexplained sightings to rule out the possibility that UFOs exist. What do you believe?

- 1 What does the word “debate” mean in this passage?
- 2 How did UFOs get their name?
- 3 What do non-believers think that unidentified flying objects in the sky really are?
- 4 What do some people who believe in UFOs think about the beings that fly these craft?
- 5 What is the theme of this passage?

### *The Garbage Problem*

We have to become more environmentally conscious now. If we do not, the earth will soon become virtually uninhabitable. A large part of the problem is a result of overflowing landfill sites. Thus, we have to address the problems of excess garbage and garbage disposal. If we would just take the time to sort our garbage for recycling, we could eliminate over half of our landfill deposits. We need to recycle everything we can. All paper and paper packaging should be recycled. Glass bottles can be reused or melted down. Organic materials, such as food scraps, grass, and leaves can be composted. We need to reduce the use of plastic as much as possible too. We should also use mugs or recyclable paper cups instead of polystyrene drinking cups. If we all do our part, our world will last a lot longer.

- 1 What environmental problem is the main topic of this passage?
- 2 How can we cut our landfill deposits in half?
- 3 Name three of the main kinds of recyclable materials.
- 4 Why are some waste materials called “organic”?
- 5 By recycling, what kind of awareness are we displaying?

## *Career Choices*

Choosing a career is one of the most difficult, yet important, decisions a person must make in life. In order to make a wise choice, people must first recognize their unique strengths, interests, and abilities. This allows them to choose from the major occupational areas, such as sales, the arts, or the trades.

Information on some of the career options within these groups may then be collected and their various requirements explored. Realistic goals need to be set and limitations noted that might prevent individuals from doing a job. Also, a plan of action should be established to obtain the right type and amount of education needed for a job. Good career planning can make the world of work a rewarding place in a person's life.

- 1 In order to make a wise career choice, what must a person first recognize?
- 2 What are the three examples of major occupational areas mentioned in this paragraph?
- 3 What is the word used to describe goals set by people who consider both their strengths and their limitations?
- 4 Why is a good plan of action for education an important part of career planning?
- 5 What do most people hope to accomplish through good career planning?



### *Crime Detection*

If you have ever read any Sherlock Holmes adventures, you will appreciate the advances in crime detection that have been made since the late eighteen-hundreds. Holmes relied on keen observation and his sense of logic to solve a case. Today, detectives have the added benefit that advances in science have given them to help solve crime. Each piece of evidence, even the smallest trace, can be tested with chemicals or viewed under high power microscopes to link the crime with the criminal. Another sophisticated technique, DNA testing, uses DNA from cells that, like a fingerprint, has a pattern that is found only in one person. The experts that work in this field can often tell when, where, how, and who was involved in a crime, without ever being at the scene. This is very different from the kind of detecting that was carried out in the past.

- 1 What did Holmes rely on to solve a case?
- 2 What added benefits are available to detectives today to help solve a crime?
- 3 Why is a person's DNA like a fingerprint?
- 4 How is crime detection today different from the kind that was carried out in the past?
- 5 Which title best tells what this paragraph is about?

## *Emotions*

Emotions are complex feelings that are aroused by experiences. Things may impress you as being agreeable, pleasurable, frightening, etc. These impressions then give rise to such emotions as happiness, grief, affection, or fear. We can judge people's emotions by looking at their eyes, gestures, and facial expressions. We can also study their actions, words, and tone of voice. But people can also hide their emotions, making it difficult to judge their feelings. Sometimes a sensitive friend might need to "read between the lines". When there are no outward signs, we must try to figure out how a certain experience may make someone else feel. At times, it is appropriate to control our emotions while at other times, it is wise to try to express them clearly. Emotions play an important role in everyone's lives and have a strong influence on character and relationships.

- 1 Emotions are \_\_\_\_\_.
- 2 Why is it sometimes difficult to judge people's feelings?
- 3 Facial expressions and gestures are among the many \_\_\_\_\_ of emotions.
- 4 If someone "reads between the lines", he or she tries to \_\_\_\_\_.
- 5 When might be the best time to express your emotions?

## *Figurative Language*

We use figurative language to say things in an imaginative way. This is different from the literal way, which aims to use exact meanings. Figurative language can add different shades to a meaning. It calls for imagination from both speaker and listener. It is often based on a comparison. We compare something unfamiliar with something more familiar in order to bring clarity to the less well-known. The comparison can have a pictorial effect or an emotional one. When we say, “The path was a ribbon of moonlight”, we are comparing the path to a ribbon. We want you to picture something smooth, narrow, winding, and shiny. This comparison, therefore, has a pictorial effect. When we say, “He cried like a baby”, we want the listener to feel the sadness and helplessness of that little person. This comparison, then, is emotional. Figurative language is what makes a message more than just mere words.

- 1 Figurative language brings \_\_\_\_\_ to a story.
- 2 Figurative language doesn't aim for exact meaning like \_\_\_\_\_ language does.
- 3 Figurative language is often based on comparing what kinds of things?
- 4 If a comparison brings “clarity” to something, it provides \_\_\_\_\_.
- 5 In writing, a comparison can be used to create either of these two effects:

## *Singapore*

One of the most beautiful places you can visit is the Republic of Singapore. It is close to the equator, so the weather is hot throughout the year. Singapore is a small country in Southeast Asia, but it has one of the most advanced economies in the world. It is one of the busiest ports in the world, and there are also many computer and other consumer electronics manufacturers in Singapore. Its government is democratic and it keeps an ordered society. Crime and unemployment rates are low, while the standard of living is high. Singaporeans, mostly a mixture of people from China, Malaysia, and India, welcome visitors from around the world. Almost everyone speaks English, as it is an official language. Singapore is also one of the cleanest countries in the world. Smoking in public, for example, is forbidden. The city of Singapore abounds in scenic parks and colorful gardens. It is a treasure to see.

- 1 Singapore is \_\_\_\_\_.
- 2 Why is Singapore so prosperous?
- 3 How do the people of Singapore behave towards tourists?
- 4 What is an important factor that contributes to the scenic parks and colorful gardens that abound in Singapore?
- 5 The standard of living in Singapore is high while \_\_\_\_\_ rates are low.

## *Polar Bears*

Polar bears, the world's largest land carnivores, are remarkable creatures. Not only are polar bears enormous, with some males towering twelve feet high and weighing up to 1500 pounds, but they are so powerful that they can kill a seal with one blow from their mighty paws. Polar bears can run as fast as twenty-five miles per hour, and they are able to swim out over sixty miles from land. Polar bears also have an acute sense of smell, which they use to locate food even many miles away. And they are patient hunters too, for sometimes they disguise themselves as drifting ice, and float around in the hope that a meal might swim by. A polar bear realizes that its black nose is highly visible, so it uses a paw to conceal it while hunting. Polar bears are ferocious and dangerous hunters, for it is known that even small whales and people inside igloos are not safe from them.

- 1 Which word from this paragraph tells us that polar bears are meat-eaters?
- 2 Why can we say polar bears are well-suited to be hunters?
- 3 Why do we say that polar bears are dangerous and ferocious hunters?
- 4 What might make us think that a polar bear is clever?
- 5 When a polar bear floats around trying to look like drifting ice, what does it hope might happen?

## Chapter 11

# Junior Comprehension Stories—Level 10

Stories in this chapter:

- Ecology
- Explorers
- The Hyphen
- Atoms
- Conversation
- Languages
- Alphabets
- Elections
- The Ideal Physique

## *Ecology*

Ecology is the science that studies how living things interact with each other and with their surroundings. The word “ecology” is formed from two Greek words: “oikos”, which means home (i.e., the earth), and “logos”, which means study. Ecology is extremely important. We must learn to understand and protect our environment. We must all feel responsible for the condition of our natural resources and our surroundings. Anyone, of any age, can take on that responsibility. We can all take part in waste management programs that aim to reduce, reuse, and recycle. We can all help to maintain and improve the habitat of our local wildlife. We can all work together to make sure endangered species survive. And we can all make a point of staying informed in ecological issues by reading and by watching television documentaries on the topic.

- 1 Ecology is the topic of this paragraph. What is ecology?
- 2 The Greek word “bios” means “life”. So, biology is \_\_\_\_\_.
- 3 In waste management, the three R’s program is \_\_\_\_\_.
- 4 Who should feel responsible for the condition of the Earth’s environment?
- 5 How can we stay informed on ecological issues?

## *Explorers*

John Cabot, in 1497, was the first European to explore North America. This New World was named after Americus Vesputius who had been the first to write about it. During the sixteenth century, many voyages of discovery were made by the Spanish, Portuguese, English, and French. The Spaniards colonized Mexico. They tried to settle in the southern part of what is now the United States. As well, the French tried to settle on the east coast of the US and along the St. Lawrence River. There were no permanent European settlements until the next century. At this time, the English, in 1607, settled in Jamestown, Virginia, and in 1620, at Plymouth, Massachusetts. The French made their first settlement at Quebec in 1608. Today, these settlements are old but thriving cities. They have come to remind us of the courage and strength of the early explorers.

- 1 John Cabot was the first European to \_\_\_\_\_.
- 2 The continent of North America was named after \_\_\_\_\_.
- 3 Who colonized Mexico?
- 4 There were no permanent European settlements in North America until the \_\_\_\_\_ century.
- 5 In what North American country did the French make their first permanent settlement?



## *The Hyphen*

The hyphen, an important punctuation mark, joins words together. One of its many uses is to form compound words such as merry-go-round and water-repellent. Often, it is difficult to know whether a compound should be two separate words, as in comic strip, a single word, as in nighttime, or hyphenated, as in left-handed. If you are uncertain, check the dictionary and if the word is not there, treat it as two separate words. A hyphen also connects two or more words that operate together as an adjective before a noun. “A well-informed scientist” is an example of this. Hyphens are also used with written fractions (two-thirds) and written compound numbers (twenty-one). Use a hyphen with the prefix “re” when writing a word that is spelled the same as another word with a different meaning. For example, “re-cover” means to cover again but “recover” means to get something back. The hyphen helps us to tell words like this apart.

- 1 Choose the best title for this paragraph.
- 2 If a word is hyphenated, it \_\_\_\_\_.
- 3 If you are not sure if a compound words needs a hyphen, you should \_\_\_\_\_.
- 4 In the example “a well-informed scientist”, well-informed is \_\_\_\_\_ that comes before the noun “scientist”.
- 5 We \_\_\_\_\_ use a hyphen with the prefix “re”.

## *Atoms*

All matter in the universe is made up of extremely tiny particles called atoms. An atom is the smallest particle that can exist by itself. Long ago, scientists thought that each atom consisted of protons and neutrons. These made up the central nucleus and were surrounded by electrons. Then, in 1919, a scientist named Rutherford developed a device that could split an atom apart. By smashing atoms, scientists have found hundreds of other particles. Even though these particles exist only briefly, scientists realized that protons and neutrons are not the most basic particles after all. Today, they think that there are only two fundamental particles. They feel that protons and neutrons are made up of “quarks”. Electrons and similar particles are made up of “leptons”. “Gauge Bosons”, a possible third kind of particle, hold the quarks and leptons together.

- 1 What is the name of the smallest particle that can exist by itself?
- 2 What was thought to make up the central nucleus of an atom?
- 3 When scientists split atoms apart, they found out that\_\_\_\_\_.
- 4 Today, scientists believe that electrons are made up of \_\_\_\_\_.
- 5 What keeps the two fundamental particles together?

## *Conversation*

Have you ever tried to talk to someone but been lost for words? Most people have experienced that problem. If this happens to you, then the following may be of interest. A conversation begins when one of the participants initiates the discussion. Most people wait for the other person to take the lead and start a conversation, so you should learn to take the lead and start a conversation. A good opener is a question or a comment about a topic that is not personal or threatening, such as the weather. Once the conversation begins, listen carefully and try to determine what interests your partner. You can do this by being sensitive to the feelings behind the words and by carefully observing body language. When you sense a topic of interest, follow it up with a comment or question. Being sensitive to others will make you a better listener and more successful during conversation.

- 1 Who might this paragraph help?
- 2 What often happens prior to the start of a conversation?
- 3 Why would it be a good idea to initiate a conversation by talking about a popular TV show?
- 4 What should you do during a conversation?
- 5 A good listener \_\_\_\_\_.

## *Languages*

Most creatures communicate by using sounds but humans are the only ones who do so by using spoken languages. There are approximately five thousand languages in the world; most of them are spoken by relatively small groups of people. In Africa, for example, there are nearly one thousand languages and in Australia there are several hundred spoken by the Aborigines. Mandarin Chinese is the main language of the largest group of people but the language spoken in the most countries in the world is English. In addition, English rates second as the language used by most people. It first was spoken in England by Anglo-Saxons before the year 1100 and was developed by either deriving new words or borrowing entire words from other languages. This process of development still continues as languages change with time.

- 1 How does human communication differ from that of most animals?
- 2 Africa is a country of many tribes. What impact does that have on the languages spoken there?
- 3 Which language is spoken in most countries in the world?
- 4 What does the phrase “deriving new words from other languages” mean?
- 5 Why is “Living Language” a good title for this paragraph?

## *Alphabets*

Most modern languages are written using alphabets, the letters of which represent different sounds. However, the earliest forms of written language were picture symbols on clay tablets, used by the Sumerians in the region of present-day Iraq. Later, the Egyptians developed picture writing, called hieroglyphics. Each hieroglyph stood for an object or a sound and was printed on paper made from papyrus reed. The first letter alphabet was developed by the Phoenicians in 1000 BC. Of that alphabet, the letter “o” is the oldest and the only one that has remained unchanged. The modern English alphabet contains twenty-six letters. Of all modern languages, Chinese is the only one that has no alphabet. It uses fifty thousand picture symbols, called characters, to form words.

- 1 Why was the development of picture symbols and alphabets important?
- 2 Which writing system was developed earliest?
- 3 Who developed the first letter alphabet and when did they do it?
- 4 Which modern language is the only one with no alphabet?
- 5 Why would it be difficult to master written Chinese?

## *Elections*

An election is the process by which government officers are chosen to manage the country's affairs. Only citizens may participate in an election, either as voters or as potential candidates for office. They must also be of a certain age to vote or hold office. A national election day is usually the same day in all parts of the country. Practices and privileges are controlled by strict laws and rules. But all political elections are held by secret ballot. This is done to make sure that votes are uninfluenced so far as secrecy can protect them. And the results of all democratic elections are based on the notion that the will of the majority shall always prevail. After all, the definition of democracy is a system of government in which the people choose their leaders by voting for them in elections. This is government by the people, for the people.

- 1 The people who win political elections \_\_\_\_\_.
- 2 All candidates who have not yet won the election are \_\_\_\_\_ candidates.
- 3 You must be \_\_\_\_\_ and of legal age to vote or hold public office.
- 4 Elections are held by secret ballot so that \_\_\_\_\_.
- 5 "Government by the people" is the definition of \_\_\_\_\_.

### *The Ideal Physique*

The media today places a great deal of emphasis on a standard view of the “ideal” physique. Trying to acquire this physique can have a negative effect on a person’s health. Losing excess body fat can be an appropriate goal, but uncontrolled dieting can lead to muscle deterioration and extreme fatigue. This happens when stores of fat are used up and the body begins to burn muscle tissue for energy. Another way people sometimes try to reshape their physique is by adding muscle mass through the use of steroids. However, not only do steroids develop muscle, but they also produce some rather undesirable side effects and pose long-term health risks. Each person should realize that the images portrayed by the media are not realistic. They should then learn to use good health and fitness habits to develop the physique that is ideal for them.

- 1 What is the author’s main purpose of this passage?
- 2 What can lead to muscle wasting and extreme fatigue?
- 3 When does the body begin to burn muscle tissue for energy?
- 4 What do steroids do besides build muscle?
- 5 Why is the media’s single view of the “ideal” physique not realistic?

## Chapter 12

# Senior Comprehension Stories—Level 1

Stories in this chapter:

- Proof of Payment
- A Place to Live
- Getting Downtown
- Seth's Rules
- Cool Bees
- Luke's Dad
- Recreation
- The Mall
- A Cool Purchase



### *Proof of Payment*

Tony knew that he didn't owe any more money on his set of drums. Yet here was a new bill from the music store. It showed he had made three payments. It said he had one more payment to make. Tony looked for his receipt for the fourth payment. He couldn't find it anywhere. So he went to the store. The manager there checked his records. He said the bill was right. He said Tony had no proof that he had made the fourth and final payment. But the manager went on to give Tony some advice. He told Tony to keep his "paid" bills and receipts in one place as a record. He told him he should pay large bills by check. The problem was solved! Tony could prove he had paid. He had made his fourth payment by check.

- 1 What had Tony bought?
- 2 How many payments had Tony made?
- 3 What good advice did the manager give Tony?
- 4 Why was Tony's problem solved?
- 5 Use a word from the story to complete this sentence: A receipt is a proof of \_\_\_\_\_.

## *A Place to Live*

Lin and his family moved to the big city. They had no place to live. He bought a newspaper to look through the want ads. He saw lists of places for rent. He and his wife wanted to rent a townhouse. They needed space for their three sons. The townhouse had three bedrooms. It had a small yard and a parking place for their car. The rent would take half of Lin's salary. His wife planned to find a job too. Her money would pay for food, heat, and light bills. The townhouse was close to Lin's work. It was close to a school for their boys. Lin thought that they could sell his car if they needed more money. Their plans made the whole family happy.

- 1 What kind of home did Lin and his family want to rent?
- 2 How would Lin's wife contribute to the family expenses?
- 3 What advantages does the townhouse have for Lin's family?
- 4 What fraction of Lin's salary is needed for the rent?
- 5 Why did Lin think he could sell his car if they needed more money?

### *Getting Downtown*

The city was a big place for Sara. She and her dad had to get from the train station to downtown. They did not have much money or time to spend. They had to decide the best way to get downtown. They could take a taxi or a bus. The trip by taxi would be fast. It would take about 15 minutes. It would cost them 15 dollars. The bus stop was nearby. A sign said their bus would leave soon. The bus trip would cost them 3 dollars each. It would take a half hour. Sara thought that the bus would be the better way for them to get downtown.

- 1 What did Sara and her dad have to do?
- 2 Name the two vehicles they thought about taking downtown.
- 3 Which was the better way for them to travel downtown?
- 4 In what kind of place did Sara and her father likely live?
- 5 What two things did Sara think about when making her decision?

## *Seth's Rules*

Seth had a hard time keeping a job. He had few skills. It was hard for him to get along with people at work. In the past, he had been fired because of fights. He knew that he had to learn how to act on the job. He had to keep this new one. Being on time each day was his first rule. The next rule was to listen to the boss. Seth would do as he was told. He knew he should not argue. He also knew that he had to work hard and do his share. There was no time for “fooling around” on this new job. Seth hoped that by trying hard and sticking to his rules, he would do well.

- 1 What important problem is discussed in this story?
- 2 What was the result of Seth's not knowing how to act at work?
- 3 How do we know Seth wants to change his ways?
- 4 Which one of these is not one of Seth's rules?
- 5 Why do you think it is important for Seth to keep his new job?

## *Cool Bees*

Bees live in homes called hives. They can't work and live in them if it is too hot, though. So they air-cool their home. The door of a hive is a narrow slit across the front. It is at the bottom. When the hive gets too hot, a group of bees line up outside the door. Then they fan their wings. This draws hot air out from the hive. It makes all the air in the hive move around. Cool air moves in. This is how they air-cool their homes.

- 1 Why do bees have to cool off their homes?
- 2 Where do you find the door to the hive?
- 3 What moves into the hive to replace the hot air that is drawn out?
- 4 What do the bees do when the hive gets too hot?
- 5 What do the bees do with their wings?

## *Luke's Dad*

Luke's dad is a truck driver. He drives his own big rig. He often drives 2500 miles in a week. His main job is to haul fruit from the south to cities in the north. Then he loads up with hay to take back to the south. He has done this for a long time. He thinks of himself as a professional driver. He is a good one. Luke is glad when his father comes home. Then they clean up the rig for the next trip. Luke likes the cab best. It has a "sleeper" attached. On long hauls, two drivers share the work. They take turns. One drives while the other sleeps. Luke hopes to be a truck driver too some day.

- 1 What does Luke's dad do for a living?
- 2 In his work, Luke's dad usually goes \_\_\_\_\_.
- 3 What does Luke do when his father gets home?
- 4 A professional driver is someone who \_\_\_\_\_.
- 5 What kind of job does Luke hope to do some day?

## *Recreation*

There is an old saying we should know. It is, “All work and no play makes Jack a dull boy.” We all need play or recreation. It keeps us fit and happy. To recreate means to make fresh again, or to refresh. We need to do things that make us feel refreshed after we work. Some people like to swim, run, or walk. Others like to play or watch sports. Many make things with their hands. They sew, knit, carve, or build. Some want to sit and read in a quiet place. We all have 24 hours to fill each day. We must do our work. We must eat and sleep. But we should also spend time at things we enjoy. The best plan is to have things to do that make our minds and bodies feel fresh.

- 1 What is the main idea in what you just read?
- 2 The word “recreate” means \_\_\_\_\_.
- 3 How many hours do we have to fill in one day?
- 4 What does the old saying in this story mean?
- 5 We all need to do things that make us feel this way after hard work:

## *The Mall*

We have built lots of malls to shop in. We build malls near large numbers of homes. Malls have many kinds of stores. People can buy all the things they need. They just have to make one stop. Malls are warm in the winter. They are cool in the summer. They have large parking lots and places to eat. They have theaters where you can watch a movie. All these things make it so that family and friends enjoy spending time at the mall. Everyone can find things they want to do and to buy. Then they can meet and get something to eat. Can you think of things that you don't like about shopping at a mall?

- 1 This paragraph is mainly about \_\_\_\_\_.
- 2 Malls have many kinds of \_\_\_\_\_.
- 3 This paragraph lists \_\_\_\_\_.
- 4 Why do we build malls near large numbers of homes?
- 5 In this paragraph, we are told about places that are \_\_\_\_\_.



### *A Cool Purchase*

Mika wants to buy a new fridge. He likes to know the facts before he buys new things. He read an article to help him shop. He saw it in a magazine for consumers. He is surprised by what he learns. New models have lots of “cool” new features. One new model beeps if the door is left open too long. One fridge can tell you how much power it needs for the month. This fridge is quite efficient and does not use much power. There are fridges with the usual features. They have extra-deep shelves on the door. They have icemakers. Mika read about a fridge that is connected to the Internet. With this fridge, you can order groceries on-line as you stand in front of it! That’s a pretty cool fridge.

- 1 When does Mika like to get the facts?
- 2 What kind of magazine did Mika read?
- 3 What does the word “efficient” mean in this story?
- 4 What cool new feature surprised Mika the most?
- 5 Name one of the common features that fridges have.

## Chapter 13

# Senior Comprehension Stories—Level 2

Stories in this chapter:

- House Rules
- Credit Cards
- Late for Work
- The Need to Read
- The Application
- Home Security
- Labels
- Food for Life
- Job Search

### *House Rules*

Stefano and his brother live in a very small apartment. It has only one bedroom. It also has a small kitchen and a living room. They made up a list of rules to keep the place tidy. Their rules are ones that we all can follow. First, have a place for everything and keep everything in its place. Then, put clothes away when you take them off. Try not to leave them on the floor. Next, wash the dishes after each meal and put them away. Clean up spills right away. Pick up bits of dust and dirt. To make these rules work, Stefano and his brother share the cleaning jobs between them. This way, they know they can keep their home neat and clean.

- 1 What is the main idea in this paragraph?
- 2 How do Stefano and his brother make their cleaning rules work?
- 3 Which rule is the most important for small homes?
- 4 What do Stefano and his brother say to do after each meal?
- 5 Which word in the story means the same as “neat and clean”?

## *Credit Cards*

We live in a world of credit cards! They are not hard to get. They are not hard to use. They can help us to manage money. But they can cause problems if used poorly. We can use credit cards instead of paying cash. This means as shoppers, we can buy more than we can afford. If we do, we can't pay off the balance on each month's statement. Then a high interest charge is added to the balance. If you have trouble using credit cards, here are some rules. Use them only when you have cash in the bank. Put them away when you can't pay each month's balance. Use them only for special or expensive purchases.

- 1 Complete this statement to give the main idea of this story: Credit cards can \_\_\_\_\_.
- 2 When is a high interest charge added to a credit card bill?
- 3 What rule should you follow when you can't pay each month's credit card balance?
- 4 Why is it wise to use credit cards only when you have cash in the bank?
- 5 What can credit cards help us do?

### *Late for Work*

It was Saturday morning at the bus stop. Pierre was starting a new shift at work that day. But he was going to be late. The 6 o'clock bus had not come. In fact, since he had been at the stop, no bus had passed. It was almost 6:30. His shift began at 7 and the bus trip took at least 50 minutes. Pierre worried about what his boss would say. This was only his third week at the company and he needed this job. Then he remembered what his mother had said. "Be sure to check the bus schedule. It may be different on weekends." He had not paid any attention to her. Now he was sorry that he had not listened to her. At last, he saw the bus turn at the corner.

- 1 Why does Pierre not want to be late for work?
- 2 What time does Pierre start work?
- 3 Can Pierre get to work on time by bus?
- 4 What had Pierre's mother said to do?
- 5 What will Pierre have to tell his boss?

## *The Need to Read*

Chris has trouble reading. She did not attend much school as a child because her mother was ill. She had to stay home a lot. When her mother died, Chris dropped out of school. All her life, Chris has struggled with not being able to read. She finds it very difficult. But she never lets on that she can't read. She is worried that people will think that she is not smart. She knows she is smart. She just didn't learn to read in school. Now Chris wants to change this. She wants to be able to read books. She wants to be able to walk into a bank or an office and read the forms herself. She feels the need to read.

- 1 What does Chris not do well?
- 2 What does Chris worry about?
- 3 What does Chris want to do now?
- 4 When Chris learns to read, what does she want to be able to do?
- 5 What does the word "attend" mean?

### *The Application*

At last Maria had a job. She could count on a paycheck each week. Finally she would have her own money. She decided to get her own credit card. She wanted it to be in her name. Right now the card was in her husband's name and he paid the bills. She got an application form at the bank. She filled out her name and address. She wrote down her employer's name and address. There was a box for her salary and one for the length of time she had worked at her job. Some questions surprised her. Did you have to say who owned your home? Did you need to say if you were getting support payments? Maria wanted to do this on her own. She did not want to ask her spouse to co-sign the form. Would she qualify for her own credit card?

- 1 Where did Maria get the application form?
- 2 When Maria read some of the questions, \_\_\_\_\_.
- 3 Maria decided to get a credit card because \_\_\_\_\_.
- 4 The person who must pay a credit card bill is \_\_\_\_\_.
- 5 What other word for "husband" is used in the story?

## *Home Security*

We all need to make our homes as secure, or as safe, as possible. Nobody wants a thief to break in. Here are some ways to keep out an intruder.

- Keep the doors locked at all times. Use strong locks.
- Put a chain on the inside of the door. It will let you open the door a little bit.
- Lock all the windows.
- At night, close and lock windows that are near to the ground.
- Put bars on basement windows.
- Arrange for mail to be picked up when you are away.
- Leave a light on when you go out.
- Don't leave money or jewelry lying around.

Following these tips will help to keep you and your home safe and sound.

- 1 We make our houses secure because we don't want \_\_\_\_\_.
- 2 Why should you put a chain on the inside of the door?
- 3 You should leave a light on when you go out because \_\_\_\_\_.
- 4 When we are away, we should arrange for our mail to be \_\_\_\_\_.
- 5 Which word means the same as "safe"?



## *Labels*

How many labels do you see each day? How many do you read? Labels are on food packages and on clothes. They are there to tell us important facts. Food labels tell us how much food is in a package. They also list all the things that are in the food. This is good for people who don't like to have things put in their food to make it last longer. Others can't eat certain food because it makes them sick. Still others don't want to eat food with a lot of fat in it. Labels on clothes tell the size. They tell how to clean the clothes and what they are made of. Be a smart shopper. Read the labels!

- 1 This is the main idea of what you just read:
- 2 Food labels tell us \_\_\_\_\_.
- 3 Clothes labels tell us \_\_\_\_\_.
- 4 According to the text, what do smart shoppers do?
- 5 Which phrase from the text means the same as “things in the food to preserve it”?

## *Food for Life*

Can what you eat prevent cancer? Many experts think that it can lower the risk. They say a good diet can bring down the chance of cancer. The risk can come down by as much as one-third. They think it is wise to eat food with lots of fiber. This means beans, oats, and bran are good foods to eat to help avoid cancer. Fruits and vegetables have lots of fiber too. The experts also say to eat less fat and oil. Low fat milk and a low fat bran muffin make a good snack of food for life.

- 1 Which group of food has the most fiber?
- 2 "Risk" means the same as \_\_\_\_\_.
- 3 A good diet can lower the risk of cancer by as much as \_\_\_\_\_.
- 4 In this text, an expert is someone \_\_\_\_\_.
- 5 In this text, a wise person is someone \_\_\_\_\_.

## *Job Search*

Remember that your town or city has many places where you can find work. But you have to go out and find these jobs. Make notes before you look for any job. Think of the different businesses in your town. What does each business do? What kinds of work go on inside each business? What skills do you have that would fit in? Will you have to do shift work? Will you work on weekends? Are you able to work the hours that they might ask you to work? Do you have a new idea for a business to use? Now with your notes you can decide which companies you should visit. Look into jobs that match your skills and your interests.

- 1 Which sentence best tells what this paragraph is about?
- 2 When you make notes, you \_\_\_\_\_.
- 3 In this text, you are told to make notes about \_\_\_\_\_.
- 4 You should make notes before you look for any job. They help you to \_\_\_\_\_.
- 5 You should look into jobs that match your \_\_\_\_\_.

## Chapter 14

# Senior Comprehension Stories—Level 3

Stories in this chapter:

- Marco, the Cat
- Too Much Packaging
- Skin Care
- Workplace Safety
- The Menu
- Healthy Heart
- Deductions
- The Right Bank
- Traffic Signs

### *Marco, the Cat*

Suzanne and her family rent a two-bedroom apartment. They have lived there for one month. Before Suzanne signed the lease, she asked if they could keep a pet. Her children are very attached to their cat, Marco. The landlord said the cat could stay. But later, he called to tell Suzanne that she would have to get rid of Marco. He said the neighbors had complaints about the cat. Suzanne said she wouldn't part with it. She had asked about it before the lease was signed. The landlord said he was sorry but the lease said no animals. Suzanne then read the lease. Sure enough, it said very clearly, "No pets allowed". What was she to do? The lease was the legal document even though the landlord had given his word.

- 1 Who had complaints about the cat?
- 2 What mistake had Suzanne made?
- 3 What did the lease say about pets?
- 4 What does "attached to" mean in this story?
- 5 What will probably happen to Marco?

## *Too Much Packaging*

The next time you shop, stop a minute. Think about how the things you buy are packaged. By volume, half of our garbage is now packaging. Total garbage volume is growing fast. Shoppers must start to see how they can help to stop this waste problem. You must make wise choices when you shop. You should keep the three R's in mind. They are: reduce, reuse, and recycle. Avoid anything made with polystyrene. This means things like egg cartons, meat trays, and fast food containers. Buy in bulk when you can. Take your own bags shopping. Sort your garbage for recycling. The main materials for recycling are glass, paper, and plastics. Be package smart. Remember that less is best.

- 1 What is the main topic in this paragraph?
- 2 What are the three R's?
- 3 By volume, how much of our garbage is now packaging?
- 4 Finish this message to shoppers: Be package smart. Remember that \_\_\_\_\_.
- 5 Name one of the wise choices that shoppers should make, according to this paragraph.

## *Skin Care*

For good skin care you must do more than wash it every day. Moisture in the skin makes it healthy. To keep moisture in your skin, drink lots of water every day. Stay away from dry heat. Stay out of the sun too, unless you are protected. A sunscreen lotion can help. Look for one that is strong enough. It should also have an SPF - or sun protection factor - of 15 or more. Wear clothing and a hat to cover you when you are in the sun. If you put on a night cream, it will give moisture to your skin while you sleep.

- 1 What makes skin healthy?
- 2 What will a sunscreen lotion help to do?
- 3 Which of these groups of words best tells what this paragraph is about?
- 4 What is one way to keep moisture in your skin?
- 5 What do the letters “SPF” stand for?

## *Workplace Safety*

Franco worked in a small room testing new food products. He often felt sick by lunchtime. This was a new job for him so he didn't want to complain. At first, he thought he had the flu. Then he thought he needed more fresh air in his lab. He opened the window but it didn't seem to help. At last, Franco spoke to his supervisor, Mr. Stein, about his problem. Mr. Stein knew he had to check out this complaint. He called in the safety inspector. Together they checked all the equipment Franco used. Then they saw what the problem was. Some of the chemicals Franco used were stored poorly. They should have been in special cupboards, not on open shelves. The inspector would correct this.

- 1 How did Franco often feel at work?
- 2 How did Franco think that opening a window might help his problem?
- 3 When did Franco decide to speak to his supervisor?
- 4 How did Mr. Stein solve the problem?
- 5 Who would correct the problem?



## *The Menu*

Years ago, people would go out to eat once or twice a year. Now many people eat out once a day. So they need to know what to look for when they read a menu. The menu tells what is included in the price. Often the price is only for the main course. It does not include dessert or drinks. Often there is a “special”. This food may be served more quickly and cheaply. A buffet is a good value too. You can eat all you want for one price. An important thing to remember is that you can ask the waiter to explain the menu if you don’t understand it.

- 1 The main idea in what you read is \_\_\_\_\_.
- 2 This paragraph tells us that most often dessert and drinks \_\_\_\_\_.
- 3 Why is the “special” a good value?
- 4 Find one possible reason why more people eat out now than they did years ago.
- 5 You can ask \_\_\_\_\_ to explain things about the menu.

## *Healthy Heart*

There are lots of things that you can do to prevent heart disease. One is to quit smoking or not to start. Drink beer, wine, and liquor in moderate amounts. This means not more than one drink a day. Less is better. Diet is important too. Stay away from animal fats. Eat more fish and bran. Also, regular exercise will keep your heart fit. Follow these rules for a healthy heart.

- 1 What does it mean to drink beer, wine, and liquor in moderate amounts?
- 2 Find the best way to prevent heart disease.
- 3 Fish and bran both \_\_\_\_\_.
- 4 Exercise that keeps a heart “fit” keeps it \_\_\_\_\_.
- 5 This paragraph mainly gives advice on \_\_\_\_\_.

## *Deductions*

Did you just get a job? Are you looking forward to your first paycheck? If you are new to the workplace, you must learn about deductions. Gross pay is the money you earn before any dollars are taken off to pay for taxes or benefits. The amounts taken off are called deductions. The main one is for income tax. The tax you pay depends on how much you earn. The more you make, the more tax you pay. Other deductions may be for health and pension plans. These will vary with where you live and the kind of work you do. Your take-home, or net pay, is what is left after deductions.

- 1 Which statement about a paycheck is true?
- 2 Net pay means the same as \_\_\_\_\_.
- 3 Deductions are \_\_\_\_\_.
- 4 Which is usually the largest amount?
- 5 Deductions are taken off your paycheck to pay for \_\_\_\_\_.

## *The Right Bank*

Hanna is now earning money. She wants to find the right bank for herself. She knows that it is wise to choose a bank near her home. This will be convenient when she has banking to do that must be done at the bank. She also knows she needs a bank that has a wide range of services. Hanna will do most of her banking over the Internet, so she wants a bank that offers this service for free. When she decides on the right bank, she has a list of questions to ask. One deals with service charges. How much does this bank charge to cash checks and to move funds from one account to another? What are the different kinds of savings accounts offered? What are the benefits of each one? Even though Hanna will do her banking on-line, she still hopes the bank is open on Saturday.

- 1 How will Hanna do most of her banking?
- 2 What are two things that Hanna is looking for in a bank?
- 3 What is meant by the word “convenient” in this story?
- 4 Why will Hanna likely be satisfied in her choice for a bank?
- 5 What questions does Hanna want to ask about service charges?

### *Traffic Signs*

Marc had just moved from a small town to the city. He was confused by all the traffic. He learned fast that the signs on the roads gave information to motorists and to people on foot. As a young boy, he had learned the meaning of traffic lights and red stop signs. But the “yield” signs were new to him. He saw that these signs were important to drivers when two main roads met. The driver facing the “yield” sign gave way to the driver on the other road. He also saw many other unfamiliar signs. He learned that the blue and white “H” stands for hospital. The black “P” inside a red circle with a slash through it meant that Marc couldn’t park his car there.

- 1 Why was Marc probably confused by all the traffic in the city?
- 2 What did Marc learn fast about the purpose of signs on the road?
- 3 What is another word for “drivers” used in the paragraph?
- 4 What does the “no parking” sign look like?
- 5 What are the colors of the “Hospital” sign?

# Chapter 15

## Senior Comprehension Stories—Level 4

Stories in this chapter:

- Coupons!
- The Family Doctor
- Stop Payment
- The Trouble With Flying
- Employment
- Budgeting
- Shopping
- Exercise
- The Job Resume

### *Coupons!*

You can bring home lots of goods from the food store and still not blow the budget. One good shopping tip is to use coupons and refund offers for cash. These can be found in many places. Newspaper ads, food store flyers, and magazines are full of them. This way of saving money is used regularly by many shoppers. It makes most sense to use coupons for things you normally need and buy. When these goods are already on sale, the savings can really grow. But be careful! Don't let coupons tempt you to buy things that you don't really need just to get a deal. And don't let coupons cause you to "shop hop". If you spend a whole day going to four or five stores, you are wasting your time and the cost of the gas.

- 1 What shopping tip is the main topic of this paragraph?
- 2 Where are you unlikely to find coupons?
- 3 When does it make most sense to use coupons?
- 4 What is meant by the expression "shop hop"?
- 5 What is the main purpose of using food coupons?

## *The Family Doctor*

Jeremy and his wife make regular visits to their family physician. Each year they have a checkup even though they feel healthy. This is very important. Their doctor keeps a record from one visit to the next. She knows if things change or may or may not be a sign of some illness. She may find early signs of disease. She can give them good advice about a healthy lifestyle. This is preventive medicine. She can give them advice about their children too. By getting to know them, she can serve them better.

- 1 Why is it important to see your doctor regularly?
- 2 What might a doctor find if she notices a change in someone?
- 3 Which word in the story means the same as “doctor”?
- 4 Which word in this story means the same as “illness”?
- 5 What is meant by the term “preventive medicine”?



## *Stop Payment*

Joseph planned to go to the bank on Thursday. He wanted to make a deposit in his savings account. On Wednesday, he filled in his deposit slip. He was excited to put in a \$100 check he got from his aunt as a gift for his 16th birthday. He signed the check right away. When he got to the bank the next day, the check was missing. He told the bank teller about the problem. The teller asked if Joseph had endorsed the check. Joseph admitted that he had signed the check already. Then the teller explained that anyone who found the check could cash it. An endorsed check is as good as cash. Joseph was very upset. He'd lost one hundred dollars! The teller calmed Joseph down. She told him to call his aunt immediately so that she could arrange to stop payment for that check at her bank. Maybe the money was not lost after all.

- 1 Joseph planned to go to the bank on Thursday. What did he do on Wednesday?
- 2 What problem did Joseph face when he got to the bank?
- 3 Where did Joseph get the check?
- 4 What big mistake had Joseph made?
- 5 Why did the teller suggest that Joseph call his aunt?

### *The Trouble With Flying*

“Flying is not what it used to be,” said Lynne when her husband met her at the airport. “It took two hours to go through security. Then the flight was three hours late. Do you know what it’s like to sit in a crowded airport lounge for that length of time?” Her husband had been in situations like this. He understood her feelings but wanted to ease her mood. He tried to change the subject. Still, Lynne raged on. “I’m so annoyed that I’m going to write a letter to the airline. While we were in the lounge, the conditions were awful. The snack bar was closed. Vending machines were out-of-order. To top things off, one of the washrooms was being repainted!”

- 1 When did Lynne speak to her husband about her travel problems?
- 2 What word or phrase in the story describes Lynne’s mood?
- 3 How long did Lynne say it took her to go through security?
- 4 What are some of the complaints that Lynne will write about?
- 5 Why did her husband understand her feelings?

## *Employment*

There are two sides to employment. One side is that of the employee. The other side is that of the employer. It costs an employer a lot for a worker who quits after just a few days on the job. These costs come from many things. One is in advertising the job. Another is in the time it takes to interview and hire. Once a new worker is hired, there are payroll and accounting costs. There are also costs in lost production time. No wonder employers look for people who are serious about working. They also look for those who will be loyal and remain on the job for some time.

- 1 What two major traits does an employer look for in an employee?
- 2 What is meant by “lost production time” in this paragraph?
- 3 What are the two sides to employment mentioned in this paragraph?
- 4 Name two of the costs an employer has if an employee quits after a short time on the job.
- 5 Which title best expresses what is being discussed in this paragraph?

## *Budgeting*

It might be nice to have an endless supply of money. But most of us are not so lucky. To make the best use of our money, we need to have a budget or a money plan. To begin a budget, list all monthly expenses that are due on a set date. These are fixed expenses. They include rent or mortgage payments, taxes, insurance, and utility bills. Then list all other expenses for the month. These are flexible expenses. This means they can be cut down as needed. They may include food, clothes, gifts, and travel. If expenses are more than income, check to see which flexible ones can be cut. The last step is to set a savings goal.

- 1 The main purpose of a budget is to \_\_\_\_\_.
- 2 How should you begin to plan a budget?
- 3 What is the last step in planning a budget?
- 4 Why are some expenses called “flexible”?
- 5 Which of these are fixed expenses?

## *Shopping*

We often have different feelings when we shop. Sometimes we may feel good but many times we feel stressed. We should try to remember some facts as we shop. Often there are not enough salespeople. This means we may have to wait longer to be served than we may like. At certain times, on weekends and holidays, stores are filled with shoppers. Even extra staff may not be able to serve them quickly. We should try not to shop before an important meeting or when we have little time. We will feel more stress if we have to wait. It's wise to plan shopping trips. Perhaps shopping alone or in "off-hours" may make shopping a better experience.

- 1 Which phrase best tells what this paragraph is about?
- 2 According to the paragraph, the best time to shop is when \_\_\_\_\_.
- 3 When we shop, we often feel more stress if \_\_\_\_\_.
- 4 Which is probably the least stressful time to shop?
- 5 In this paragraph, the word "stress" means \_\_\_\_\_.

## *Exercise*

If you are tired much of the time, why not think about starting an exercise program? Check with your doctor before you begin. All of us can benefit from some form of exercise each day. It helps increase blood flow. This gives us more energy and makes us feel better. Best of all, exercise burns fat. It helps tone muscles too. Begin with a warm-up that includes stretching. This helps loosen muscles. It also aids in preventing soreness after a work out. Then choose something that you like to do, perhaps running, brisk walking, or some sport. Try to spend at least 15 to 30 minutes daily at this. Increase the amount of time spent at the activity gradually. Remember to end with a cool-down period. This means slowing down the activity before you stop. It helps prevent cramps. After one week of regular exercise, you will feel more alert and energetic.

- 1 What is the first thing you should do before starting an exercise program?
- 2 Which is not a benefit of daily exercise?
- 3 Pick the sentence that means the same as: "A warm-up aids in preventing soreness".
- 4 Why should you end an exercise program with a cool-down period?
- 5 You should start your exercise program with \_\_\_\_\_.

### *The Job Resume*

A job resume is like an ad for yourself. You want an employer to see you as a skilled person. You want to be seen as someone he or she would want to hire. Your resume should be complete but to the point. It should be neat, easy to read, and free from mistakes. It should be no more than 2 or 3 pages long. Use short sentences and precise wording to describe your experience. Divide your resume into sections. Some of these should be: education and training, work background and experience, and personal interests. You may give references or offer to give them on request. A good resume makes a good impression. That can be the key to an interview for the job you want.

- 1 A resume can be the “key” to getting an interview because \_\_\_\_\_.
- 2 This paragraph says you should make your resume neat and \_\_\_\_\_.
- 3 What is a resume?
- 4 What impression do you hope to give with your resume?
- 5 How long should a resume be?

## Chapter 16

# Senior Comprehension Stories—Level 5

Stories in this chapter:

- Back to Work?
- Money Matters
- Going South?
- Granddad's Car
- Healthy Fast Food?
- Energy Wise
- Cars
- Shopping On-line
- Self-Health



### *Back to Work?*

Marta used to be a bank teller. Eight years ago, she left work to raise her children. Now they are in school and Marta wants to return to work. In her interview, the manager explained how a teller's job has changed since she left. "It used to be," he said, "that a teller's job was handling withdrawals and deposits." He went on, "Today, people want one-stop service. They expect the teller to be very knowledgeable and helpful. The teller still does the basics but also helps customers with a wide range of money matters. Today's teller needs to know as much as a manager did when you were here, Marta. Computers have also changed the job quite a bit, so you'll need to learn how to use them." Marta was surprised at the changes over the years. But she was up for the challenge. She was ready to go back to work.

- 1 What was Marta's career before she left to raise her children?
- 2 When did Marta decide that she wanted to return to work?
- 3 What kind of challenges did Marta face?
- 4 What must a modern bank teller do differently than in Marta's time?
- 5 What had changed about how tellers do their jobs?

## *Money Matters*

It took just one month of keeping track of all expenses for Mr. and Mrs. Lopez to know that their budget was not working. They had not been able to save any money. The ten percent they had planned to save was too high. They looked at some of their flexible expenses. Their budget records showed that they were spending too much money eating out at restaurants. Mrs. Lopez also said that they could cut down on their grocery bill. Instead of buying frozen foods and pre-cooked meals, she decided to use fewer prepared foods. They were shocked to see how much interest they were paying on their credit card bills. From now on, they would limit their use of these cards. They would monitor their spending for another month to see if these steps helped them to save money.

- 1 For how long had Mr. and Mrs. Lopez been on a budget?
- 2 Which part of their budget had failed?
- 3 Which expression in the text means the same as “prepared foods”?
- 4 Mr. and Mrs. Lopez hoped to solve their budget problem by \_\_\_\_\_.
- 5 How did they plan to cut down the high interest charges on their credit card bills?

### *Going South?*

The Larabie family was on a winter vacation in Florida. They wondered what it would be like to move from the north to the south. They loved many things about the south: the warmth, the sun, the beach, the light, and casual clothing. They felt that they would never miss snowstorms, heating bills, and heavy winter jackets and boots. They were sure that the warm climate would mean cheaper living. So they began to check into costs and housing. They were surprised by what they learned. They found that to rent an apartment or townhouse near the water was very expensive. They would be paying high costs for air conditioning. They found out that on some winter days it gets cold enough that they would need to heat their home. Rather than snowstorms, they heard about the damage caused by hurricanes. They decided to rethink the idea of moving south.

- 1 What is the main idea in this story?
- 2 Which is usually more dangerous, a snowstorm or a hurricane?
- 3 Name two things the Larabie family loved about the south.
- 4 What costs could be greater in the south than in the north?
- 5 When they had checked into the cost of living in the south, what did the Larabies decide to do?

## *Granddad's Car*

Granddad's photograph album gave the family a picture history of the development of the American automobile. His first car was a Ford. It had a cloth roof, no doors, and small lights that looked like lanterns. One snapshot showed him at the front of the car. He was turning a crank to start it. Other pictures from the 30's and 40's showed much larger cars. Some had four doors and huge, round headlights sticking out like the eyes of a frog. Perhaps the oddest looking car was a '59 Buick. It had wide wings, or fins, at the back, with bullet-like taillights. The children said it looked like a giant insect from space. Now they thought, cars seem so plain and small, like boxes on wheels.

- 1 What make, or kind, of car was Granddad's first car?
- 2 What did Granddad have to do to his first car?
- 3 A simile compares two things using "like" or "as" to make the comparison. Which simile was used in the story?
- 4 What did the children think was the oddest looking?
- 5 Which two words in the story mean the same as "photograph"?

### *Healthy Fast Food?*

Like most people, you probably enjoy the convenience of a fast food restaurant every now and then. But you may also be concerned about good nutrition. Is it possible to choose healthy foods at a fast food restaurant? You may be surprised to learn that it is. Here are some guidelines to help you make the healthy choices. Choose meat or fish that is broiled or baked, not fried. Select salads and vegetables instead of fries. Ask for low calorie dressings on the side. Have low-fat milk or fruit juice instead of a soft drink. Choose whole grain bread or rolls and avoid pastries.

- 1 What is the main topic in this paragraph?
- 2 What do most people enjoy about a fast food restaurant?
- 3 Name three healthy food choices you can make at a fast food restaurant.
- 4 Would deep-fried fish be a healthy fast food choice? Why or why not?
- 5 People who make healthy food choices may be concerned about \_\_\_\_\_.

## *Energy Wise*

We all must do our part to use energy wisely. By doing so, we will save not only our natural resources but our dollars too. A lot of energy is used to heat and cool our homes. Whether it is as a tenant or owner, someone pays the cost. On cold days, we can open blinds and drapes to let the sun heat the rooms. On hot days, we can close them to help keep the rooms cool. When we are away from home, we can lower heating or raise cooling temperatures. If we have unused rooms, we can close them off to reduce energy use. All of us can lower the heat setting on our hot water heaters. We can all be more careful about the amount of hot water use too. We can all be energy wise.

- 1 Which sentence best tells the main focus of this paragraph?
- 2 On what type of days can we best save energy?
- 3 If we use energy wisely, we can \_\_\_\_\_.
- 4 How do we use a lot of energy?
- 5 Which pair of words used in the text is related in the same way as “open and close”?

## *Cars*

Since the turn of the century, the automobile has changed life in North America. Much farmland has become a network of roads. Some of them look like concrete ribbons. They seem to increase our pace of life and our love of speed. To meet these needs, gas stations have popped up all over. Signs and billboards coax us to buy both cars and gas. Our newspapers and magazines carry the same messages. So do radio and television. Cars are now an essential part of our lives. We use them for transportation in our business and personal lives. Cars and the freedom they give us have made us a mobile society.

- 1 This paragraph is mainly about \_\_\_\_\_.
- 2 The term “mobile society” means:
- 3 The phrase “concrete ribbon” describes \_\_\_\_\_.
- 4 Cars are now an essential part of \_\_\_\_\_.
- 5 According to the paragraph, where do we find messages that coax us to buy cars and gas?

## *Shopping On-line*

On-line shopping has many advantages. Probably the major one is the saving of time. You don't have to travel to different stores looking for an item. All you do is look through the on-line web pages and pick out what you want. Then you simply fill out the on-line order form and choose your method of payment. Another advantage is its ease. Many people find it hard or even physically impossible to go to stores. But on-line shopping solves the problem. They don't have to leave their homes. This "at-home" shopping also gives us time to choose with care. It frees us from crowds and allows us to do a lot of comparison shopping in just a few minutes. Remember to fill out the on-line order form carefully before you click on the "submit order" button. This way your on-line shopping will be a success!

- 1 One major advantage to on-line shopping is \_\_\_\_\_.
- 2 What does on-line shopping mean to those who find to difficult or impossible to go to stores?
- 3 Which disadvantages of on-line shopping are mentioned in this paragraph?
- 4 What is the main idea in the paragraph?
- 5 "At-home" shopping frees us from \_\_\_\_\_.



### *Self-Health*

Life is filled with responsibilities. One of the main ones is to look after our own health. Of course, health problems can appear that are not related to our own habits. In most cases though, good habits lead to good health. We need regular exercise. This improves lung capacity and tones muscles. Our bodies need regular sleep. The number of hours each person needs varies but we cannot make up for lost sleep. Proper diet is another vital factor. Each day should start with breakfast and we should plan our meals from the basic food groups. Finally, we should see a doctor if there is a sudden change in our health.

- 1 Which would make the best title for this paragraph?
- 2 Good habits lead to good health; this means they \_\_\_\_\_.
- 3 What helps to develop lung capacity?
- 4 \_\_\_\_\_ are related to our personal health care.
- 5 This paragraph lists good habits that lead to good health. Which is not listed in the paragraph?

## Chapter 17

# Senior Comprehension Stories—Level 6

Stories in this chapter:

- Taking The Bus
- Smart Shopping
- New Accounts
- The Lease
- Alice’s Lease
- Public Transit
- Read The Manual!
- Eating well
- Childcare

### *Taking The Bus*

Steven is trying to decide if taking the bus is the best way of getting to and from work. He knows that it is important for him to arrive on time. He telephoned the local transit system and told them his home address, where he worked, and the time he had to arrive at work. Steven found out what routes he should take, how long the trip would take, and the cost. He also asked for a copy of route maps so he wouldn't get lost. He used all this information and learned it would take 30 minutes to get to work and that he would have to transfer only once. He would arrive at work 10 minutes before starting time. Taking the bus to and from work was going to work out just fine for Steven.

- 1 What is Steven trying to decide?
- 2 What phrase used in the paragraph means “bus company”?
- 3 What word could you use to describe how Steven is going about making his decision?
- 4 Why did Steven ask for a map of the routes?
- 5 What seems to be the most important point guiding Steven's decision about getting to and from work?

## *Smart Shopping*

Buying food takes a large portion of our incomes. Because of this, the wise shopper follows certain rules and guidelines. To avoid impulse buying, never shop when you are hungry and always use a list. Read the grocery store advertisements and specials, clip coupons, and plan menus before going to the store. Read the “unit prices” on the shelf for similar items. They can show you the best buy. When possible, buy local fruit and vegetables. They will usually be cheaper. Remember that foods you prepare yourself will often cost less than those that are ready to use. Try to avoid buying junk foods. They have little food value and are expensive. Finally, it is a good idea to replace some meat purchases with things like eggs, cheese, beans, and lentils.

- 1 What two rules are mentioned to avoid impulse buying?
- 2 Why are local fruits and vegetables usually cheaper?
- 3 What’s the difference between foods you prepare yourself and foods that are ready to use?
- 4 Why will you not find junk foods on a smart shopper’s grocery list?
- 5 What use is suggested here for eggs, cheese, beans, and lentils?

### *New Accounts*

To open a bank account, go to the desk in the bank marked “New Accounts”. The person at the desk will give you an information card to fill out. The bank needs to know your full name and address, including your postal code. You will also tell them your birth date and your telephone number and the type of work you do. For identification, you may use your Social Security Number or your driver’s license. Your signature on the card shows how you sign your name. It will be used to compare with the signature on any of your checks. This comparison is made by the bank to protect your money.

- 1 When you open a bank account, you may use \_\_\_\_\_ for identification.
- 2 An information card serves this one main purpose:
- 3 Which phrase would make the best title for this paragraph?
- 4 What is one way the bank protects your money?
- 5 What is your “signature”?

## *The Lease*

All tenants have some rights that are not put in the lease. But they must also be completely aware of what is in the lease. They should not expect any statement or promise that is not in it to be upheld. A tenant should not sign a lease if he or she objects to any clause or conditions in it. Instead, he or she should discuss it with the landlord. Together, they may then decide to remove or alter a part of the lease so that it is acceptable to both the tenant and the landlord. Both parties should initial any changes since a lease is a legal document. A wise tenant will also know the name and address of the owner as well as the superintendent. Often problems can be solved faster if a tenant can speak directly to the owner of the property.

- 1 What kind of legal document is being discussed in this paragraph?
- 2 What is the most important reason why a tenant should read the lease?
- 3 What can a tenant do about a clause in the lease that is not acceptable?
- 4 When should a tenant accept changes to the lease that are not in writing?
- 5 A wise tenant will \_\_\_\_\_.

### *Alice's Lease*

Before Alice signed the lease for her new apartment, she read it carefully. She understood most of it but she had trouble with some of the legal terms. She asked a friend to read it over with her. She wanted to know just what her obligations were. She wanted to know what the landlord's obligations were too. Alice found out she had to pay for the heat and electricity as well as for small repairs and maintenance such as painting. The landlord had the right to inspect the apartment at any time. She didn't like this point at all. The thought of her landlord going into her apartment at any time made her very uncomfortable. She met with the landlord and he agreed to change the lease to limit visits to no more than one per month, and by appointment only. This change satisfied Alice and she signed her new lease.

- 1 What three things was Alice expected to pay for under the terms of the lease?
- 2 When did Alice decide to read the lease carefully?
- 3 What change was made in the lease?
- 4 What facts show that Alice is a wise consumer?
- 5 Why do you think the landlord wanted to inspect the apartment?

## *Public Transit*

For many of us who live in urban areas, public transit is a practical means of getting to and from work. The driver has all the worries. He has to think of crowded, wet, or slippery roads. As passengers, we just have to sit and relax. Once at work, we don't have to think about finding a parking place. Also, we don't have the expense of monthly parking. In some areas, express buses bring commuters from outlying places. This cuts down the need for transfers. In other regions, buses travel in special lanes. Some buses have their own transit roads. All this saves time for the rider. Using public transit may also save on car insurance costs. Premiums are usually lower if a car is not being used for work.

- 1 The word "transit" means \_\_\_\_\_.
- 2 Public transport is helpful because \_\_\_\_\_.
- 3 One benefit of the use of public transit not mentioned in this paragraph is \_\_\_\_\_.
- 4 Car insurance premiums may be lower if \_\_\_\_\_.
- 5 Which of these words means the same as the word "premiums" in this paragraph?



### ***Read The Manual!***

When we purchase an appliance, we should receive a manual with it. A manual describes in words and pictures how to use and care for appliances. These days, many appliances do complex operations. For example, a telephone can be programmed to dial a number when we touch only one button. A video recorder can tape one TV program while we watch another one. An oven can be set to turn on and cook while we are at work. A manual gives us all the facts we need to make full use of an appliance. It is important to read it and to look at the pictures. This is the way to learn all the things the appliance can do. We will find tips too on how to fix certain problems. This can save repair costs. So, it is wise to read the manual.

- 1 In what you just read, the main idea is about \_\_\_\_\_.
- 2 Which appliances are mentioned in this paragraph?
- 3 Instructions for how to use and care for an appliance are found in a \_\_\_\_\_.
- 4 Why do the instructions in a manual use both words and pictures?
- 5 To help us make full use of an appliance, a manual will give us \_\_\_\_\_.

## *Eating well*

We spend a large part of our income on food. Still, we need guidelines to help us make sure we eat well. Many people eat only certain foods and believe that they eat well. But experts have determined what types of food our bodies need. These foods fall into three basic groups: proteins, fats, and carbohydrates. Protein foods build and repair body tissue. We get protein from meats, nuts, legumes, and grains. Fats provide fuel and energy. They are in meats, oils, and dairy products. Carbohydrates provide energy too. They are found in fruits, vegetables, cereals, and sugar. Vitamins and minerals, found in all three food groups, are also essential for good nutrition. It is helpful to keep these groups in mind as you plan meals and shop for food.

- 1 What is the main topic of this paragraph?
- 2 What are the three basic food groups?
- 3 What do protein rich foods do?
- 4 Which food groups are a good source of energy?
- 5 Vitamins and minerals can be found in \_\_\_\_\_.

## *Childcare*

There are many kinds of childcare arrangements for working parents to consider. One is to have children looked after at home. Caregivers may live in their own homes and come in daily to look after children in their homes. Or the caregiver may live with the family and be there all the time. In either case, children and parents will benefit. There is less upset in routine and no transportation to consider. Also, children like being in their own surroundings. Childcare outside the home can be provided in several ways. There are daycare centers, nursery schools, and private homes. All of these have benefits. A major one is the chance for children to play together and develop social skills.

- 1 There are many forms of childcare outside the home. Which one is considered to have no benefits?
- 2 A major benefit of childcare outside the home is \_\_\_\_\_.
- 3 The term “daycare” suggests more than the word “baby-sitting” because it implies \_\_\_\_\_.
- 4 For which type of childcare arrangement does child transportation not have to be considered?
- 5 “Children like being in their own surroundings.” Means they like being in their own \_\_\_\_\_.

# Chapter 18

## Senior Comprehension Stories—Level 7

Stories in this chapter:

- Problem Landlord
- New Car?
- Consumer News
- Environmentally Friendly
- Tenants' Rights
- Carpooling
- Comparison Shopping
- A Problem
- The Job Interview

### *Problem Landlord*

The Willards had seven months left in the one-year lease on their apartment and they were having problems with the landlord. In their unit, there were no screens on the windows. This was a danger for their young child in the summer months. In the lobby, not only was the floor often dirty but also many of the tiles were broken or turning up. The Willards spoke to the landlord several times but he refused to make any repairs without increasing their rent to cover the costs. He said they knew of these conditions when they signed the lease. However, the Willards did not give up and decided to check the housing bylaws at City Hall. They were sure there were bylaws to handle their situation.

- 1 What complaint did the Willards have about their apartment?
- 2 What complaint did the Willards have about the lobby?
- 3 What did the landlord do when the Willards spoke to him?
- 4 What did the Willards decide to do in this situation?
- 5 Why did the landlord think that he didn't have to make the repairs?

## *New Car?*

After working for two years, Anita wanted to purchase a car. The factory where she worked was 20 miles from her home and the bus trip took over an hour. When she drove a car to work, the trip took only 15 to 20 minutes depending on traffic. However, Anita did not have the money to buy a car nor could she afford monthly payments on a bank loan. She thought of different ways she could obtain the money but they meant holding two jobs or borrowing. She spoke to a friend who had recently bought a new car and asked him how he managed to afford such an expensive purchase. He had planned a budget and put money from each paycheck into a savings account. After three years, he had enough money for the car without having to take out a bank loan.

- 1 What is this story about?
- 2 How much time did Anita save going to work by car rather than by bus?
- 3 At first, what did Anita think she would have to do to get a car?
- 4 Which of these words best tells you about what Anita's friend did to get his car?
- 5 Explain how Anita's friend had managed to buy a car?

## *Consumer News*

A consumer's magazine is made up of articles that describe and compare products. It covers issues of interest to consumers and gives facts on a variety of goods. One issue may cover a range of topics - from baby food, to toys, to cars. The facts are gathered by independent research groups. They aim to present findings that are objective. Sometimes comparisons or factors related to the products are laid out in charts and graphs. This makes them easy to read and recall. A smart shopper is well informed. You should try to know all about the products you plan to buy. Then you will be able to make sound decisions. Some people subscribe to a consumer's magazine to get all the latest consumer news. They want to stay up-to-date on the facts about products and current issues. Others use libraries to research consumer information just before making a big purchase.

- 1 What kind of articles are found in a consumer's magazine?
- 2 What is meant by "independent research group" in this paragraph?
- 3 Why is it important for consumers to be able to read objective information about products?
- 4 What is the point of presenting information about products in charts and graphs?
- 5 Why do some people subscribe to consumer's magazines?

## *Environmentally Friendly*

In recent years, there has been an effort to protect our outdoor environment. In part, this has come about as a result of oil spills and acid rain. We need to be attentive to the environment we live in and work in too. Some of the systems we use to heat and cool our surroundings seem to cause headaches and fainting. Strong lights and poor ventilation will make some people ill too. In addition, too many strong cleaners and synthetic fabrics are being used. There is an excessive use of plastic and disposable goods. This means a lot of chemicals are still being used to make these things. On the other hand, no-smoking laws are helping to clear the air in many workplaces. No smoking is the law in a lot of homes too. We must all strive to use things and do things that are “friendly” to the inner space we live in.

- 1 What is the main idea in this paragraph?
- 2 What are some things in the indoor environment that seems to cause headaches and fainting?
- 3 What kind of laws are mentioned that help to clear the air in many workplaces?
- 4 Explain what it means to be “friendly” to the environment.
- 5 What does the use of strong cleaners and disposable goods indicate?



## *Tenants' Rights*

A landlord no longer has the right to drag a tenant from his or her home, turn off the heat, or raise the rent as he wishes. Today, in most places, a tenant has more rights than those stated in the lease. Tenants can appeal to the city, a rent review board, or a judge to help correct any wrongs. For example, a landlord must keep his rental property in good, safe condition. If he does not, tenants can appeal to have their rents lowered until the conditions are improved. Also, a landlord cannot evict a tenant without good reason, such as failure to pay the rent or damage to the property. Many tenants in large buildings form tenants' rights groups to protect their interests.

- 1 How have the rights of a landlord changed?
- 2 If the landlord allows his apartment building to get run down, a good move for his tenants would be to \_\_\_\_\_.
- 3 To “appeal your rights” means \_\_\_\_\_.
- 4 Where can tenants go to judicially appeal their rights?
- 5 Why are tenants' rights groups formed?

## *Carpooling*

Although she had calculated the monthly costs to drive her car to work, Suki had not considered increases in the price of gas, insurance, and parking. She was spending too much money using her car to get to and from work. The thought of taking the subway really did not appeal to her, so she discussed her problem with a fellow worker and together they came up with a good plan. They would form a carpool, made up of three drivers to share the driving. Each would drive for a week and then be a passenger for two weeks. Each would be responsible for his or her own expenses. They would divide the cost of one parking permit. Suki knew this plan had some disadvantages but at least it allowed her to get to work by car.

- 1 Suki's travel problem stemmed from the fact that \_\_\_\_\_.
- 2 How did Suki feel about taking the subway to work?
- 3 The problem was solved when Suki \_\_\_\_\_.
- 4 What disadvantage of the carpool plan are mentioned in the text?
- 5 In the carpool, Suki's travel costs would be lowered to approximately \_\_\_\_\_.

### *Comparison Shopping*

We all can be wise shoppers if we learn to compare certain factors. Whether we are buying clothes, food, or major items such as cars and appliances, it pays to “comparison shop” first. We should check the price of the particular item in more than one store. It is a difficult task to compare products that look the same but have different labels. For example, when buying shoes, we should consider the material used, how they are made, and the fit. Then we are in a position to judge which pair will be more durable, or last longer. Buying food involves comparing the cost, weight, and quantity of similar products. Some stores help by showing this information as the “unit” price. Comparing can mean saving dollars.

- 1 What is the main idea in the paragraph?
- 2 What factors should be compared when we shop for shoes?
- 3 What factors should be compared when we shop for food?
- 4 What does the phrase “be more durable” mean?
- 5 To do comparison shopping, you should check the price of \_\_\_\_\_.

## *A Problem*

Isabel noticed that her classmate, Manuel, frequently fell asleep in class. For a while she noticed it mainly after lunch, but lately she noticed that he couldn't keep his eyes open in the morning as well. It seemed that Manuel was late for class quite often and when he did arrive he looked pretty rough. They often sat together at the same desk and she saw his hand trembling when he handed her things. When the professor asked where Manuel was, Isabel always tried to cover for him. They had been in school together for a few years and she liked him. She decided to talk to him. Manuel revealed that he was working two jobs in order to pay for school. He was falling asleep in class because he was up all night at work. Isabel suggested he talk to the school administrator. She knew that there were programs at the school that could help Manuel with his financial problems.

- 1 Lately, Manuel appeared to be falling asleep in class \_\_\_\_\_.
- 2 Isabel suspected that Manuel \_\_\_\_\_.
- 3 What happened first in the story?
- 4 What did Isabel suggest to Manuel?
- 5 Isabel decided to \_\_\_\_\_.

### *The Job Interview*

An invitation to a job interview is a sign that the company is interested in hiring you. Because interviews may be short, it is important to be prepared. You want to appear informed and capable. Learn some facts about the company: its history, its head office location, its products and services. Make sure you know the name of the person with whom you are meeting so that you can use it with confidence. Review the job being offered. Be able to state how your skills and experience make you a good choice. Remember, in an interview your answers to the questions help “sell” you. Finally, think of questions the interviewer might ask and try to prepare answers to them.

- 1 How do you want to appear in a job interview?
- 2 What is an advantage of preparing for an interview by thinking of questions the interviewer might ask?
- 3 When you try to “sell” yourself in a job interview, you are trying to convince someone to \_\_\_\_\_.
- 4 In a job interview, you should talk about your skills and experience so that \_\_\_\_\_.
- 5 Which interview tips would you use to make the interview more friendly and personal?

## Chapter 19

# Senior Comprehension Stories—Level 8

Stories in this chapter:

- Just Out Of Reach
- Road Trip
- Job Health
- Home Ownership
- Using Plastic
- Allergies
- Good Job!
- Priorities
- Just Out Of Reach

### *Just Out Of Reach*

This was not the first time the real estate broker had seen disappointment. The young couple had waited a year for a special house to be for sale but now they sat before Mr. Raymond, hearing him say that they were not in a position to purchase the house. They had taken into consideration the down payment, legal fees, and closing costs but had not figured out the monthly expenses. These could not be avoided. Even if they spent forty percent of their income on housing, they still could not manage the monthly costs without a larger down payment. This was out the question because they could not get a larger bank loan. But Mr. Raymond had some advice. “You could buy in a less expensive neighborhood or a less expensive type of home and then your housing dollars would go further.”

- 1 Who was Mr. Raymond?
- 2 Which words in the text suggest that Mr. Raymond was experienced?
- 3 What costs had the young couple not figured out?
- 4 Name two of the expenses that they had taken into consideration?
- 5 How did the young couple feel?

## *Road Trip*

Renting a car for her holiday was a new experience for Carla and one that she found exciting. The clerk at the car rental agency helped her fill out the necessary forms to rent the car for a week, with unlimited mileage. Carla clearly understood that her fee included insurance and any normal wear and tear on the car, but did not include gas. On the second day of her trip, 500 miles from home, the car would not start even though the car was practically brand new. Carla was upset at first, but then remembered what she must do. She contacted the local branch of the rental car company and explained the problem. They indicated that they would supply another car to her within the hour. However, the second car was a different make and she was shocked when the car arrived. The driver said that Carla would be expected to cover the cost difference between Carla's original car and the upgrade.

- 1 Carla was trying something for the first time. What was it?
- 2 When and where did Carla's rental car break down?
- 3 When the problem arose, whom did Carla contact?
- 4 Why was Carla shocked when she found out she had to pay more for the replacement car?
- 5 How far could Carla travel without paying additional costs?



### *Quality vs. Quantity*

As a single mother, Anna was constantly faced with financial problems because she has bills to pay, plus unexpected expenses. A wise consumer, Anna took time to make comparisons when she shopped. But she was not sure what to do when it came to purchasing clothes for her teenage daughter. Should she buy the best quality she could afford so that the clothes would be durable and last a long time? With fashions and styles changing so quickly, Anna knew her daughter would want new clothes before she wore them out. But buying more clothes more often would mean buying cheaper quality. After much consideration, Anna concluded she could save money on her daughter's everyday school wear, but would shop for good quality jackets and shoes. Her daughter agreed that this was a good compromise and was happy that her mother had considered her desire to stay fashionable despite financial problems.

- 1 What kind of consumer is Anna considered to be?
- 2 Which word used in the paragraph describes the opposite of clothes “that wouldn't last”?
- 3 What was the main decision that Anna was trying to make?
- 4 What did Anna conclude after much consideration?
- 5 Why was Anna concerned about buying expensive clothes for her daughter?

## *Job Health*

Your physical and emotional health can affect your performance on the job. There are different signs that may indicate it is time to get some medical advice. Feeling irritable, tense, or anxious much of the time are some of them. Sudden change in weight, tiredness despite enough sleep, and low energy are also signs. Others are headaches, dizziness, and frequent colds or flu. You may have a greater chance of having health problems if your family has a history of high blood pressure, heart disease, or diabetes. It is wise to visit your doctor, the staff health service, or a health clinic if you have any of these signs frequently or for extended periods of time.

- 1 How might your physical health affect your performance at work?
- 2 How might your emotional health affect your performance at work?
- 3 What three signs indicate that it is time to seek medical help?
- 4 What do we mean when we say that someone is feeling “irritable and tense”?
- 5 What family history of health problems may put you at risk?

## *Home Ownership*

For a variety of reasons, most North Americans want to own a home some day. For many of them living in large cities, home ownership will only be a dream because of high real estate costs. The reason they want to buy can be as simple as wanting to feel a sense of pride in a home. Some want to build equity in property. Others want to enjoy the increased space, freedom, and privacy a house can provide. If the cost of a single-family home is too high, alternative forms of housing may provide a solution. For example, a semi-detached house, a townhouse, or a condominium will often be cheaper. Buying a home of any type is a major financial investment and takes careful planning.

- 1 What is usually the major factor in deciding what type of home to buy?
- 2 The word “equity” refers to \_\_\_\_\_.
- 3 Why is home ownership only a dream for many?
- 4 If the cost of a single-family home is too high, what might be an alternative?
- 5 Which title best describes the theme of this paragraph?

## *Using Plastic*

Many consumers are in the habit of “buying with plastic”. The word “plastic” refers to credit cards. These cards allow us to charge purchases rather than pay cash. Certainly, this is one advantage of credit cards. They also can serve as identification and allow us to purchase goods and services in emergencies when we don’t have enough money. They permit us to travel more safely as we can carry a minimum amount of cash. However, credit cards have their disadvantages. They are easy to use and sometimes encourage us to be impulsive and to spend too much. In addition, the monthly interest charged on an unpaid balance is very high. Wise consumers avoid this problem by being careful and moderate when they use credit cards.

- 1 What is the main idea in this paragraph?
- 2 What does the word “plastic” refer to in this paragraph?
- 3 High interest rates are \_\_\_\_\_ of using credit cards.
- 4 Which is not an important advantage to having a credit card?
- 5 When you can travel with a minimum amount of cash, \_\_\_\_\_.

## *Allergies*

Many people now suffer from allergies. These are sensitivities to foods they eat or chemicals they breathe or touch. Things such as dust, pollen, and pet hair can also cause allergic reactions. Although these reactions may vary, common ones are headaches, skin rashes, and nausea. A more severe type results in swelling of the air passage to the lungs and, sometimes, leads to sudden death. Many food allergies seem to result from eating foods rich in protein such as shellfish, eggs, nuts, and milk. People who suffer from food allergies are often on special diets and must avoid certain foods. On the other hand, chemicals fill our modern world and are harder to avoid. They are found in cleaners, building materials, garden supplies, and even clothing. As a result, allergies to chemicals pose a great health threat to many.

- 1 What is the main topic of this paragraph?
- 2 Which type of food seems to be the main cause of allergies?
- 3 What are allergies?
- 4 Which is the most severe type of allergic reaction?
- 5 Why do allergies to chemicals pose a greater threat to health than food allergies?

## *Good Job!*

There are specific things that an employee can do to keep a job and advance in it. There is more to holding a job than doing good work. Two of the main reasons why employees are fired are absenteeism and an inability to get along with fellow workers and bosses. Therefore, plan to always get to work. If you cannot get to work one day, make sure you contact your employer well before starting time. Keep personal business out of your job. Be careful in your involvement with other workers. Listen carefully to your supervisor and, before you become involved in an argument, consider if it will help in the long run. If you do your job well, attend work regularly, and get along with the people you work with, your chances for promotion should be good.

- 1 What are the two main reasons why employees get fired?
- 2 In this story, what is the best way to improve your promotion chances?
- 3 In this story, what should you do if you cannot get to work one day?
- 4 You should try not to argue with your supervisor unless you are sure that \_\_\_\_\_.
- 5 Which answer states the central focus of the paragraph?

### *Priorities*

Nina is a single mother with two children under six years of age. She has an opportunity to go back to work as a legal secretary. Nina feels it is most important to find good childcare before she accepts the job. She knows that she will need a reliable caregiver for her children so she can go to work regularly and be punctual. These are habits her employer values highly, as most employers do. Frequent lateness and time off work would not be acceptable, even when her children are the cause. If she has dependable child care and good back-up plans for emergencies, she knows she will be able to make a full commitment to her job.

- 1 What does Nina have to do before she accepts the job offer?
- 2 What is the main idea that is stressed in this paragraph?
- 3 What does Nina mean by “good child care”?
- 4 What habits does her employer value?
- 5 How do we know that Nina will likely make a good employee?

## Chapter 20

# Senior Comprehension Stories—Level 9

Stories in this chapter:

- The Inspection
- Commuting
- Buyer Beware!
- Stress
- Human Rights
- World Trade
- It's Guaranteed
- Drug Abuse
- Figurative Language



### *The Inspection*

After weeks of searching, the Wongs wanted to make a thorough inspection of a particular house. The real estate agent had shown them through it one evening and they had been impressed by the size and layout of the rooms, the closet space, and the excellent maintenance. But before they made a final decision to buy, they had hired an experienced house inspector, for a fixed fee, to determine the condition of the house. Outside, he inspected the siding, the roof, the windows, and the eavestroughing used to carry water away from the building. All were in satisfactory condition. Inside, he listened for squeaking floors and doors, for banging pipes, and then spent considerable time in the basement. Much of a house's structural condition can be determined by looking at the basement. To their delight, the inspection results were positive and the house inspector said the house appeared to be in very good condition.

- 1 What shows the Wongs were good consumers?
- 2 What are some of the things the house inspector looked at?
- 3 What is eavestroughing used for?
- 4 Was the house inspector's fee related to the price of the house?
- 5 In what condition did the inspector say the house appeared to be?

## *Commuting*

For those who live outside of the city, commuter buses and trains are useful options for getting to and from work each day. Many of the smaller bus companies offer commuter services from the suburbs and other outlying areas. This mode of transportation is both economical and friendly. The drivers get to know their customers well. They often can be seen scanning the street for their regulars who might be late. Commuter buses aim to make fewer stops than city buses on regular runs, to accommodate those who use them. They also aim to be convenient for standard working hours. The commuter bus routes start early and the drivers know that being punctual and reliable is important to their clients.

- 1 What mode of transportation is the topic in this paragraph?
- 2 Which detail in this paragraph best describes how personal bus service can be?
- 3 What is another way of saying “method” of transportation?
- 4 What qualities do the commuter bus clients appreciate in their bus driver?
- 5 At what time in the afternoon would you expect a commuter bus to leave the city?

### ***Buyer Beware!***

More and more shoppers are taking time to read the list of ingredients and nutritional information on food labels. The main thing to know about ingredient lists is that they start with the one that occurs in the largest amount and they proceed in descending order to the ingredient that is present in the smallest amount. People can also refer to the nutritive listing on labels. These can be used to check that daily menus are well-balanced and healthful. Some labels have nutritional claims like “cholesterol-free”, “low-fat”, and “high-fiber”. Very specific rules govern when and how these claims can be made and, as a result, these claims are usually true. However, buyer beware! For most foods, there are no rules on giving information about the other nutrients. So “high-fiber” cookies may also be high in sugar and in fat. Read the whole label. If you don’t find what you want to know, don’t buy the product. If you have questions about ingredients or nutrients, write to the manufacturer.

- 1 What is the main thing to know about ingredient lists?
- 2 According to this paragraph, why are nutritional claims usually true?
- 3 What does this paragraph try to encourage shoppers to do?
- 4 How might nutritional labels help people on specific diets?
- 5 What does the “high-fiber” claim tell us about fat and sugar in food?

## *Stress*

After some thought, Angelo realized that Ms. Jenkins, his company's counselor, had given him some good advice about coping with stress. For weeks, Angelo had not felt well. He couldn't sleep. He had headaches and he was overeating. Ms. Jenkins had suggested that these conditions may have come from too much stress on the job and that he should prepare a plan to reduce his stress. We all need a certain amount of stress to motivate us and keep us alert. Excessive stress, however, is harmful. Angelo's plan included regular physical activity and deep breathing exercises. He set aside some time in each day for these activities. In addition, Ms. Jenkins felt it was necessary for Angelo to learn how to discuss and solve difficult situations at work before they became major concerns. By following this advice, he felt that he would be on the right track to dealing with stress.

- 1 Who was Ms. Jenkins?
- 2 Which phrase best tells what this story is about?
- 3 What are the advantages of the right amount of stress?
- 4 What were some of the symptoms of stress that Angelo suffered from?
- 5 List the two main parts in Angelo's stress management plan.

## *Human Rights*

Many countries have human rights laws. They can protect people from unfair treatment in the workplace. An employer cannot hire or fire someone because of race, color, place of birth, or religion. In most areas, it is against the law to discriminate on the basis of sex, age, medical history, and criminal record. Governments now have programs to correct past wrongs. Some of these are called “affirmative action plans” and ensure the hiring of groups of people that have been underrepresented in the workplace. In the past, these groups have not been treated fairly. While the laws may vary, most countries are attempting to bring fairness and equality to the workplace in hiring, salary and promotion policies, regardless of a person’s physical and social attributes.

- 1 What is the main purpose for human rights laws discussed in this paragraph?
- 2 Name two factors that should never determine whether or not a person is hired or fired:
- 3 What are many governments attempting to do with their human rights laws?
- 4 What is meant by the word “discriminate” in this paragraph?
- 5 Who are affirmative action plans designed to help?

## *World Trade*

Transportation is the moving of goods and people from one place to another. It plays a major role in today's world. In fact, the wealth of a country as well as the world trade market depend to a large extent on transportation networks, or systems. Several methods are used to move goods between countries. Ocean freighters are used for things such as oil, coal, cars, wheat, lumber, and dry foodstuffs. Once goods reach a port, they are then sent to areas of the country by plane, train, truck, and inland freighter. Airplanes are also usually used to carry goods and mail over long distances. Perishable items that spoil easily, like dairy goods and flowers, are often transported by plane.

- 1 What is the main theme in this paragraph?
- 2 The word "perishable" means \_\_\_\_\_.
- 3 In a crisis, our country would send medical supplies to Africa by \_\_\_\_\_.
- 4 A transportation system is a major factor in determining \_\_\_\_\_.
- 5 Which are perishable goods?

### *It's Guaranteed*

Modern industry has increased the production of most consumer items with techniques such as assembly lines and computerized machinery. In spite of this, defective items are still produced. But most goods come with written guarantees or warranties. These are statements that the products are free from defects in workmanship. They usually provide a time period during which the maker will do repairs without charge. They also explain steps a consumer should follow if problems arise. It is important for the consumer to read the details of the guarantee and to keep a proof of purchase. This proof is the original receipt from the store. The consumer should also complete and mail in any guarantee card that comes with the item as soon as it is purchased.

- 1 What does this paragraph do?
- 2 Which two terms do not mean essentially the same thing?
- 3 What has helped to increase the production of most consumer items?
- 4 A product guarantee or warranty is a statement that \_\_\_\_\_.
- 5 A product guarantee states that the maker will do repairs without charge \_\_\_\_\_.

## *Drug Abuse*

Substance abuse is a topic often discussed in schools with students. Educating adults too should be of concern, not only from a legal but also from a health viewpoint. Research indicates that use of alcohol, drugs, and tobacco has harmful effects. More than half of all traffic deaths involve drivers under the influence of either alcohol or drugs. Both these substances decrease a person's ability to think clearly and remain in control. Excessive use often leads to poor work habits as well as family and social problems. Poor eating habits also result from overuse of these drugs. Prolonged tobacco use causes lung disease and breathing problems. It may also lead to cancer. Each person should consider his or her use of these drugs and their impact on personal health as well as the health of others.

- 1 Educating adults and students about substance abuse should be done from these two viewpoints:
- 2 People who drink or take drugs and drive should know that \_\_\_\_\_ of all traffic deaths involve drugs or alcohol.
- 3 According to this paragraph, what is often first thing affected by drug and alcohol use?
- 4 When a person's abilities are decreased by drugs or alcohol, his or her ability to behave responsibly \_\_\_\_\_.
- 5 Which term from the paragraph means the same as "excessive use"?



## *Figurative Language*

We use figurative language to say things in an imaginative way. This is different from the literal way, which aims to use exact meanings. Figurative language can add different shades to a meaning. It calls for imagination from both speaker and listener. It is often based on a comparison. We compare something unfamiliar with something more familiar in order to bring clarity to the less well-known. The comparison can have a pictorial effect or an emotional one. When we say, “The path was a ribbon of moonlight”, we are comparing the path to a ribbon. We want you to picture something smooth, narrow, winding, and shiny. This comparison, therefore, has a pictorial effect. When we say, “He cried like a baby”, we want the listener to feel the sadness and helplessness of that little person. This comparison, then, is emotional. Figurative language is what makes a message more than just mere words.

- 1 Figurative language brings \_\_\_\_\_ to a story.
- 2 Figurative language doesn't aim for exact meaning like \_\_\_\_\_ language does.
- 3 Figurative language is often based on comparing what kinds of things?
- 4 If a comparison brings “clarity” to something, it provides \_\_\_\_\_.
- 5 In writing, a comparison can be used to create these two effects:

## Chapter 21

# Senior Comprehension Stories—Level 10

Stories in this chapter:

- Transportation
- Take It Back
- Too Much Sugar!
- Up-Skilling
- Money Matters
- Airline Troubles
- Smart Shopping
- Clean Environment
- Job Search

## *Transportation*

The methods of transportation in any country depend, in part, on the geography and the social and economic development in that country. In the United States and Canada, we use a wide variety of transport, from bicycle to jet. However, in countries where there is not a great deal of personal wealth or where traffic congestion makes car ownership undesirable, people rely on more basic means of transportation. For example, China has more bicycles per capita than any other country. It also has a large number of people who use boats and waterways as their means of moving about. The same is true for people living on some of the more remote islands in the South Pacific. In other countries where there are few roads, horses, donkeys, and even camels are still used to transport goods and people.

- 1 Why is a bicycle a good means of transportation in a developing country?
- 2 On what factors does the development of methods of transportation in any country depend?
- 3 What you are told about the methods of transportation in China?
- 4 How do horses, donkeys, and camels fit into the message in this paragraph?
- 5 What word is used in this paragraph as a synonym for “methods”?

## *Take It Back*

All consumers will likely have the experience of buying a new product that is defective. Certain steps should be taken immediately to correct the situation. Whether it is food, clothing or household goods, take the item and the receipt back to the store where it was purchased. Most stores will replace the item promptly. However, if the store refuses to help and the manager is of no assistance, then write a letter to the manufacturer stating the exact nature of the problem. If the letter brings no acceptable action, the local Better Business Bureau might help. There are also “action lines” for consumer complaints in the newspaper and on television. Just remember that all complaints should be made in a calm and polite way, without any insulting remarks.

- 1 What is a defective product?
- 2 Describe the first step in correcting the problem when you buy a defective new product.
- 3 How should complaints be made?
- 4 Why is it important to bring the receipt when you return a defective item to a store?
- 5 What role do “action lines” play in dealing with consumer complaints?

### *Too Much Sugar!*

The average North American eats excessive amounts of sugar each year. This huge consumption of sugar results in several conditions. There is a direct link between tooth decay and the amount of sugar in the diet. Decreasing sugar lessens the number of cavities. Many people have been made aware of these facts. Not as much is known about the connection between sugar and behavior. Hyperactivity is a condition that makes it hard for a child to remain still for more than a few seconds. He or she may have difficulty in social situations and may have trouble staying focused and paying attention. Although it remains a disputed topic, some experts believe the disorder may be caused or aggravated by refined sugar in diets. The problem is sometimes solved or decreased by removing sugar.

- 1 What adjective is used to describe the amount of sugar eaten by the average North American each year?
- 2 What is the known result of eating large amounts of sugar?
- 3 What behavior disorder is thought to be related to eating too much sugar?
- 4 What evidence is stated to support the theory that hyperactivity is caused or is aggravated by refined sugar in diets?
- 5 What are some characteristics of hyperactivity?

## *Up-Skilling*

Many employers now have training and retraining programs for their employees. Basic job skills need to be at higher levels than ever before. These skills include abilities to listen, read, write, and do math well. Many employees are now also expected to solve problems, communicate, and use new learning techniques on the job. This “up-skilling” of work in America is in part due to the effect of new technology. Often schools do not have the latest equipment on which to train students. As a result, this training must now be done in the workplace. In addition, users of computers and technical manuals require good reading and thinking skills. Although these are exciting changes, they make it necessary for many employees to further develop and enhance many of their skills.

- 1 What is the central idea of this paragraph?
- 2 What is the main reason companies develop training and retraining programs for employees?
- 3 Why may someone with weak thinking skills be at a disadvantage in today’s workplace?
- 4 What are many employees now expected to do on the job?
- 5 What special term is used to describe the trend toward higher levels of basic skills needed in the workplace?

## *Money Matters*

As we go through different life stages, we also go through various financial stages. In all of them, developing a savings program should be important. At first, young single workers may spend most of their money on themselves and may not realize they need to save. Newly married people, and other couples, tend to spend large portions of their incomes on furnishings and other consumer items, leaving themselves with little money to save. Most people with children see the need for planning financially for the future, although saving may still be difficult. However, as children mature, fewer financial demands should mean more money for parents to save or invest. In all stages, experts agree that it is the regular habit of saving which is the most important aspect of a savings program.

- 1 What do experts say is the most important aspect of a savings program?
- 2 At which life stage do people consider saving money to be least important?
- 3 When do many people start to see the need for financial planning?
- 4 Why do people with young children often see the need for a savings plan as being important?
- 5 As people go through different life stages listed in this paragraph, \_\_\_\_\_.

## *Airline Troubles*

Over the past quarter century, the airline industry has faced increased consumer pressure. We demand fast, safe service and, when it is not delivered, we are annoyed. Deregulation of the industry lowered fares and increased the number of flights available. However, the drop in fare prices caused some small companies to go bankrupt because they could not compete with larger carriers. In some of these cases, travelers were stranded far from their homes. The increase in the number of flights has meant lengthy delays in departures at some airports. Violent political activity by terrorist groups has also caused major problems in the airline industry. Governments around the world have tried to combat this by increasing security. The traveling public sees the effect in prolonged security lineups and increasing fares.

- 1 Pick the best alternative title for this paragraph.
- 2 What is the major reason for security delays?
- 3 What kind of impact has deregulation had on the airline industry?
- 4 What is the increased security in the airline industry aimed at combating?
- 5 A quarter century is made up of \_\_\_\_\_.



## *Smart Shopping*

Before you go shopping, it is advisable to determine what items you intend to buy and, importantly, how much money you can afford to spend for each item. Making a checklist beforehand can save you time and money and it may be helpful in avoiding impulsive purchases. Frequently, items bought on impulse are not things that are practical in terms of their cost or in terms of their appropriateness. Avoiding impulse buying is particularly important when major items, or items that need to last a long time, are purchased. Trendy things go out of fashion quickly. Bold and loud colors may become tiresome after a while. Spending too much money on impulse may mean having to go on a tight budget afterwards.

- 1 Which title best states the central focus of this paragraph?
- 2 What is meant by impulsive buying?
- 3 Preparing a checklist before you go shopping can \_\_\_\_\_.
- 4 What is the definition of the word “trendy”?
- 5 Often, things bought on impulse can be characterized as \_\_\_\_\_.

## *Clean Environment*

The environment is a popular topic now. Environmentalists are very concerned about pollution. For years they have warned that the fragile balance in nature is being destroyed as chemicals emitted from factories fill the atmosphere and destroy the ozone layer. These chemicals also result in acid rain, which harms trees such as pines and maples. Some factories dump their waste into lakes and oceans where it contaminates the water and kills birds and aquatic life, such as fish and plants. All of these pollutants have a ruinous effect on our environment. Clean air and water, as well as food sources free of chemicals and pollutants, are all critical to our good health and a healthy environment. Pollutants will endanger the health of future generations if major preventive steps are not taken against them.

- 1 What is the theme of this paragraph?
- 2 What do we call experts concerned about pollution?
- 3 “Pollutants” are materials that make the environment \_\_\_\_\_.
- 4 What is destroying the ozone layer?
- 5 What is mentioned in this paragraph as a cause of contamination in water?

## *Job Search*

There are always jobs available since, at any one time, approximately four percent of all positions in the labor market are open. This comes as a result of retirements, promotions, firings, transfers, resignations, and extended leaves. In addition, new jobs are always being created. If you are serious about finding the best type of work for yourself, be prepared to spend time doing so. Experts recommend spending forty hours each week on job search activities and warn that it may take several weeks to find the most suitable employment. However, your hard work should be rewarded. On the other hand, it might be easier to find work that is less well-suited for you although, in the long run, this would probably not turn out to be a successful course of action.

- 1 A good job search should involve \_\_\_\_\_.
- 2 The tone of this paragraph is \_\_\_\_\_.
- 3 Besides the change in status of many workers, why are there so many job vacancies?
- 4 Experts recommend spending about as much time on job searching activities as \_\_\_\_\_.
- 5 Which word is used in this paragraph to describe someone who is ready to put a lot of effort into looking for a job?

## Chapter 22

# Junior Comprehension Stories—Level 1 Canadian

Stories in this chapter:

- Pigs
- Spiders
- Skunks
- Kittens
- Sounds
- South Pole
- Whistling
- Friends
- The Missing Pie

## *Pigs*

Pigs love mud. They like to roll and dig in the mud. This helps the pigs. It helps them keep cool on hot days. It also helps to keep bugs off them. The bugs cannot crawl through the mud and bite the pigs. Now you know why pigs look so happy in mud.

- 1 What do pigs love?
- 2 What do pigs like to do in the mud?
- 3 On hot days, why do pigs roll in the mud?
- 4 Why do pigs look so happy in the mud?
- 5 What kind of things “crawl” in this story?

## *Spiders*

Spiders aren't pretty but they're fun to watch. They have eight legs and eight eyes. They have six spinnerets that make silk. All these things help them to spin their webs. If you want to watch spiders, get up before the sun does. Bring a flashlight. Spiders are busiest then. It won't take long to find one. And it won't take long to watch. A spider can finish a web in less than an hour.

- 1 Which sentence best tells us what this story is about?
- 2 A spider has six \_\_\_\_\_.
- 3 Which words in the story mean the same as “build their webs”?
- 4 Why should you bring a flashlight to watch spiders spin webs?
- 5 A spider can finish a web in \_\_\_\_\_.

## *Skunks*

Beware of the skunk. A skunk is a small black animal. It has a big white stripe on its back. It eats plants, small animals, and garbage. A skunk is most famous for its smell. When it is afraid, it sprays its enemies. The spray smells very bad. That is why we must beware of the skunk.

- 1 What colour is a skunk?
- 2 What does a skunk eat?
- 3 What is the skunk most famous for?
- 4 When does a skunk spray its enemies?
- 5 What should we remember about a skunk?

## *Kittens*

In the box, there are 4 gray kittens and 5 black kittens. Four plus five makes nine kittens. There are nine kittens in all. Two black kittens jump out. Five take away two leaves three. Three black kittens are left in the box. Then, two gray kittens jump out. Four take away two leaves two. Two gray kittens are left in the box. How many kittens in all are left in the box now?

- 1 How many kittens are there in the box at the start of the story?
- 2 There are 5 black kittens. Two jump out. Then \_\_\_\_\_ are left.
- 3 Five \_\_\_\_\_ two leaves three.
- 4 There are four gray kittens in the box, and \_\_\_\_\_ jump out.
- 5 At the end of the story, how many kittens are left in the box?



## *Sounds*

We talk about sounds in lots of ways. People speak, yell, and whisper. Pigs squeal. Wolves howl. Lions and bears roar. Dogs bark and growl. Seals bark too. Sounds tell us things. A fire alarm tells us to get outside. The phone rings. That sound tells us to answer it. Words have sounds when we talk. We know what these sounds mean. Listen well. You learn a lot from sounds.

- 1 Howl, roar, growl, and squeal are all \_\_\_\_\_.
- 2 What do we call the long, high sound that pigs make?
- 3 Dogs bark and growl and seals \_\_\_\_\_ too.
- 4 The story tells us that when the phone rings, we should \_\_\_\_\_.
- 5 When \_\_\_\_\_, we know what the sounds mean.

## *South Pole*

The South Pole sits at the bottom of the world. Ice and snow cover the land all year. No trees or grass can grow. No animals can live inland. There is no food to eat. Whales and seals live in the sea. Some birds live by the shore. They can catch fish. But when winter comes, even the sea turns to ice.

- 1 Where is the South Pole?
- 2 Why do no trees and grass grow at the South Pole?
- 3 In this story, what are the two kinds of animals that live in the sea?
- 4 Why are birds able to live by the shore but not inland?
- 5 When does the sea turn to ice?

## *Whistling*

Do you whistle? Some people don't know how. Others find it easy. Only a few do it well. Some people whistle instead of singing. Others like to sound like birds. But I know when you can't whistle. Try these tricks. Suck on a lemon. I bet you can't whistle a tune. Try eating a few crackers. Can you whistle? No, you can't. But you can make a mess!

- 1 What does “whistle” mean in this story?
- 2 The story tells us that \_\_\_\_\_ people can whistle well.
- 3 People can whistle. What else can whistle?
- 4 You can't whistle a tune if you \_\_\_\_\_.
- 5 To make a mess, first put a few crackers in your mouth, and then:

## *Friends*

Sue and Mike are friends. They live on the same street. They are in the same class at school. They both love to play with Mike's dog. His dog's name is Tim. Tim has a small, red ball. They all have fun playing with the ball. After school, Mike and Sue play with Tim in the park. They throw him the ball. This makes Tim happy. He wags his tail.

- 1 Why do Mike and Sue know each other so well?
- 2 Whose dog is Tim?
- 3 What kind of ball does Tim have?
- 4 Where do Sue and Mike go with Tim after they get home from school?
- 5 Why does Tim wag his tail?

### *The Missing Pie*

Danny Duck took a blueberry pie out of the oven. It was very hot. He set it by an open window to cool. Then he left to go shopping. When Danny came home the pie was missing. He went outside and saw Freddy Fox, Penny Pig, and Billy Bear. “Did you eat my pie?” Danny asked them. They all said “No”. “I think you did,” said Danny. “Your teeth have all turned blue!”

- 1 Why was the pie hot?
- 2 When did Danny Duck discover the pie was missing?
- 3 When did Danny see Freddy, Penny, and Billy?
- 4 Why did Danny Duck think Freddy, Penny, and Billy ate the pie?
- 5 What is the best title for this story?

## Chapter 23

# Junior Comprehension Stories—Level 2 Canadian

Stories in this chapter:

- Measures
- Hobbies
- Clouds
- Horses
- Moths And Butterflies
- The Violin
- Never Alone!
- Beth's Glasses
- The Mean King

## *Measures*

Where did measurements come from? Years ago, people used body parts to measure length. Here's what they found. Measure from your wrist to your elbow. Now measure your foot. They are about the same length. Measure from the tip to the first knuckle of your thumb. It is close to an inch long. Now measure a man's foot. It is about twelve inches, or one foot long. It was easy to use body parts to measure things. Many of us still use these measures today.

- 1 Which is the best title for this story?
- 2 Years ago, people used body parts to \_\_\_\_\_.
- 3 Measure from your wrist to your elbow. Your \_\_\_\_\_ will be about the same length.
- 4 The \_\_\_\_\_ on your thumb is where it bends.
- 5 A man's foot is about how long?

## *Hobbies*

Do you have a hobby? Is there something you like to do in your spare time? It is good for you to have a hobby. One of my hobbies is fishing. I fish with my dad and brothers every summer. In the winter, I like to read in my free time. I think everyone should have at least one hobby. A hobby is something you can look forward to and enjoy.

- 1 A hobby is something that \_\_\_\_.
- 2 In the summer, the author likes to \_\_\_\_.
- 3 How many hobbies does the author tell us about?
- 4 \_\_\_\_\_ is another way of saying “spare time”.
- 5 The author thinks it’s good for you to have \_\_\_\_.



## *Clouds*

Clouds are made from very small drops of water. As the drops get bigger, the cloud turns gray. Then the drops become too heavy to float in the air. They fall to the ground as rain. When the rain stops, the wet ground begins to dry. Heat from the sun turns the water back into tiny drops. The drops rise into the sky and form new clouds.

- 1 What are clouds made from?
- 2 What happens when the drops become too heavy to float in the air?
- 3 How does the ground get dry again after the rain stops?
- 4 What happens to the drops of water that rise into the sky?
- 5 What is the best title for this paragraph?

## *Horses*

Horses are handsome and strong animals. They love to run. They can run far and fast. When they are running with other horses, they all want to be in the lead. They are like people in a race: each one wants to run the fastest. If you ride on a horse that likes to run, hang on tight!

- 1 In this story, what do horses love to do?
- 2 What do most horses want when they are running with other horses?
- 3 How are horses and people alike in this story?
- 4 What special word is used to say that horses are good-looking?
- 5 Why do you need to hang on tight if you ride a horse that likes to run?

### *Moths And Butterflies*

A moth and a butterfly are different. A moth flies at night. Porch lights make it fly in circles. This might be because the moth uses moonlight to guide it. A moth is thick and hairy. Its antennae look like feathers. But a butterfly flies during the day. It's not hairy like a moth. Its antennae are long and often have little knobs on the ends. When a moth rests, it lays its wings out flat. A butterfly folds them up. It's not hard to tell them apart.

- 1 A porch light makes a moth fly in circles. Maybe the moth thinks the light is \_\_\_\_\_.
- 2 What do a moth's antennae look like?
- 3 Some look like feathers. Some have little knobs on the ends. What are they?
- 4 When do butterflies fly?
- 5 A moth and a butterfly do different things with their wings when they \_\_\_\_\_.

## *The Violin*

A violin is a stringed musical instrument. To play it, you hold one end under your chin. It has four strings. You play it by drawing a bow across these strings. Your right hand holds the bow. You press down on the strings to make notes. You do this with the fingers of your left hand. But the notes will not sound until you use the bow. To make loud notes, you press firmly with the bow.

- 1 What is a violin?
- 2 Where do you put the violin to play it?
- 3 How many strings does a violin have?
- 4 What makes the notes sound?
- 5 What would you do to play quiet notes?

### *Never Alone!*

Think of this. Wild animals live in our homes with us! Spiders, mice, and ants are some of them. But there are other insects that eat food, fabric, and wool. Mites, as big as specks of dust, eat flour. Silverfish live in dark cracks and come out to eat at night. Moths eat wool and fur, as do carpet beetles. Termites eat wood. We are never alone!

- 1 Why does the author say that we are never alone?
- 2 What is one of the creatures that eat our food?
- 3 What do moths eat?
- 4 In what way are mites like “specks of dust”?
- 5 What kind of insect eats wood?

## *Beth's Glasses*

Beth went to school and left her new glasses at home. She didn't like the way they made her look. The teacher put some writing on the board. Beth found it hard to see the letters. At lunchtime, the teacher told Beth to stay in and fix her work. Beth told the teacher she could not see well. She said she would bring in her glasses the next day.

- 1 Why did Beth go to school without her glasses?
- 2 What did the teacher put on the board?
- 3 Why did Beth find it hard to see the letters on the board?
- 4 Why did the teacher have to ask Beth to fix her work?
- 5 When did Beth say she would bring her glasses?

### *The Mean King*

A long time ago, a mean king told his subjects that it was a crime to laugh. He said the penalty for this was death. Suddenly, a man started to laugh. The king told the man that he must die because of his outburst. He asked the man how he wanted to die. The man answered, “I’d like to die of old age.” The king burst out laughing, and then all his subjects laughed, too. And so ended the law.

- 1 What was the king’s new rule?
- 2 What kind of king would say it was a crime to laugh?
- 3 When the king asked the man how he wanted to die, what did the man answer?
- 4 Why was the doomed man’s answer to the king so clever?
- 5 What happened right after the man answered the king?

## Chapter 24

# Junior Comprehension Stories—Level 3 Canadian

Stories in this chapter:

- On the Beach
- Snakes
- Ant Picnic
- The Sun
- Puzzles
- Dawn of Time
- The Hawk
- Riddles
- Dinosaurs



### *On the Beach*

Sue and Bob like to be on the beach in the summer. They walk on the wet sand and collect the shells that are left behind by crabs and snails. Some shells are round and shaped like spinning tops while others are shaped like small saucers. One time at the ocean, they noticed a spurt of water shooting out of the sand. They hurried over and dug into the sand. Guess what they found? It was a live crab!

- 1 Why do the children like to be on the beach?
- 2 Where do the shells come from?
- 3 How can shells be like tops?
- 4 Why did the sand spurt water?
- 5 What did the children do when they saw the spurt of water?

## *Snakes*

Have you ever seen a snake stick out its tongue? It does not use its tongue to taste things like humans do. A snake uses its tongue to help it smell. When a snake sticks out its tongue, tiny particles from the air stick to it. The snake then brings its tongue back into its mouth. Here it quickly smells the particles to know what is around. If it picks up the scent of an enemy, it will quickly slither away, but if it smells food, it will attack. So you see, a snake's tongue has an important job.

- 1 What does a snake use its tongue for?
- 2 When a snake sticks out its tongue, what gets stuck on it?
- 3 What do you think a snake would do if it smelled a human?
- 4 What will a hungry snake do if it smells something it can eat?
- 5 What does the word "scent" mean in this story?

### *Ant Picnic*

One lazy summer day, Fred the Ant went for a walk. He saw a family on a picnic. On a blanket under a tree, Fred spied a feast fit for a king. There was a large watermelon, apple pie, cookies, and best of all, chocolate cake. He ran home to tell his friends. They had the best ant party ever. Fred and his friends went home very full that night!

- 1 What did Fred the Ant see when he went for a walk?
- 2 What food did Fred see on the blanket?
- 3 When Fred saw the food, what did he do?
- 4 He had a piece of chocolate cake.
- 5 Why did Fred and his friends have such a great party?

## *The Sun*

The sun is a star. Like all stars, it is made of hot, shining gases. It looks much bigger than the other stars we see at night. This is because it is much closer to us. During the day, the bright sunlight hides the light from the other stars. Without the light and heat from the sun, no one would be able to live here.

- 1 What is the sun?
- 2 What is the sun made of?
- 3 Why does the sun look bigger than other stars?
- 4 Why can't we see the other stars during the day?
- 5 Why is the sun important to life on earth?

## *Puzzles*

Brain teasers are a type of puzzle. While the teasers are both challenging and fun, their answers may surprise you. Try to solve this puzzle. I have a jar full of wet sand and a jar full of dry sand. Both jars are exactly the same size. Which one is heavier? If you guessed that the dry sand weighs more, you are correct. There is an explanation for this surprising answer. Wet sand contains water, which takes up space. The water weighs less than sand, making it lighter than dry sand. If you don't believe me, try it out for yourself.

- 1 What is this story mainly about?
- 2 Which fact is true?
- 3 The jar of wet sand is \_\_\_\_\_ than the jar of dry sand.
- 4 \_\_\_\_\_ tells you why or how something happened
- 5 Brain teasers are a type of \_\_\_\_\_.

## *Dawn of Time*

Long ago, people lived in caves. In those days, it wasn't safe to be outside your cave after dark. Early humans used the sun to tell them when to get back. They saw that the sun always rose in the east. It seemed to travel across the sky during the day. Then it always went down and disappeared in the west. These early humans saw their shadows changed size, depending on where the sun was. They used all of these facts to help them know what time of day it was. This was how they began, long ago, to keep track of time.

- 1 What did early humans use to tell the time of day?
- 2 The sun always appears to rise in the east and set in \_\_\_\_\_.
- 3 Early humans thought the sun seemed to \_\_\_\_\_ during the day.
- 4 What made the cave people's shadow change size?
- 5 Choose the best title for this paragraph.

### *The Hawk*

There is a soft gentle breeze  
Which blows the snow-capped trees.  
All is quiet and still  
As the hawk stalks his kill.  
His sleek brown body tenses,  
Alive and alert are his senses.  
And out comes the mouse walking,  
Unaware that the hawk is stalking.  
A flap of wings, the hawk must dive.

And now, only one remains alive.

- 1 What blows the snow-capped trees?
- 2 Which word in the poem rhymes with the word “senses”?
- 3 Which word tells how carefully the hawk is hunting?
- 4 What happens to the mouse?
- 5 What is the title of this poem?

## *Riddles*

Why is a pig in the kitchen like a house on fire? The sooner they're put out, the better. Why is a cat sitting on a fence like a penny? It's because it has a head on one side and a tail on the other. When is a boy like a pony? It's when he's a little hoarse. The humour of riddles often comes from a play on words. This happens when two words sound the same but have different spellings and meanings. We call these words homonyms. Their meaning depends on context. The context is the words that come immediately before and after. Do you know any riddles like these?

- 1 The humour of riddles often comes from \_\_\_\_\_.
- 2 \_\_\_\_\_ are words that sound the same but have different meanings.
- 3 Find the homonyms.
- 4 One word can have many different meanings; the meaning will depend on the \_\_\_\_\_.
- 5 What is the main idea of this paragraph?



## *Dinosaurs*

Dinosaurs lived many millions of years ago. They were reptiles. Some were very large. Others were the size of a dog or cat. Some ate meat, while others ate only plants. Sometimes they ate each other. Dinosaurs could not live in the cold. Some experts think that they all died when the weather suddenly got very cold. Today, we can see dinosaur bones and learn more about them in some museums.

- 1 What do some experts think was the reason why dinosaurs died?
- 2 Dinosaurs were “reptiles”, this means they were like \_\_\_\_\_.
- 3 What did the dinosaurs eat?
- 4 Today, we can see real dinosaur bones \_\_\_\_\_.
- 5 What is this paragraph mainly about?

## Chapter 25

# Junior Comprehension Stories—Level 4 Canadian

Stories in this chapter:

- Scary Story
- Komodo Dragon
- An Accident
- Rainforests
- The Citizen
- The Sentence
- Descriptions
- Sharks
- Basketball

### *Scary Story*

The night was clear and dark as the boys stepped out into the woods. Their hearts pounded but they wanted to test their courage. A branch cracked and a giant shadow drifted from a treetop. What was it? The “who-who” call told them it was just an owl. As the boys moved closer together, they noticed small, dark creatures swooping and darting in the air above their heads: only bats on their nightly hunt. But what were those flashes of light in the bushes? Then, from the deepest woods came crashing and panting sounds. As they frantically raced back into their house, their father asked, “Where’s the dog?”

- 1 Why did the boys go into the woods?
- 2 What was the “giant shadow that drifted from a treetop”?
- 3 What did the boys hear just after they saw the bats?
- 4 What was most likely crashing and panting through the deep woods?
- 5 What kind of feeling probably sent the boys racing home?

## *Komodo Dragon*

The Komodo dragon is the largest of all lizards. It is a member of the monitor lizard family. It is a tropical lizard, which means it likes a hot, humid place to live. It has very thick brown or black skin. Its legs are as thick as small tree trunks and it has a long neck. This lizard can grow as long as three metres and weigh as much as one hundred and forty kilograms. The Komodo dragon is a good swimmer. It likes to eat fish, eggs, and animals such as deer and wild pigs. The Komodo dragon is a very scary lizard!

- 1 What is the Komodo dragon?
- 2 Where do you find these tropical lizards?
- 3 How large can the Komodo dragon grow?
- 4 What does the dragon's large size allow it to eat?
- 5 Why does the writer say that the Komodo dragon is a very scary lizard?

### *An Accident*

Mike and Dan jumped on their bikes and headed down an old country road. It was early October and the leaves on the trees were aflame with colour. Dan was looking at the woods and not the road. Just as Mike was about to warn him, a truck pulled out from a hidden driveway. Dan was so surprised he slammed on his brakes, skidded his bike and fell onto the road. The owner of the truck hurried over to help Dan. When he saw that Dan was not hurt, he advised him to be more careful and to always watch where he's going. Dan knew that he could have avoided the accident by paying more attention to the road. He learned a valuable lesson.

- 1 Why was Dan looking at the woods?
- 2 What is meant by: “the leaves were aflame with colour”?
- 3 What surprised Dan?
- 4 What was Mike about to do just as the truck pulled out from the hidden driveway?
- 5 What is the main message in this story?

## *Rainforests*

Rainforests are found in parts of the world that are very wet and hot. They are home to half the animals and plants of the earth. The plants give us many of the drugs needed to cure sickness. They also play a huge role in making the air we breathe. Yet much of the land is being burned to make room for farms and houses or logged for wood. Without the trees to hold the soil, it erodes, or wears away. Soon, nothing can grow or live on the land. Unless something is done soon, the rainforests will become only a memory.

- 1 Where are rainforests found?
- 2 What are two reasons given for the importance of plants in the rainforests?
- 3 What is happening to the rainforests?
- 4 When does the soil erode, or wear away?
- 5 What does the paragraph mean when it states: "Unless something is done soon, the rainforests will become only a memory"?

### *The Citizen*

Maria was so excited she could hardly sleep. It had been a strange day. Just this morning she was Mexican, but now she was American! The change happened shortly before lunch. Maria and her parents went to a ceremony at the Citizenship Court. There were many people there from all around the world. There was a girl from Greece and a boy from Chad. The judge recited the Citizenship Oath. She spoke in English and Maria had to listen closely and repeat the judge's words. Maria was promising to be a good citizen. She was then presented with her citizenship card. The ceremony ended by singing the National Anthem.

- 1 What ceremony did Maria go to?
- 2 When was the ceremony?
- 3 What is an oath?
- 4 In what language did the judge speak?
- 5 Where do Maria and her parents live now?

## *The Sentence*

One of the groups of words in this paragraph isn't a sentence. See if you can find it as you read through. A sentence is a group of words that expresses a complete meaning. A simple sentence always has one subject and one verb. In writing, you begin a sentence with a capital letter. You a sentence with a period.

A verb is the action word in the sentence and the subject is who or what does the action. The following is a simple sentence: "The students finished their homework." Ask yourself, "Who did what?" The "who" part is the subject and the "did" part is the verb.

Did you spot the incomplete sentence?

- 1 The action word in a sentence is \_\_\_\_\_.
- 2 In a sentence, the person or thing that did the action is \_\_\_\_\_.
- 3 Here is a simple sentence: The students finished their homework. What is the subject?
- 4 Here is a simple sentence: The students finished their homework. What is the action word?
- 5 This is not a sentence: "You a sentence with a period." The word "end" is missing. This word is the \_\_\_\_\_.



### *Descriptions*

From the top of the old wooden bridge, I can feel the soft, cool breeze. It causes ripples in the river below. There is a smell of wet and rotting wood and it overpowers any other smell that might be floating in the air. The boards are moist and rough on my bare legs. I look down and see the gentle current pushing the fallen leaves like boats on a river. Up above, the sky is a soft blue with swirls of cottony clouds. This is my favourite place. This is where I come to think and figure things out and feel good.

- 1 What causes the ripples in the river below?
- 2 The smell of wet and rotting wood comes from \_\_\_\_\_.
- 3 The writer compares the fallen leaves to \_\_\_\_\_.
- 4 What is the writer describing?
- 5 Which of these senses did not provide any impressions for the writer of this story?

## *Sharks*

The shark is one of the most feared fish in the sea. This is because it is an eating machine. Most sharks take large bites and swallow without chewing. Some large sharks, such as the Great White, can tear a person in half with one bite. Even though sharks are scary, most sharks are harmless to people. People can swim safely with some sharks if they leave them alone. Swimmers must take special care, however, when they swim near man-eating sharks.

- 1 Why do so many people fear sharks?
- 2 Swimmers must take care when they are around what kind of sharks?
- 3 It is \_\_\_\_\_ for people to be afraid of all sharks.
- 4 Who is most likely to be the victims of a shark attack?
- 5 Why do we call sharks “eating machines”?

## *Basketball*

People play basketball all over the world. In fact, it is the world's most popular indoor sport. People play it outdoors too. James Naismith invented it in 1891. Naismith was a gym teacher from Canada teaching in the United States. He wanted his students to play a fun, competitive sport during the cold New England winters. So he created basketball. He nailed two peach baskets to the gym walls. Players had to throw a soccer ball into them. Naismith made thirteen rules that we still use today. As time passed, the new sport grew more and more popular. The equipment and rules got better. No more peach baskets. Now, millions of people love to play and watch the game. Thanks, James.

- 1 Why do many people know James Naismith?
- 2 When were peach baskets first used for basketball?
- 3 Why did Naismith invent basketball?
- 4 Where did Naismith invent basketball?
- 5 How many of Naismith's rules do we still use today?

## Chapter 26

# Junior Comprehension Stories—Level 5 Canadian

Stories in this chapter:

- Decision Making
- Puns
- Migration
- Guessing Game
- The Moon
- Special Questions
- New Words
- A Friend
- Money

## *Decision Making*

There are five main steps in making a decision. The first step is to look at the decision to be made and a list of your choices. Next, you should examine all of the different options. You must decide if each one is really a way to get what you want. The third step is to take each option and think it through. Which ones are possible, and what will be the results of each? You must think of all the advantages and disadvantages for each option. Then you can make your decision based on the best option. Lastly, you have to stand by your choice and feel good about it. When making a decision, you have to investigate it thoroughly.

- 1 What is listed in this paragraph?
- 2 What is the first step in making a decision?
- 3 What step comes next after you list your choices?
- 4 Which pair of opposites in this paragraph means good points and bad points?
- 5 Why must you look at the advantages and disadvantages of each option?

## *Puns*

A pun is called a “play on words” and is a form of humour. A pun is made from a sentence with at least one word that has more than one meaning. For example, in the pun that follows, the word “drill” can mean a tool or a march to train a soldier.

The dentist joined the army because he liked to “drill”.

The humour results when both meanings of the key word, in this case “drill”, give the sentence a twist. The next pun will use a key word that has a different spelling for each of its two meanings.

Seven days without food makes one “weak”.

- 1 What is a pun?
- 2 What must the key word in a pun have?
- 3 How do the two different meanings of “drill” produce the humour in the first pun?
- 4 What is the meaning for the other word that sounds like “weak” but has a different spelling?
- 5 What is the best title for this paragraph?

## *Migration*

During the fall, when days grow shorter and colder, many birds migrate south. They must leave their northern nesting grounds because food becomes scarce. How they are able to find their way has always been a puzzle. Birds that migrate in flocks may teach the route to their young but those that fly alone must use other ways. Landmarks or the position of the sun and stars may serve as guides. It is also thought that some birds may sense the earth's magnetic field the way a compass does. Migration is one of nature's wonders.

- 1 When do many birds migrate south?
- 2 How might birds that migrate in flocks learn the migration route they have to follow?
- 3 What might migrating birds see that could serve as a guide along the way?
- 4 In what way might a migrating bird and a compass be alike?
- 5 Which of these titles best tells what the paragraph is about?

## *Guessing Game*

Try to guess the names of these animals. Each animal's name begins with the letter "c". What is the name of a small, tailless, intelligent ape often found in zoos? What is the name of a snake that can lift up the skin behind its head so that it looks like a hood? What is the name of a humped mammal that is a beast of burden in scorching deserts? What is the name of a tall, graceful bird with a long neck and long legs? What is the name of an animal, between a wolf and a fox in size, that howls and yaps at night? If you managed to answer all of them, you did remarkably well.

- 1 What do all the names of the animals described in this paragraph have in common?
- 2 A cobra is the name of a \_\_\_\_\_ that can lift up the skin behind its head.
- 3 A crane is the name of a \_\_\_\_\_.
- 4 Which of these animals has a name that starts with a sound that is different from the others?
- 5 Which of these animals is not described in this paragraph?



## *The Moon*

The moon is a satellite. A satellite is any heavenly body that moves in an orbit around any planet. Our moon moves around the earth from west to east. A complete orbit takes about 30 days. This period of time roughly matches a month on our calendar. The moon appears to shine but not in the same way as the sun. It shines because it reflects light from the sun. That is, sunlight bounces off the moon and then bounces back to earth. Moonlight helps us to see at night, especially when the moon is full and the sky is clear.

- 1 Which one does not move in an orbit around a planet?
- 2 What does the word “satellite” mean in this story?
- 3 What word or words used in the paragraph mean “a natural object in space”?
- 4 The moon we see at night is the earth’s \_\_\_\_\_.
- 5 Light from the sun bounces off the moon. We say that the moon \_\_\_\_\_ light.

## *Special Questions*

We usually ask a question to get information. When you ask a question, you expect an answer, don't you? Well, this isn't always the case. There is a special kind of question to which no answer is expected. This is a rhetorical question. We use these questions for effect or style. We use them to make statements rather than to get answers. "Do you think I was born yesterday?" and "What else can go wrong?" are two examples of rhetorical questions. Make sure you don't answer them. You might sound a little silly.

- 1 We usually ask a question to \_\_\_\_.
- 2 What is the special name for a question that we use for style and effect?
- 3 Do people who ask a rhetorical question expect an answer?
- 4 You don't answer a rhetorical question because you don't \_\_\_\_\_.
- 5 Pick the question that is most likely a rhetorical question.

### *New Words*

Some people like to make a game out of learning new words. They make an effort to learn at least one completely new word every day. They may pick an unfamiliar word from a book, a television show, or even a conversation. Then, they find out what it means. The best way to do this is to look it up in the dictionary. Then, they try to use the word at least three times a day. Of course, they try to use the word correctly. They fit it into their conversations with others. They might also use it in writing. This game is not only entertaining, it is also a great way to build your vocabulary.

- 1 This paragraph is mainly about a good way to \_\_\_\_\_.
- 2 Your \_\_\_\_\_ is the list of words you understand and can use.
- 3 If you want to learn a new word, you first find an unfamiliar word. The next thing to do is:
- 4 We use a dictionary to \_\_\_\_\_.
- 5 Try to use the new word at least three times a day but be sure to \_\_\_\_\_.

## *A Friend*

One of my best friends is only four years old. His name is Arthur. He sleeps on a rug by my bed. Every morning, we go for a long run together. He is always excited about this outing and he never makes any excuses about not wanting to go. He eats the same thing for breakfast every morning - never any complaints. Whenever we're together, he never wants to be more than a few steps away. Whenever we're apart, he misses me and he's always happy to see me again. He never seems to want much from me even though he's always there for me. He loves me and I love him back.

- 1 How do we know that Arthur likes to go for long runs?
- 2 What emotion is not talked about in this story?
- 3 What does Arthur never complain about?
- 4 Who do you think Arthur is?
- 5 How old is Arthur?

## *Money*

Before there was money, it was hard for people to get the things they needed from others. People had to trade goods and services with each other. But once there was money, they didn't have to look for someone to trade with. They could go to merchants. Merchants sold many things for money. Over time, money was taken in the form of shells, precious stones, gold, coins, and paper. Credit cards have become another form of money. Whether it is paper, plastic, or just a computer transaction, people will always use money. It is truly one of humankind's most useful inventions.

- 1 Why is money one of humankind's most useful inventions?
- 2 Why was it difficult for people to get things before there was money?
- 3 People didn't have to find others to trade with when they were able to \_\_\_\_.
- 4 Early merchants probably sold things for money in the form of \_\_\_\_\_.
- 5 What is the best title for this paragraph?

## Chapter 27

# Junior Comprehension Stories—Level 6 Canadian

Stories in this chapter:

- Knuckle Cracking
- Vampire Bats
- Adverbs
- Word Problems
- Fairy Tales And Fables
- Environment Boy
- Digging to China
- Babysitting
- An Adventure

## *Knuckle Cracking*

Most people know how to crack their knuckles but no one can crack them twice within a few minutes. Doctors recently discovered that the popping noise that you hear when you crack your knuckles is caused by tiny exploding gas bubbles. They found that the fluid in your joints contains dissolved gases. When you stretch the joint, you reduce the pressure. This lets the gas bubbles “pop” out of the fluid. The same thing happens when you open a bottle of soda. But the gas in the knuckle can’t escape and eventually dissolves back into the joint fluid. This takes about fifteen minutes. This has to happen before you can crack your knuckles again.

- 1 What causes the popping noise when you crack your knuckles?
- 2 Liquid in your body is called body \_\_\_\_\_.
- 3 The fluid in your joints contains \_\_\_\_\_ gases.
- 4 What does not happen when you crack your knuckles?
- 5 What happens first when you crack your knuckles?

## *Vampire Bats*

Some say that all bats acquired their bad reputation from the vampire bat. Vampire bats live in South and Central America. They feed only on blood from cattle, pigs, horses, or large birds and not on humans. They lap up blood from tiny wounds that they make with their front teeth. But they are not a real menace. They make up only a small part of the world's bat population. There are about 900 species of bats. Most of them play a very important role in the ecosystem. They eat huge numbers of insects. They spread plants by carrying and dropping seeds from one place to another. Today, in the hope of attracting bats, some people even build bat houses in their backyards.

- 1 Why do vampire bats give all bats a bad reputation?
- 2 There are about 900 \_\_\_\_\_.
- 3 What is one important role that bats play in the ecosystem?
- 4 How does a bat help spread plant life?
- 5 People build bat houses because they want to \_\_\_\_.



## *Adverbs*

You can increase your writing powers by understanding how to use different parts of speech. Let's examine adverbs. Adverbs modify verbs, adjectives, and other adverbs. They describe how, when, or where. Consider these sentences: "Enter quietly." "Janet arrived early." "I left my pencil here." The words "quietly", "early", and "here" are adverbs. Adverbs don't have a fixed position in a sentence. In fact, you can alter the meaning by changing the adverb's position. Read these sentences and notice how the position of the adverb "only" affects the meanings:

- 1 He whispered to me that he loved only me.
- 2 What is the main topic of this paragraph?
- 3 What do adverbs modify? Pick the most precise answer.
- 4 According to this passage, you can alter the meaning in a sentence by \_\_\_\_\_.
- 5 An adverb is not \_\_\_\_\_.
- 6 Find the word used in the paragraph that means "to change".

## *Word Problems*

To solve a word problem in math, first read it carefully. Look for special phrases that tell what operations you need to do. For example, “how many in all” and “find the total” tell you to add. Learn to recognize that some of the facts in what you read are unnecessary to the solution. Don’t let them mislead you. Then, express the problem in your own words. Include only the necessary facts and the question you must answer. You may have to put the facts in order. This is most important when two or more steps are needed to solve the problem. Next, do the number operation. Remember that it may take two or more operations to solve the problem. Keep in mind too that you should estimate what a reasonable answer would be. Finally, answer the question. Check the estimate to be sure your answer makes sense.

- 1 What is the first thing you should do to solve a word problem in math?
- 2 When a problem says to “find the total”, you should \_\_\_\_.
- 3 Why should you learn to recognize that some of the facts in the problem are unnecessary facts?
- 4 When you try to solve a math problem, you should remember to estimate what a reasonable answer would be. This will help you \_\_\_\_.
- 5 Which of these is the final step when you solve a word problem in math?

## *Fairy Tales And Fables*

Fairy tales are special stories for children. They're full of make-believe, magic, and happy endings. They're about witches, monsters, and dragons. They're about handsome heroes and brave heroines. "Beauty and the Beast" is a famous fairy tale.

Fables, however, are a little different. Fables are stories about animals that act like people. Often the animals can think and talk. Fables are supposed to teach us a lesson. We say they have a moral. They don't always have happy endings. The animals often get punished for being bad, mean, or lazy. Have you read the famous fable "The Hare and the Tortoise"?

- 1 What kind of story usually has a happy ending?
- 2 What is a fable?
- 3 Fables are supposed to \_\_\_\_\_.
- 4 "Slow and steady wins the race" is the \_\_\_\_\_ of "The Hare and the Tortoise".
- 5 "Beauty and the Beast" is \_\_\_\_\_.

## *Environment Boy*

I read a story in the school newspaper about a boy. This boy was worried about the environment. He had not had a bath or shower in two weeks. Our dwindling fresh water supply concerned him, so he cleaned himself with a sponge and a pail of water. He also washed his clothes by hand. He tried to put all of his ideas and feelings about the environment into action. That was why he recycled everything he could. He planted trees in his backyard and helped clean up his neighbourhood. He also spent a lot of time reading, looking for new ways to help the environment.

- 1 The boy was concerned about our fresh water supply because it is \_\_\_\_.
- 2 What did the boy do to save water?
- 3 What is one of the ways the boy put his feelings about the environment into action?
- 4 How is this boy a model environmentalist?
- 5 What is a good title to express the theme in this paragraph?

### *Digging to China*

I was watching television one day when I saw a cartoon rabbit dig into the earth until he reached China, on the opposite side of the world. I thought I could do the same, so I took a shovel and started digging. I dug for the next two hours and made a small hole about four feet deep. I was very hot, so I took a break and went into the house to get a glass of water. My mother asked me why I was making a hole in the backyard. I told her my plan to dig to China. My mother then got a book and showed me how impossible my plan was to achieve. She explained that I would have to dig for at least forty lifetimes, through the earth's crust, the mantle, and finally the earth's molten core before I would get to China. So I gave up and went back to watching cartoons on television!

- 1 Where did the writer get the idea to dig to China?
- 2 What was the writer doing before he went into the house to get a glass of water?
- 3 What did the mother use to show him how impossible his plan was?
- 4 Why could nobody ever dig all the way through the earth?

## *Babysitting*

Pat stomped into the house and threw her schoolbooks on the floor. She didn't want to miss going shopping with Liz, but her mom had asked her to baby-sit her little brother after school. Pat walked over to the window and glared down the street looking for Matt. The wind was blowing drifts of snow over the sidewalks and the sky was growing dark. After twenty minutes, Pat started to get worried. Finally, she saw Matt's small form plodding through the deep snow, slowly making its way up the street. Pat was so relieved to see him, she no longer cared about missing a shopping trip.

- 1 How was Pat probably feeling when she came into the house?
- 2 Why couldn't Pat go shopping with Liz?
- 3 What was the weather like outside?
- 4 What caused Pat to start getting worried?
- 5 Why was Pat relieved to see Matt?

### *An Adventure*

Nino grasped the handlebars more tightly, and pedaled faster and faster. Down the hill he sped, past the house with the bright blue door. The wheels went round and round. He selected another gear, then shot by the mailbox and over the railroad bridge, the wind whistling in his ears. Just as he reached the dangerous bend in the road by the maple tree, his wheels left the pavement, and he soared into the air. Nino screamed in delight as a startled blackbird squawked and fled the treetop. But in that moment of lost concentration, he also lost his balance. As he tumbled towards the ground, he heard his alarm clock.

- 1 In this story, what does the word “grasped” mean?
- 2 What was Nino riding?
- 3 What happened just as Nino reached the dangerous bend in the road?
- 4 What kind of sound did Nino make as his wheels left the ground?
- 5 Explain the importance of the information you get at the end of this story.

## Chapter 28

# Junior Comprehension Stories—Level 7 Canadian

Stories in this chapter:

- The Apostrophe
- Childhood Memory
- Learning
- Sponges
- History of Fashion
- Heroes
- Writing
- Fitness
- Dinosaurs



## *The Apostrophe*

The apostrophe has three very important uses in writing. When we leave out a letter in certain words, we use the apostrophe instead of the missing letter. We call this “contracting words”. So, instead of writing “are not”, we leave out the “o” and write “aren’t”. For the sake of clearness, we use the apostrophe plus “s” (’s) to form the plural of letters and numerals. So we write, “make your 5’s clearer” and “Dot your i’s”. We also use the apostrophe to show possession. For a singular noun, add apostrophe plus “s”: the man’s hat. For a plural noun, ending in “s”, just add the apostrophe: the boys’ shoes. We never use the apostrophe for possessive pronouns such as hers, theirs, or its.

- 1 \_\_\_\_\_ means the same as “it is”.
- 2 The apostrophe is used to mark \_\_\_\_\_ in a contracted word.
- 3 The apostrophe is important \_\_\_\_\_.
- 4 For the sake of clearness, use an apostrophe plus “s” (’s) to \_\_\_\_\_.
- 5 Which of these shows “books belonging to the girls” correctly?

## *Childhood Memory*

My mother tells me that I was usually a very well behaved child. But as a four-year-old, I remember playing a trick on her. I hid in the doghouse in my backyard all morning long and watched clearly as my mother searched and called my name. She grew increasingly frantic as more and more neighbours joined in the search. Finally, my favourite aunt appeared on the scene. When I ran out to greet her, she immediately whisked me away. She realized that, under the circumstances, the other adults probably had mixed feelings about finding me. I can't even remember what made me play that trick. But, as a mother today, I try to remember that kids sometimes do silly things without really meaning any harm.

- 1 What trick did the child play on her mother?
- 2 Why did the child in this story finally come out of the doghouse?
- 3 What does the phrase “whisked away” mean in this story?
- 4 What were the mixed feelings that the adults in this story most likely had when they found the child?
- 5 What does the writer try to remember from this childhood incident?

## *Learning*

Learning still puzzles scientists. Some compare learning to the way a computer functions. All that we know and experience comes in through our senses. We call this input. Any input that we pay attention to then moves into short-term memory. This is like a small filing cabinet with room for about seven files. As new files are put in, old ones are pushed out. These files are either forgotten or they move into long-term memory. How our “computer” prepares information for long-term storage affects how easy it will be to remember. If we chunk new pieces of information together, or associate them with old information, we make it easier to retrieve them. We can learn how to use this linking of information and practice it. Then it will be easier to call information to mind when we need to remember it.

- 1 In this paragraph, scientists compare learning to \_\_\_\_\_.
- 2 When we pay attention to anything we experience through our senses, the information will move into \_\_\_\_\_.
- 3 This writer compares \_\_\_\_\_ to a small filing cabinet.
- 4 Information is easier to remember when we \_\_\_\_\_.
- 5 When we “retrieve” information, we \_\_\_\_\_.

## *Sponges*

A sponge is a collection of sea creatures that attaches itself to an underwater rock. Sponges come in all different sizes, shapes, and colours. Because they have no heart, lungs, or brain, and because they don't move around, people once thought they were plants. Now, scientists believe that one sponge is really thousands of animals that live together in a colony. Each sponge has a hollow tube that allows water to flow through. This water is full of tiny plants and animals, some of which becomes food for the sponge. Perhaps you use a sponge for bathing or for washing cars. Actually, what you are using is the dried skeleton of a sponge colony.

- 1 Where does a sponge live?
- 2 People once thought that sponges were:
- 3 Find a word used in the paragraph that means “a group of plants or animals that live together”.
- 4 Choose the function that is served by the hollow tube in a sponge.
- 5 When we use a sponge to wash a car, we may actually be using:

### *History of Fashion*

Because Jean planned to be a fashion designer after she left school, she often researched different aspects of fashion. To her surprise, she learned that many of our fashion and grooming habits began more than one thousand years ago! Jean read that at first buttons were used as jewellery. When buttonholes were invented in the 1500's, buttons then were used to fasten clothes. Ancient Greeks and Romans made perfume by soaking flowers, leaves, and roots in oils. They applied these oils to their bodies to mask unpleasant odors. Jean also learned that the first shoes were made by hand thousands of years ago out of animal skins and grasses. Only one hundred years ago, factories began to make shoes in a variety of sizes. Her next investigation was going to be the history of make-up.

- 1 Why was Jean interested in fashion?
- 2 What does the word “research” mean?
- 3 What did the ancient Greeks and Romans use to mask unpleasant odors?
- 4 What does Jean plan to research next?

## *Heroes*

What makes a hero? There are many people who, faced with a crisis, rise to the occasion and find courage and inner strength that they never knew they had. If you pick up a newspaper on any given day, you will likely be able to find an article about someone who behaved heroically in the face of grave danger. You may read of a man who pulls a person out of a crushed vehicle just before the vehicle bursts into flames. What is it that made that man risk his life to save a stranger? Do we all have the potential to be a hero, or is it a characteristic that only some of us possess?

- 1 When faced with a crisis, what do many people find?
- 2 Which words in the paragraph would provide a definition for the word “fortitude”?
- 3 What example is given of the type of hero story you might read about?
- 4 This passage asks if we all have the potential to be a hero. What does the word “potential” mean here?
- 5 What makes a hero?

## *Writing*

Do you know how writers bring stories to life? The answer can be found in this basic rule of writing: “Show; don't tell”. The difference between showing and telling is like the one between playing in a game and watching it from the sidelines. Writers give their readers a sense of “being there” by describing the people, places, and events in the story based on their own detailed observations of the world around them. All five senses are used to give precise, clear pictures to the readers. For example, they are not just told, “it was a cold day”; instead, specific details, like “billows of frosty vapour” or “the snow squeaked when we walked on it”, are used to give the feeling of a cold day. Writers bring a story to life when they show the readers what it's like to be there.

- 1 In writing, there is a difference between showing and telling. What is this difference compared to?
- 2 Why is it important for writers to closely observe the world around them?
- 3 What do writers use to provide precise, clear pictures for their readers?
- 4 What were the specific examples of details used to give the feeling of a cold day?
- 5 What is supposed to happen when writers follow this basic rule of writing: Show; don't tell?

## *Fitness*

Physical fitness, for both young and old alike, is known to improve people's health and outlook on life. Daily exercise strengthens muscles, not only in the arms and legs, but also in the heart. With each beat of a fit heart, more blood is pumped through the body. This means it doesn't have to work as hard and a person has more staying power. Many people also enjoy how daily exercise increases the rate at which the body burns calories. As long as they don't change the way they eat, they will start to lose weight. People feel better, and have energy and self-esteem when they are active. When one looks at the benefits that daily exercise can bring, it is hard to see why everyone doesn't make the effort to keep fit.

- 1 What is known to improve a person's health and outlook on life?
- 2 How does strengthening the heart muscle improve a person's staying power?
- 3 Why will people lose weight without changing the way they eat if they exercise daily?
- 4 How can being active improve a person's outlook on life?
- 5 What makes it hard to understand why everyone doesn't make the effort to keep fit?



## *Dinosaurs*

Even though dinosaurs have never been seen, experts conclude many things from their fossilized bones, like their size and shape. Where they find the bones and how the bones are laid out also tell a story. For example, in one location, scientists found fossils of a large number of dinosaurs of the same species. The skeletons all pointed in the same direction. How did they die? Why were so many found in one place? Now, the kinds of rocks found in that area showed that the place used to be a large river. In modern day, caribou sometimes drown trying to cross fast flowing rivers in the spring. Since they move in herds, many die together. Their bodies have been found along riverbanks, all pointing in the direction of the strong current. Using this analogy, scientists say that the riverbed fossils were probably from a migrating species that moved in herds and died crossing a river.

- 1 When experts find fossils, why is it important for them to note how and where they find them?
- 2 In this story, what did the experts find that puzzled them at first?
- 3 What told the scientists that the area where they found the fossils of so many dinosaurs used to be a river?
- 4 How does the behaviour of some modern-day caribou shed light on how the dinosaurs in this story died?
- 5 What is an “analogy”?

## Chapter 29

# Junior Comprehension Stories—Level 8 Canadian

Stories in this chapter:

- Essays
- Word Categories
- A Novel Review
- Storms
- Steroids
- The Continents
- Bad Conscience
- The Paragraph
- Job-shadowing

## *Essays*

When you write an essay, you often read a lot to get ideas and facts. You may find material in books, magazines, encyclopedias, the Internet, or perhaps from television and radio programs. This research makes your essay informative and interesting. Sometimes you quote the material that you find. That is, you cite the actual words of the original work in your essay. Sometimes you cite the material in your own words. In either case, you should make an exact reference to the source. A reference includes the names of the author and publisher, the title of the book, the year of publication, and the exact page where the information can be found. A bibliography is a list of all sources that you have cited in your essay. This list should appear at the end of your essay.

- 1 What is the main idea of this paragraph?
- 2 If you “quote” someone else’s material, you:
- 3 If you use someone else’s material, you should always:
- 4 Find the word that means the same as “use someone else’s ideas, either in their words or in your own words”.
- 5 The \_\_\_\_\_ should appear at the end of your essay.

## *Word Categories*

Here is a list of words: trombone, piano, violin, accordion. These words are similar because they all name musical instruments. Here is another list of words: opera, organ, orchestra. Which of these words belongs with the first list? Look at the meaning of each word and then ask yourself if any are musical instruments. An opera is a play where singing is accompanied by musical instruments, while an orchestra is a group of musicians playing musical instruments. An organ can be part of an animal but it is also the name of a musical instrument. Here is another list of words: mix, combine, blend. These words are similar because they all mean the same thing. Which of these, then, belongs with that group: stir or confuse? Again, it is the one that shares a similar meaning. Grouping words into categories like this can help you learn about word meanings.

- 1 Which of these words belongs with the list of musical instruments?
- 2 Which word belongs in this list: mix, combine, blend?
- 3 Grouping words into categories is a good way to:
- 4 In this paragraph, we grouped words into categories by:
- 5 What is the best title to tell what this paragraph is about?

### *A Novel Review*

“The Outsiders”, a fascinating novel about teenagers, was written by a teenager. The author, S.E. Hinton, was only seventeen years old when she wrote a moving and perceptive novel about a rough gang of longhaired teenagers who came from the wrong side of the tracks. She wrote about things that are important to teenagers. The story is filled not only with drama and violence but also with sensitivity, understanding, and hope. The story is told by the main character, a fifteen year-old boy. He starts his story as he comes out of a movie theatre. Here, he begins to tell the readers about his world, a world of “greasers” from the poor side of town. These friends and fellow gang members are not part of what is called “mainstream”; they are truly “outsiders”.

- 1 According to this review, what was unusual about the author of “The Outsiders”?
- 2 What did S.E. Hinton want to write about in her novel?
- 3 From whose point of view is the story in the novel told?
- 4 Find the label in the passage that describes teenagers as rough and tough, with long, slicked back hair.
- 5 Why did the author call her story “The Outsiders”?

## *Storms*

Have you ever been in a fierce storm? All over the world, there are different kinds of storms. Lightning storms can form wherever there is a mix of warm and cool air. Strong swirling winds sometimes develop into tornadoes or cyclones. These twisters can pick up and destroy anything in their paths. Hurricanes and typhoons pound tropical areas with high winds and flooding. Blizzards, which are severe snowstorms, have very strong winds and create zero visibility. All these storms can create natural disasters. So, wherever you live, you must learn about the types of storms that might threaten your area and what precautions to take before and during those storms.

- 1 Which part of the world is never threatened by fierce storms?
- 2 When do lightning storms form?
- 3 A cyclone is sometimes also called \_\_\_\_\_.
- 4 \_\_\_\_\_ tend to strike Florida because of its tropical location.
- 5 What causes “zero visibility” during a blizzard?

## *Steroids*

Sports are becoming more competitive all the time. Athletes are being forced to excel at extremely high levels. This pressure on athletes has sometimes led to the use of steroids. The major concern with steroid use is the potentially damaging side effects. Steroids may cause problems such as liver disease, tendon injuries, increased aggression, loss of scalp hair, and high blood pressure.

Another major risk is the chance of getting caught with traces of steroids in the body and being banned from competitive sports. Steroid use is not worth all the trouble it causes. It has ruined the lives of many athletes, both through scandal and through harmful bodily disorders. The best athletes are clean athletes who know that training, hard work, and determination are the best ways to excel in any sport.

- 1 What has put pressure on some athletes to use steroids?
- 2 What are some of the bodily disorders caused by steroid use?
- 3 Besides harming an athlete's body, what is another major problem caused by steroid use?
- 4 Which word in the passage means "shame" or "disgrace"?
- 5 What is the theme of this passage?

## *The Continents*

Have you noticed how the shapes of the continents look as though they could fit together, the way jigsaw puzzle pieces do? Scientists believe that, millions of years ago, the continents were joined together in one giant land mass called Pangea. The evidence suggests that Pangea split apart and the pieces slowly moved to where they form the continents of today. This is thought to have happened because the Earth's crust, or outer layer, is made up of pieces that are always moving. The pieces of crust are called plates and they are pushed and pulled by the flowing molten rock that lies beneath them. Today, the continents continue to move with the plates they are associated with. Perhaps, some time in the distant future, they will form a new Pangea!

- 1 In what way are the continents like jigsaw puzzle pieces?
- 2 What was Pangea?
- 3 Why did Pangea split apart?
- 4 How might a new Pangea form in the distant future?
- 5 What is the best title for this paragraph?



### *Bad Conscience*

Jim could feel his stomach begin to twist into knots as he glanced nervously around the brightly lit store. He saw the clerk busily engaged with a customer and knew this would be a good time to slip the earrings into his pocket. He had never stolen anything before and knew he really should use the money he'd saved to buy the earrings. If he got caught, it wasn't going to be much of a birthday present for his mom. If only Peter hadn't come along and persuaded him to use his money for the movies tonight. Jim looked out the window at Peter, who was waiting outside, and realized he was the only one responsible for his actions. Removing his wallet from the back pocket of his jeans, Jim walked over to the cash register and waited to pay the clerk. He knew he was doing the right thing.

- 1 The paragraph states that “Jim could feel his stomach begin to twist into knots”. What does this sentence tell you about how Jim was feeling?
- 2 When did Jim think it would be a good time to slip the earrings into his pocket?
- 3 Why was Jim interested in getting earrings?
- 4 What did Jim realize he was responsible for?
- 5 What did Jim finally do?

## *The Paragraph*

In order to convey an idea in writing, without having the reader miss the point, the paragraph form is used. Many people have a lot of ideas to write about, but their writing is not always meaningful because it is not well constructed. A paragraph expresses only one main idea and readers learn what it is when they read the topic sentence. This is often the first thing people read and it should catch their interest. The body of the paragraph develops the main idea by adding supporting details. These are written in an order that makes sense and each sentence must flow smoothly into the next. Once all the details have been covered, the paragraph closes by summing up the main idea. To write well, one must master the craft of paragraph writing.

- 1 Why is some writing not meaningful?
- 2 What should you find at the beginning of a good paragraph?
- 3 How should the details in the body of the paragraph be written?
- 4 What is another name for “the main idea” in a piece of writing?
- 5 Which title best tells what this paragraph is about?

### *Job-shadowing*

“Now tell me about your job-shadowing,” said Mrs. Green, to her class. “I helped a dental hygienist. I really enjoyed meeting people, and being in a medical environment,” announced Kathy. “Well, I shadowed an accountant who was auditing off-site. I liked the idea of visiting, and working in many different offices, but I don’t think I’ll enjoy checking other people’s math,” said Radha. “I had a blast with the firefighters,” grinned Pierre. “I liked the sense of adventure.” He turned to Sue, who shyly admitted, “I’m going to be a veterinarian.” “I shadowed a project manager,” chipped in Andy. “I thought there was too much budgeting and scheduling, but I like the fact that he travels all around the world.” “Now I want you to make a list of your likes and dislikes about the jobs and environments you’ve just observed. Use it when you’re thinking about careers,” concluded Mrs. Green.

- 1 How would you describe job-shadowing?
- 2 Why did Kathy like helping the dental hygienist?
- 3 Why do you think Pierre might also consider a job with the army?
- 4 Which of Mrs. Green’s students probably likes animals the most?
- 5 With what suggestion did Mrs. Green conclude the discussion?

## Chapter 30

# Junior Comprehension Stories—Level 9 Canadian

Stories in this chapter:

- History of Sports
- UFOs
- The Garbage Problem
- Career Choices
- Crime Detection
- Emotions
- Figurative Language
- Singapore
- Polar Bears

## *History of Sports*

Do you realize that some of today's sports began thousands of years ago? They originated with prehistoric humans and their skills in hunting for food. When people began to live in communities and to farm, they turned their hunting skills of running and throwing weapons into sports - activities done for entertainment and exercise. Later, the soldiers of Ancient Greece, trained to run, throw, and jump, held athletic competitions in the city of Olympia to test their skills. Today, these competitions are called the Olympic Games and attract thousands of amateur athletes from around the world. However, for most of us, sports are simply a part of our daily routine. We may cycle, jog, golf, play baseball or basketball, engaging in both individual and team sports for pleasure and fitness. The sports we play now may change with the seasons but they are a vital part of our lives.

- 1 What does the word "originated" mean?
- 2 When did the skills needed by early humans for survival develop into entertainment skills?
- 3 Where did the Olympic Games originate?
- 4 What are good reasons to take part in some form of sports?
- 5 How do modern humans differ from prehistoric humans in their need to develop physical skills?

## *UFOs*

The debate over whether or not UFOs (Unidentified Flying Objects) exist is a mystery that may never be solved. There are people who say that they have seen UFOs. Some researchers believe that these people really just saw airplanes, falling stars, or even light reflecting off various planets that are close to earth. Other experts believe that it is quite possible that UFOs exist. They think that there are other forms of beings in the vast universe who fly these craft. Such life forms may be more intelligent than humans on earth in that they may already be studying us! There have been too many unexplained sightings to rule out the possibility that UFOs exist. What do you believe?

- 1 What does the word “debate” mean in this passage?
- 2 How did UFOs get their name?
- 3 What do non-believers think that unidentified flying objects in the sky really are?
- 4 What do some people who believe in UFOs think about the beings that fly these craft?
- 5 What is the theme of this passage?

### *The Garbage Problem*

We have to become more environmentally conscious now. If we do not, the earth will soon become virtually uninhabitable. A large part of the problem is a result of overflowing landfill sites. Thus, we have to address the problems of excess garbage and garbage disposal. If we would just take the time to sort our garbage for recycling, we could eliminate over half of our landfill deposits. We need to recycle everything we can. All paper and paper packaging should be recycled. Glass bottles can be reused or melted down. Organic materials, such as food scraps, grass, and leaves can be composted. We need to reduce the use of plastic as much as possible too. We should also use mugs or recyclable paper cups instead of polystyrene drinking cups. If we all do our part, our world will last a lot longer.

- 1 What environmental problem is the main topic of this passage?
- 2 How can we cut our landfill deposits in half?
- 3 Name three of the main kinds of recyclable materials.
- 4 Why are some waste materials called “organic”?
- 5 By recycling, what kind of awareness are we displaying?

## *Career Choices*

Choosing a career is one of the most difficult, yet important, decisions a person must make in life. In order to make a wise choice, people must first recognize their unique strengths, interests, and abilities. This allows them to choose from the major occupational areas, such as sales, the arts, or the trades.

Information on some of the career options within these groups may then be collected and their various requirements explored. Realistic goals need to be set and limitations noted that might prevent individuals from doing a job. Also, a plan of action should be established to obtain the right type and amount of education needed for a job. Good career planning can make the world of work a rewarding place in a person's life.

- 1 In order to make a wise career choice, what must a person first recognize?
- 2 What are the three examples of major occupational areas mentioned in this paragraph?
- 3 What is the word used to describe goals set by people who consider both their strengths and their limitations?
- 4 Why is a good plan of action for education an important part of career planning?
- 5 What do most people hope to accomplish through good career planning?



### *Crime Detection*

If you have ever read any Sherlock Holmes adventures, you will appreciate the advances in crime detection that have been made since the late eighteen-hundreds. Holmes relied on keen observation and his sense of logic to solve a case. Today, detectives have the added benefit that advances in science have given them to help solve crime. Each piece of evidence, even the smallest trace, can be tested with chemicals or viewed under high power microscopes to link the crime with the criminal. Another sophisticated technique, DNA testing, uses DNA from cells that, like a fingerprint, has a pattern that is found only in one person. The experts that work in this field can often tell when, where, how, and who was involved in a crime, without ever being at the scene. This is very different from the kind of detecting that was carried out in the past.

- 1 What did Holmes rely on to solve a case?
- 2 What added benefits are available to detectives today to help solve a crime?
- 3 Why is a person's DNA like a fingerprint?
- 4 How is crime detection today different from the kind that was carried out in the past?
- 5 Which title best tells what this paragraph is about?

## *Emotions*

Emotions are complex feelings that are aroused by experiences. Things may impress you as being agreeable, pleasurable, frightening, etc. These impressions then give rise to such emotions as happiness, grief, affection, or fear. We can judge people's emotions by looking at their eyes, gestures, and facial expressions. We can also study their actions, words, and tone of voice. But people can also hide their emotions, making it difficult to judge their feelings. Sometimes a sensitive friend might need to "read between the lines". When there are no outward signs, we must try to figure out how a certain experience may make someone else feel. At times, it is appropriate to control our emotions while at other times, it is wise to try to express them clearly. Emotions play an important role in everyone's lives and have a strong influence on character and relationships.

- 1 Emotions are \_\_\_\_\_.
- 2 Why is it sometimes difficult to judge people's feelings?
- 3 Facial expressions and gestures are among the many \_\_\_\_\_ of emotions.
- 4 If someone "reads between the lines", he or she tries to \_\_\_\_\_.
- 5 When might be the best time to express your emotions?

## *Figurative Language*

We use figurative language to say things in an imaginative way. This is different from the literal way, which aims to use exact meanings. Figurative language can add different shades to a meaning. It calls for imagination from both speaker and listener. It is often based on a comparison. We compare something unfamiliar with something more familiar in order to bring clarity to the less well-known. The comparison can have a pictorial effect or an emotional one. When we say, “The path was a ribbon of moonlight”, we are comparing the path to a ribbon. We want you to picture something smooth, narrow, winding, and shiny. This comparison, therefore, has a pictorial effect. When we say, “He cried like a baby”, we want the listener to feel the sadness and helplessness of that little person. This comparison, then, is emotional. Figurative language is what makes a message more than just mere words.

- 1 Figurative language brings \_\_\_\_\_ to a story.
- 2 Figurative language doesn't aim for exact meaning like \_\_\_\_\_ language does.
- 3 Figurative language is often based on comparing what kinds of things?
- 4 If a comparison brings “clarity” to something, it provides \_\_\_\_\_.
- 5 In writing, a comparison can be used to create either of these two effects:

## *Singapore*

One of the most beautiful places you can visit is the Republic of Singapore. It is close to the equator, so the weather is hot throughout the year. Singapore is a small country in Southeast Asia, but it has one of the most advanced economies in the world. It is one of the busiest ports in the world, and there are also many computer and other consumer electronics manufacturers in Singapore. Its government is democratic and it keeps an ordered society. Crime and unemployment rates are low, while the standard of living is high. Singaporeans, mostly a mixture of people from China, Malaysia, and India, welcome visitors from around the world. Almost everyone speaks English, as it is an official language. Singapore is also one of the cleanest countries in the world. Smoking in public, for example, is forbidden. The city of Singapore abounds in scenic parks and colourful gardens. It is a treasure to see.

- 1 Singapore is \_\_\_\_\_.
- 2 Why is Singapore so prosperous?
- 3 How do the people of Singapore behave towards tourists?
- 4 What is an important factor that contributes to the scenic parks and colourful gardens that abound in Singapore?
- 5 The standard of living in Singapore is high while \_\_\_\_\_ rates are low.

## *Polar Bears*

Polar bears, the world's largest land carnivores, are remarkable creatures. Not only are polar bears enormous, with some males towering three and a half metres high and weighing up to 680 kilograms, but they are so powerful that they can kill a seal with one blow from their mighty paws. Polar bears can run as fast as forty kilometres per hour, and they are able to swim out over one hundred kilometres from land. Polar bears also have an acute sense of smell, which they use to locate food even many kilometres away. And they are patient hunters too, for sometimes they disguise themselves as drifting ice, and float around in the hope that a meal might swim by. A polar bear realizes that its black nose is highly visible, so it uses a paw to conceal it while hunting. Polar bears are ferocious and dangerous hunters, for it is known that even small whales and people inside igloos are not safe from them.

- 1 Which word from this paragraph tells us that polar bears are meat-eaters?
- 2 Why can we say polar bears are well-suited to be hunters?
- 3 Why do we say that polar bears are dangerous and ferocious hunters?
- 4 What might make us think that a polar bear is clever?
- 5 When a polar bear floats around trying to look like drifting ice, what does it hope might happen?

## Chapter 31

# Junior Comprehension Stories—Level 10 Canadian

Stories in this chapter:

- Ecology
- Explorers
- The Hyphen
- Atoms
- Conversation
- Languages
- Alphabets
- Elections
- The Ideal Physique

## *Ecology*

Ecology is the science that studies how living things interact with each other and with their surroundings. The word “ecology” is formed from two Greek words: “oikos”, which means home (i.e., the earth), and “logos”, which means study. Ecology is extremely important. We must learn to understand and protect our environment. We must all feel responsible for the condition of our natural resources and our surroundings. Anyone, of any age, can take on that responsibility. We can all take part in waste management programs that aim to reduce, reuse, and recycle. We can all help to maintain and improve the habitat of our local wildlife. We can all work together to make sure endangered species survive. And we can all make a point of staying informed in ecological issues by reading and by watching television documentaries on the topic.

- 1 Ecology is the topic of this paragraph. What is ecology?
- 2 The Greek word “bios” means “life”. So, biology is \_\_\_\_\_.
- 3 In waste management, the three R’s program is \_\_\_\_\_.
- 4 Who should feel responsible for the condition of the Earth’s environment?
- 5 How can we stay informed on ecological issues?

## *Explorers*

John Cabot, in 1497, was the first European to explore North America. This New World was named after Americus Vesputius who had been the first to write about it. During the sixteenth century, many voyages of discovery were made by the Spanish, Portuguese, English, and French. The Spaniards colonized Mexico. They tried to settle in the southern part of what is now the United States. As well, the French tried to settle on the east coast of the US and along the St. Lawrence River. There were no permanent European settlements until the next century. At this time, the English, in 1607, settled in Jamestown, Virginia, and in 1620, at Plymouth, Massachusetts. The French made their first settlement at Quebec in 1608. Today, these settlements are old but thriving cities. They have come to remind us of the courage and strength of the early explorers.

- 1 John Cabot was the first European to \_\_\_\_\_.
- 2 The continent of North America was named after \_\_\_\_\_.
- 3 Who colonized Mexico?
- 4 There were no permanent European settlements in North America until the \_\_\_\_\_ century.
- 5 In what North American country did the French make their first permanent settlement?



## *The Hyphen*

The hyphen, an important punctuation mark, joins words together. One of its many uses is to form compound words such as merry-go-round and water-repellent. Often, it is difficult to know whether a compound should be two separate words, as in comic strip, a single word, as in nighttime, or hyphenated, as in left-handed. If you are uncertain, check the dictionary and if the word is not there, treat it as two separate words. A hyphen also connects two or more words that operate together as an adjective before a noun. “A well-informed scientist” is an example of this. Hyphens are also used with written fractions (two-thirds) and written compound numbers (twenty-one). Use a hyphen with the prefix “re” when writing a word that is spelled the same as another word with a different meaning. For example, “re-cover” means to cover again but “recover” means to get something back. The hyphen helps us to tell words like this apart.

- 1 Choose the best title for this paragraph.
- 2 If a word is hyphenated, it \_\_\_\_\_.
- 3 If you are not sure if a compound words needs a hyphen, you should \_\_\_\_\_.
- 4 In the example “a well-informed scientist”, well-informed is \_\_\_\_\_ that comes before the noun “scientist”.
- 5 We \_\_\_\_\_ use a hyphen with the prefix “re”.

## *Atoms*

All matter in the universe is made up of extremely tiny particles called atoms. An atom is the smallest particle that can exist by itself. Long ago, scientists thought that each atom consisted of protons and neutrons. These made up the central nucleus and were surrounded by electrons. Then, in 1919, a scientist named Rutherford developed a device that could split an atom apart. By smashing atoms, scientists have found hundreds of other particles. Even though these particles exist only briefly, scientists realized that protons and neutrons are not the most basic particles after all. Today, they think that there are only two fundamental particles. They feel that protons and neutrons are made up of “quarks”. Electrons and similar particles are made up of “leptons”. “Gauge Bosons”, a possible third kind of particle, hold the quarks and leptons together.

- 1 What is the name of the smallest particle that can exist by itself?
- 2 What was thought to make up the central nucleus of an atom?
- 3 When scientists split atoms apart, they found out that\_\_\_\_\_.
- 4 Today, scientists believe that electrons are made up of \_\_\_\_\_.
- 5 What keeps the two fundamental particles together?

## *Conversation*

Have you ever tried to talk to someone but been lost for words? Most people have experienced that problem. If this happens to you, then the following may be of interest. A conversation begins when one of the participants initiates the discussion. Most people wait for the other person to take the lead and start a conversation, so you should learn to take the lead and start a conversation. A good opener is a question or a comment about a topic that is not personal or threatening, such as the weather. Once the conversation begins, listen carefully and try to determine what interests your partner. You can do this by being sensitive to the feelings behind the words and by carefully observing body language. When you sense a topic of interest, follow it up with a comment or question. Being sensitive to others will make you a better listener and more successful during conversation.

- 1 Who might this paragraph help?
- 2 What often happens prior to the start of a conversation?
- 3 Why would it be a good idea to initiate a conversation by talking about a popular TV show?
- 4 What should you do during a conversation?
- 5 A good listener \_\_\_\_\_.

## *Languages*

Most creatures communicate by using sounds but humans are the only ones who do so by using spoken languages. There are approximately five thousand languages in the world; most of them are spoken by relatively small groups of people. In Africa, for example, there are nearly one thousand languages and in Australia there are several hundred spoken by the Aborigines. Mandarin Chinese is the main language of the largest group of people but the language spoken in the most countries in the world is English. In addition, English rates second as the language used by most people. It first was spoken in England by Anglo-Saxons before the year 1100 and was developed by either deriving new words or borrowing entire words from other languages. This process of development still continues as languages change with time.

- 1 How does human communication differ from that of most animals?
- 2 Africa is a country of many tribes. What impact does that have on the languages spoken there?
- 3 Which language is spoken in most countries in the world?
- 4 What does the phrase “deriving new words from other languages” mean?
- 5 Why is “Living Language” a good title for this paragraph?

## *Alphabets*

Most modern languages are written using alphabets, the letters of which represent different sounds. However, the earliest forms of written language were picture symbols on clay tablets, used by the Sumerians in the region of present-day Iraq. Later, the Egyptians developed picture writing, called hieroglyphics. Each hieroglyph stood for an object or a sound and was printed on paper made from papyrus reed. The first letter alphabet was developed by the Phoenicians in 1000 BC. Of that alphabet, the letter “o” is the oldest and the only one that has remained unchanged. The modern English alphabet contains twenty-six letters. Of all modern languages, Chinese is the only one that has no alphabet. It uses fifty thousand picture symbols, called characters, to form words.

- 1 Why was the development of picture symbols and alphabets important?
- 2 Which writing system was developed earliest?
- 3 Who developed the first letter alphabet and when did they do it?
- 4 Which modern language is the only one with no alphabet?
- 5 Why would it be difficult to master written Chinese?

## *Elections*

An election is the process by which government officers are chosen to manage the country's affairs. Only citizens may participate in an election, either as voters or as potential candidates for office. They must also be of a certain age to vote or hold office. A national election day is usually the same day in all parts of the country. Practices and privileges are controlled by strict laws and rules. But all political elections are held by secret ballot. This is done to make sure that votes are uninfluenced so far as secrecy can protect them. And the results of all democratic elections are based on the notion that the will of the majority shall always prevail. After all, the definition of democracy is a system of government in which the people choose their leaders by voting for them in elections. This is government by the people, for the people.

- 1 The people who win political elections \_\_\_\_\_.
- 2 All candidates who have not yet won the election are \_\_\_\_\_ candidates.
- 3 You must be \_\_\_\_\_ and of legal age to vote or hold public office.
- 4 Elections are held by secret ballot so that \_\_\_\_\_.
- 5 "Government by the people" is the definition of \_\_\_\_\_.

### *The Ideal Physique*

The media today places a great deal of emphasis on a standard view of the “ideal” physique. Trying to acquire this physique can have a negative effect on a person’s health. Losing excess body fat can be an appropriate goal, but uncontrolled dieting can lead to muscle deterioration and extreme fatigue. This happens when stores of fat are used up and the body begins to burn muscle tissue for energy. Another way people sometimes try to reshape their physique is by adding muscle mass through the use of steroids. However, not only do steroids develop muscle, but they also produce some rather undesirable side effects and pose long-term health risks. Each person should realize that the images portrayed by the media are not realistic. They should then learn to use good health and fitness habits to develop the physique that is ideal for them.

- 1 What is the author’s main purpose of this passage?
- 2 What can lead to muscle wasting and extreme fatigue?
- 3 When does the body begin to burn muscle tissue for energy?
- 4 What do steroids do besides build muscle?
- 5 Why is the media’s single view of the “ideal” physique not realistic?

## Chapter 32

# Senior Comprehension Stories—Level 1 Canadian

Stories in this chapter:

- Proof of Payment
- A Place to Live
- Getting Downtown
- Seth's Rules
- Cool Bees
- Luke's Dad
- Recreation
- The Mall
- A Cool Purchase



### *Proof of Payment*

Tony knew that he didn't owe any more money on his set of drums. Yet here was a new bill from the music store. It showed he had made three payments. It said he had one more payment to make. Tony looked for his receipt for the fourth payment. He couldn't find it anywhere. So he went to the store. The manager there checked his records. He said the bill was right. He said Tony had no proof that he had made the fourth and final payment. But the manager went on to give Tony some advice. He told Tony to keep his “paid” bills and receipts in one place as a record. He told him he should pay large bills by cheque. The problem was solved! Tony could prove he had paid. He had made his fourth payment by cheque.

- 1 What had Tony bought?
- 2 How many payments had Tony made?
- 3 What good advice did the manager give Tony?
- 4 Why was Tony's problem solved?
- 5 Use a word from the story to complete this sentence: A receipt is a proof of \_\_\_\_\_.

## *A Place to Live*

Lin and his family moved to the big city. They had no place to live. He bought a newspaper to look through the want ads. He saw lists of places for rent. He and his wife wanted to rent a townhouse. They needed space for their three sons. The townhouse had three bedrooms. It had a small yard and a parking place for their car. The rent would take half of Lin's salary. His wife planned to find a job too. Her money would pay for food, heat, and light bills. The townhouse was close to Lin's work. It was close to a school for their boys. Lin thought that they could sell his car if they needed more money. Their plans made the whole family happy.

- 1 What kind of home did Lin and his family want to rent?
- 2 How would Lin's wife contribute to the family expenses?
- 3 What advantages does the townhouse have for Lin's family?
- 4 What fraction of Lin's salary is needed for the rent?
- 5 Why did Lin think he could sell his car if they needed more money?

### *Getting Downtown*

The city was a big place for Sara. She and her dad had to get from the train station to downtown. They did not have much money or time to spend. They had to decide the best way to get downtown. They could take a taxi or a bus. The trip by taxi would be fast. It would take about 15 minutes. It would cost them 15 dollars. The bus stop was nearby. A sign said their bus would leave soon. The bus trip would cost them 3 dollars each. It would take a half hour. Sara thought that the bus would be the better way for them to get downtown.

- 1 What did Sara and her dad have to do?
- 2 Name the two vehicles they thought about taking downtown.
- 3 Which was the better way for them to travel downtown?
- 4 In what kind of place did Sara and her father likely live?
- 5 What two things did Sara think about when making her decision?

## *Seth's Rules*

Seth had a hard time keeping a job. He had few skills. It was hard for him to get along with people at work. In the past, he had been fired because of fights. He knew that he had to learn how to act on the job. He had to keep this new one. Being on time each day was his first rule. The next rule was to listen to the boss. Seth would do as he was told. He knew he should not argue. He also knew that he had to work hard and do his share. There was no time for “fooling around” on this new job. Seth hoped that by trying hard and sticking to his rules, he would do well.

- 1 What important problem is discussed in this story?
- 2 What was the result of Seth's not knowing how to act at work?
- 3 How do we know Seth wants to change his ways?
- 4 Which one of these is not one of Seth's rules?
- 5 Why do you think it is important for Seth to keep his new job?

### *Cool Bees*

Bees live in homes called hives. They can't work and live in them if it is too hot, though. So they air-cool their home. The door of a hive is a narrow slit across the front. It is at the bottom. When the hive gets too hot, a group of bees line up outside the door. Then they fan their wings. This draws hot air out from the hive. It makes all the air in the hive move around. Cool air moves in. This is how they air-cool their homes.

- 1 Why do bees have to cool off their homes?
- 2 Where do you find the door to the hive?
- 3 What moves into the hive to replace the hot air that is drawn out?
- 4 What do the bees do when the hive gets too hot?
- 5 What do the bees do with their wings?

## *Luke's Dad*

Luke's dad is a truck driver. He drives his own big rig. He often drives 4000 kilometres in a week. His main job is to haul fruit from the south to cities in the north. Then he loads up with hay to take back to the south. He has done this for a long time. He thinks of himself as a professional driver. He is a good one. Luke is glad when his father comes home. Then they clean up the rig for the next trip. Luke likes the cab best. It has a "sleeper" attached. On long hauls, two drivers share the work. They take turns. One drives while the other sleeps. Luke hopes to be a truck driver too some day.

- 1 What does Luke's dad do for a living?
- 2 In his work, Luke's dad usually goes \_\_\_\_\_.
- 3 What does Luke do when his father gets home?
- 4 A professional driver is someone who \_\_\_\_\_.
- 5 What kind of job does Luke hope to do some day?

## *Recreation*

There is an old saying we should know. It is, “All work and no play makes Jack a dull boy.” We all need play or recreation. It keeps us fit and happy. To recreate means to make fresh again, or to refresh. We need to do things that make us feel refreshed after we work. Some people like to swim, run, or walk. Others like to play or watch sports. Many make things with their hands. They sew, knit, carve, or build. Some want to sit and read in a quiet place. We all have 24 hours to fill each day. We must do our work. We must eat and sleep. But we should also spend time at things we enjoy. The best plan is to have things to do that make our minds and bodies feel fresh.

- 1 What is the main idea in what you just read?
- 2 The word “recreate” means \_\_\_\_\_.
- 3 How many hours do we have to fill in one day?
- 4 What does the old saying in this story mean?
- 5 We all need to do things that make us feel this way after hard work:

## *The Mall*

We have built lots of malls to shop in. We build malls near large numbers of homes. Malls have many kinds of stores. People can buy all the things they need. They just have to make one stop. Malls are warm in the winter. They are cool in the summer. They have large parking lots and places to eat. They have theatres where you can watch a movie. All these things make it so that family and friends enjoy spending time at the mall. Everyone can find things they want to do and to buy. Then they can meet and get something to eat. Can you think of things that you don't like about shopping at a mall?

- 1 This paragraph is mainly about \_\_\_\_\_.
- 2 Malls have many kinds of \_\_\_\_\_.
- 3 This paragraph lists \_\_\_\_\_.
- 4 Why do we build malls near large numbers of homes?
- 5 In this paragraph, we are told about places that are \_\_\_\_\_.



### *A Cool Purchase*

Mika wants to buy a new fridge. He likes to know the facts before he buys new things. He read an article to help him shop. He saw it in a magazine for consumers. He is surprised by what he learns. New models have lots of “cool” new features. One new model beeps if the door is left open too long. One fridge can tell you how much power it needs for the month. This fridge is quite efficient and does not use much power. There are fridges with the usual features. They have extra-deep shelves on the door. They have icemakers. Mika read about a fridge that is connected to the Internet. With this fridge, you can order groceries on-line as you stand in front of it! That’s a pretty cool fridge.

- 1 When does Mika like to get the facts?
- 2 What kind of magazine did Mika read?
- 3 What does the word “efficient” mean in this story?
- 4 What cool new feature surprised Mika the most?
- 5 Name one of the common features that fridges have.

## Chapter 33

# Senior Comprehension Stories—Level 2 Canadian

Stories in this chapter:

- House Rules
- Credit Cards
- Late for Work
- The Need to Read
- The Application
- Home Security
- Labels
- Food for Life
- Job Search

### *House Rules*

Stefano and his brother live in a very small apartment. It has only one bedroom. It also has a small kitchen and a living room. They made up a list of rules to keep the place tidy. Their rules are ones that we all can follow. First, have a place for everything and keep everything in its place. Then, put clothes away when you take them off. Try not to leave them on the floor. Next, wash the dishes after each meal and put them away. Clean up spills right away. Pick up bits of dust and dirt. To make these rules work, Stefano and his brother share the cleaning jobs between them. This way, they know they can keep their home neat and clean.

- 1 What is the main idea in this paragraph?
- 2 How do Stefano and his brother make their cleaning rules work?
- 3 Which rule is the most important for small homes?
- 4 What do Stefano and his brother say to do after each meal?
- 5 Which word in the story means the same as “neat and clean”?

## *Credit Cards*

We live in a world of credit cards! They are not hard to get. They are not hard to use. They can help us to manage money. But they can cause problems if used poorly. We can use credit cards instead of paying cash. This means as shoppers, we can buy more than we can afford. If we do, we can't pay off the balance on each month's statement. Then a high interest charge is added to the balance. If you have trouble using credit cards, here are some rules. Use them only when you have cash in the bank. Put them away when you can't pay each month's balance. Use them only for special or expensive purchases.

- 1 Complete this statement to give the main idea of this story: Credit cards can \_\_\_\_\_.
- 2 When is a high interest charge added to a credit card bill?
- 3 What rule should you follow when you can't pay each month's credit card balance?
- 4 Why is it wise to use credit cards only when you have cash in the bank?
- 5 What can credit cards help us do?

### *Late for Work*

It was Saturday morning at the bus stop. Pierre was starting a new shift at work that day. But he was going to be late. The 6 o'clock bus had not come. In fact, since he had been at the stop, no bus had passed. It was almost 6:30. His shift began at 7 and the bus trip took at least 50 minutes. Pierre worried about what his boss would say. This was only his third week at the company and he needed this job. Then he remembered what his mother had said. "Be sure to check the bus schedule. It may be different on weekends." He had not paid any attention to her. Now he was sorry that he had not listened to her. At last, he saw the bus turn at the corner.

- 1 Why does Pierre not want to be late for work?
- 2 What time does Pierre start work?
- 3 Can Pierre get to work on time by bus?
- 4 What had Pierre's mother said to do?
- 5 What will Pierre have to tell his boss?

## *The Need to Read*

Chris has trouble reading. She did not attend much school as a child because her mother was ill. She had to stay home a lot. When her mother died, Chris dropped out of school. All her life, Chris has struggled with not being able to read. She finds it very difficult. But she never lets on that she can't read. She is worried that people will think that she is not smart. She knows she is smart. She just didn't learn to read in school. Now Chris wants to change this. She wants to be able to read books. She wants to be able to walk into a bank or an office and read the forms herself. She feels the need to read.

- 1 What does Chris not do well?
- 2 What does Chris worry about?
- 3 What does Chris want to do now?
- 4 When Chris learns to read, what does she want to be able to do?
- 5 What does the word "attend" mean?

### *The Application*

At last Maria had a job. She could count on a paycheck each week. Finally she would have her own money. She decided to get her own credit card. She wanted it to be in her name. Right now the card was in her husband's name and he paid the bills. She got an application form at the bank. She filled out her name and address. She wrote down her employer's name and address. There was a box for her salary and one for the length of time she had worked at her job. Some questions surprised her. Did you have to say who owned your home? Did you need to say if you were getting support payments? Maria wanted to do this on her own. She did not want to ask her spouse to co-sign the form. Would she qualify for her own credit card?

- 1 Where did Maria get the application form?
- 2 When Maria read some of the questions, \_\_\_\_\_.
- 3 Maria decided to get a credit card because \_\_\_\_\_.
- 4 The person who must pay a credit card bill is \_\_\_\_\_.
- 5 What other word for "husband" is used in the story?

## *Home Security*

We all need to make our homes as secure, or as safe, as possible. Nobody wants a thief to break in. Here are some ways to keep out an intruder.

- Keep the doors locked at all times. Use strong locks.
- Put a chain on the inside of the door. It will let you open the door a little bit.
- Lock all the windows.
- At night, close and lock windows that are near to the ground.
- Put bars on basement windows.
- Arrange for mail to be picked up when you are away.
- Leave a light on when you go out.
- Don't leave money or jewellery lying around.

Following these tips will help to keep you and your home safe and sound.

- 1 We make our houses secure because we don't want \_\_\_\_\_.
- 2 Why should you put a chain on the inside of the door?
- 3 You should leave a light on when you go out because \_\_\_\_\_.
- 4 When we are away, we should arrange for our mail to be \_\_\_\_\_.
- 5 Which word means the same as "safe"?



## *Labels*

How many labels do you see each day? How many do you read? Labels are on food packages and on clothes. They are there to tell us important facts. Food labels tell us how much food is in a package. They also list all the things that are in the food. This is good for people who don't like to have things put in their food to make it last longer. Others can't eat certain food because it makes them sick. Still others don't want to eat food with a lot of fat in it. Labels on clothes tell the size. They tell how to clean the clothes and what they are made of. Be a smart shopper. Read the labels!

- 1 This is the main idea of what you just read:
- 2 Food labels tell us \_\_\_\_\_.
- 3 Clothes labels tell us \_\_\_\_\_.
- 4 According to the text, what do smart shoppers do?
- 5 Which phrase from the text means the same as “things in the food to preserve it”?

## *Food for Life*

Can what you eat prevent cancer? Many experts think that it can lower the risk. They say a good diet can bring down the chance of cancer. The risk can come down by as much as one-third. They think it is wise to eat food with lots of fibre. This means beans, oats, and bran are good foods to eat to help avoid cancer. Fruits and vegetables have lots of fibre too. The experts also say to eat less fat and oil. Low fat milk and a low fat bran muffin make a good snack of food for life.

- 1 Which group of food has the most fibre?
- 2 "Risk" means the same as \_\_\_\_\_.
- 3 A good diet can lower the risk of cancer by as much as \_\_\_\_\_.
- 4 In this text, an expert is someone \_\_\_\_\_.
- 5 In this text, a wise person is someone \_\_\_\_\_.

## *Job Search*

Remember that your town or city has many places where you can find work. But you have to go out and find these jobs. Make notes before you look for any job. Think of the different businesses in your town. What does each business do? What kinds of work go on inside each business? What skills do you have that would fit in? Will you have to do shift work? Will you work on weekends? Are you able to work the hours that they might ask you to work? Do you have a new idea for a business to use? Now with your notes you can decide which companies you should visit. Look into jobs that match your skills and your interests.

- 1 Which sentence best tells what this paragraph is about?
- 2 When you make notes, you \_\_\_\_\_.
- 3 In this text, you are told to make notes about \_\_\_\_\_.
- 4 You should make notes before you look for any job. They help you to \_\_\_\_\_.
- 5 You should look into jobs that match your \_\_\_\_\_.

## Chapter 34

# Senior Comprehension Stories—Level 3 Canadian

Stories in this chapter:

- Marco, the Cat
- Too Much Packaging
- Skin Care
- Workplace Safety
- The Menu
- Healthy Heart
- Deductions
- The Right Bank
- Traffic Signs

### *Marco, the Cat*

Suzanne and her family rent a two-bedroom apartment. They have lived there for one month. Before Suzanne signed the lease, she asked if they could keep a pet. Her children are very attached to their cat, Marco. The landlord said the cat could stay. But later, he called to tell Suzanne that she would have to get rid of Marco. He said the neighbours had complaints about the cat. Suzanne said she wouldn't part with it. She had asked about it before the lease was signed. The landlord said he was sorry but the lease said no animals. Suzanne then read the lease. Sure enough, it said very clearly, "No pets allowed". What was she to do? The lease was the legal document even though the landlord had given his word.

- 1 Who had complaints about the cat?
- 2 What mistake had Suzanne made?
- 3 What did the lease say about pets?
- 4 What does "attached to" mean in this story?
- 5 What will probably happen to Marco?

## *Too Much Packaging*

The next time you shop, stop a minute. Think about how the things you buy are packaged. By volume, half of our garbage is now packaging. Total garbage volume is growing fast. Shoppers must start to see how they can help to stop this waste problem. You must make wise choices when you shop. You should keep the three R's in mind. They are: reduce, reuse, and recycle. Avoid anything made with polystyrene. This means things like egg cartons, meat trays, and fast food containers. Buy in bulk when you can. Take your own bags shopping. Sort your garbage for recycling. The main materials for recycling are glass, paper, and plastics. Be package smart. Remember that less is best.

- 1 What is the main topic in this paragraph?
- 2 What are the three R's?
- 3 By volume, how much of our garbage is now packaging?
- 4 Finish this message to shoppers: Be package smart. Remember that \_\_\_\_\_.
- 5 Name one of the wise choices that shoppers should make, according to this paragraph.

## *Skin Care*

For good skin care you must do more than wash it every day. Moisture in the skin makes it healthy. To keep moisture in your skin, drink lots of water every day. Stay away from dry heat. Stay out of the sun too, unless you are protected. A sunscreen lotion can help. Look for one that is strong enough. It should also have an SPF - or sun protection factor - of 15 or more. Wear clothing and a hat to cover you when you are in the sun. If you put on a night cream, it will give moisture to your skin while you sleep.

- 1 What makes skin healthy?
- 2 What will a sunscreen lotion help to do?
- 3 Which of these groups of words best tells what this paragraph is about?
- 4 What is one way to keep moisture in your skin?
- 5 What do the letters “SPF” stand for?

## *Workplace Safety*

Franco worked in a small room testing new food products. He often felt sick by lunchtime. This was a new job for him so he didn't want to complain. At first, he thought he had the flu. Then he thought he needed more fresh air in his lab. He opened the window but it didn't seem to help. At last, Franco spoke to his supervisor, Mr. Stein, about his problem. Mr. Stein knew he had to check out this complaint. He called in the safety inspector. Together they checked all the equipment Franco used. Then they saw what the problem was. Some of the chemicals Franco used were stored poorly. They should have been in special cupboards, not on open shelves. The inspector would correct this.

- 1 How did Franco often feel at work?
- 2 How did Franco think that opening a window might help his problem?
- 3 When did Franco decide to speak to his supervisor?
- 4 How did Mr. Stein solve the problem?
- 5 Who would correct the problem?



## *The Menu*

Years ago, people would go out to eat once or twice a year. Now many people eat out once a day. So they need to know what to look for when they read a menu. The menu tells what is included in the price. Often the price is only for the main course. It does not include dessert or drinks. Often there is a “special”. This food may be served more quickly and cheaply. A buffet is a good value too. You can eat all you want for one price. An important thing to remember is that you can ask the waiter to explain the menu if you don’t understand it.

- 1 The main idea in what you read is \_\_\_\_\_.
- 2 This paragraph tells us that most often dessert and drinks \_\_\_\_\_.
- 3 Why is the “special” a good value?
- 4 Find one possible reason why more people eat out now than they did years ago.
- 5 You can ask \_\_\_\_\_ to explain things about the menu.

## *Healthy Heart*

There are lots of things that you can do to prevent heart disease. One is to quit smoking or not to start. Drink beer, wine, and liquor in moderate amounts. This means not more than one drink a day. Less is better. Diet is important too. Stay away from animal fats. Eat more fish and bran. Also, regular exercise will keep your heart fit. Follow these rules for a healthy heart.

- 1 What does it mean to drink beer, wine, and liquor in moderate amounts?
- 2 Find the best way to prevent heart disease.
- 3 Fish and bran both \_\_\_\_\_.
- 4 Exercise that keeps a heart “fit” keeps it \_\_\_\_\_.
- 5 This paragraph mainly gives advice on \_\_\_\_\_.

## *Deductions*

Did you just get a job? Are you looking forward to your first paycheque? If you are new to the workplace, you must learn about deductions. Gross pay is the money you earn before any dollars are taken off to pay for taxes or benefits. The amounts taken off are called deductions. The main one is for income tax. The tax you pay depends on how much you earn. The more you make, the more tax you pay. Other deductions may be for health and pension plans. These will vary with where you live and the kind of work you do. Your take-home, or net pay, is what is left after deductions.

- 1 Which statement about a paycheque is true?
- 2 Net pay means the same as \_\_\_\_\_.
- 3 Deductions are \_\_\_\_\_.
- 4 Which is usually the largest amount?
- 5 Deductions are taken off your paycheque to pay for \_\_\_\_\_.

## *The Right Bank*

Hanna is now earning money. She wants to find the right bank for herself. She knows that it is wise to choose a bank near her home. This will be convenient when she has banking to do that must be done at the bank. She also knows she needs a bank that has a wide range of services. Hanna will do most of her banking over the Internet, so she wants a bank that offers this service for free. When she decides on the right bank, she has a list of questions to ask. One deals with service charges. How much does this bank charge to cash cheques and to move funds from one account to another? What are the different kinds of savings accounts offered? What are the benefits of each one? Even though Hanna will do her banking on-line, she still hopes the bank is open on Saturday.

- 1 How will Hanna do most of her banking?
- 2 What are two things that Hanna is looking for in a bank?
- 3 What is meant by the word “convenient” in this story?
- 4 Why will Hanna likely be satisfied in her choice for a bank?
- 5 What questions does Hanna want to ask about service charges?

### *Traffic Signs*

Marc had just moved from a small town to the city. He was confused by all the traffic. He learned fast that the signs on the roads gave information to motorists and to people on foot. As a young boy, he had learned the meaning of traffic lights and red stop signs. But the “yield” signs were new to him. He saw that these signs were important to drivers when two main roads met. The driver facing the “yield” sign gave way to the driver on the other road. He also saw many other unfamiliar signs. He learned that the blue and white “H” stands for hospital. The black “P” inside a red circle with a slash through it meant that Marc couldn’t park his car there.

- 1 Why was Marc probably confused by all the traffic in the city?
- 2 What did Marc learn fast about the purpose of signs on the road?
- 3 What is another word for “drivers” used in the paragraph?
- 4 What does the “no parking” sign look like?
- 5 What are the colours of the “Hospital” sign?

## Chapter 35

# Senior Comprehension Stories—Level 4 Canadian

Stories in this chapter:

- Coupons!
- The Family Doctor
- Stop Payment
- The Trouble With Flying
- Employment
- Budgeting
- Shopping
- Exercise
- The Job Resume

### *Coupons!*

You can bring home lots of goods from the food store and still not blow the budget. One good shopping tip is to use coupons and refund offers for cash. These can be found in many places. Newspaper ads, food store flyers, and magazines are full of them. This way of saving money is used regularly by many shoppers. It makes most sense to use coupons for things you normally need and buy. When these goods are already on sale, the savings can really grow. But be careful! Don't let coupons tempt you to buy things that you don't really need just to get a deal. And don't let coupons cause you to "shop hop". If you spend a whole day going to four or five stores, you are wasting your time and the cost of the gas.

- 1 What shopping tip is the main topic of this paragraph?
- 2 Where are you unlikely to find coupons?
- 3 When does it make most sense to use coupons?
- 4 What is meant by the expression "shop hop"?
- 5 What is the main purpose of using food coupons?

## *The Family Doctor*

Jeremy and his wife make regular visits to their family physician. Each year they have a checkup even though they feel healthy. This is very important. Their doctor keeps a record from one visit to the next. She knows if things change or may or may not be a sign of some illness. She may find early signs of disease. She can give them good advice about a healthy lifestyle. This is preventive medicine. She can give them advice about their children too. By getting to know them, she can serve them better.

- 1 Why is it important to see your doctor regularly?
- 2 What might a doctor find if she notices a change in someone?
- 3 Which word in the story means the same as “doctor”?
- 4 Which word in this story means the same as “illness”?
- 5 What is meant by the term “preventive medicine”?



## *Stop Payment*

Joseph planned to go to the bank on Thursday. He wanted to make a deposit in his savings account. On Wednesday, he filled in his deposit slip. He was excited to put in a \$100 cheque he got from his aunt as a gift for his 16th birthday. He signed the cheque right away. When he got to the bank the next day, the cheque was missing. He told the bank teller about the problem. The teller asked if Joseph had endorsed the cheque. Joseph admitted that he had signed the cheque already. Then the teller explained that anyone who found the cheque could cash it. An endorsed cheque is as good as cash. Joseph was very upset. He'd lost one hundred dollars! The teller calmed Joseph down. She told him to call his aunt immediately so that she could arrange to stop payment for that cheque at her bank. Maybe the money was not lost after all.

- 1 Joseph planned to go to the bank on Thursday. What did he do on Wednesday?
- 2 What problem did Joseph face when he got to the bank?
- 3 Where did Joseph get the cheque?
- 4 What big mistake had Joseph made?
- 5 Why did the teller suggest that Joseph call his aunt?

### *The Trouble With Flying*

“Flying is not what it used to be,” said Lynne when her husband met her at the airport. “It took two hours to go through security. Then the flight was three hours late. Do you know what it’s like to sit in a crowded airport lounge for that length of time?” Her husband had been in situations like this. He understood her feelings but wanted to ease her mood. He tried to change the subject. Still, Lynne raged on. “I’m so annoyed that I’m going to write a letter to the airline. While we were in the lounge, the conditions were awful. The snack bar was closed. Vending machines were out-of-order. To top things off, one of the washrooms was being repainted!”

- 1 When did Lynne speak to her husband about her travel problems?
- 2 What word or phrase in the story describes Lynne’s mood?
- 3 How long did Lynne say it took her to go through security?
- 4 What are some of the complaints that Lynne will write about?
- 5 Why did her husband understand her feelings?

## *Employment*

There are two sides to employment. One side is that of the employee. The other side is that of the employer. It costs an employer a lot for a worker who quits after just a few days on the job. These costs come from many things. One is in advertising the job. Another is in the time it takes to interview and hire. Once a new worker is hired, there are payroll and accounting costs. There are also costs in lost production time. No wonder employers look for people who are serious about working. They also look for those who will be loyal and remain on the job for some time.

- 1 What two major traits does an employer look for in an employee?
- 2 What is meant by “lost production time” in this paragraph?
- 3 What are the two sides to employment mentioned in this paragraph?
- 4 Name two of the costs an employer has if an employee quits after a short time on the job.
- 5 Which title best expresses what is being discussed in this paragraph?

## *Budgeting*

It might be nice to have an endless supply of money. But most of us are not so lucky. To make the best use of our money, we need to have a budget or a money plan. To begin a budget, list all monthly expenses that are due on a set date. These are fixed expenses. They include rent or mortgage payments, taxes, insurance, and utility bills. Then list all other expenses for the month. These are flexible expenses. This means they can be cut down as needed. They may include food, clothes, gifts, and travel. If expenses are more than income, check to see which flexible ones can be cut. The last step is to set a savings goal.

- 1 The main purpose of a budget is to \_\_\_\_\_.
- 2 How should you begin to plan a budget?
- 3 What is the last step in planning a budget?
- 4 Why are some expenses called “flexible”?
- 5 Which of these are fixed expenses?

## *Shopping*

We often have different feelings when we shop. Sometimes we may feel good but many times we feel stressed. We should try to remember some facts as we shop. Often there are not enough salespeople. This means we may have to wait longer to be served than we may like. At certain times, on weekends and holidays, stores are filled with shoppers. Even extra staff may not be able to serve them quickly. We should try not to shop before an important meeting or when we have little time. We will feel more stress if we have to wait. It's wise to plan shopping trips. Perhaps shopping alone or in "off-hours" may make shopping a better experience.

- 1 Which phrase best tells what this paragraph is about?
- 2 According to the paragraph, the best time to shop is when \_\_\_\_\_.
- 3 When we shop, we often feel more stress if \_\_\_\_\_.
- 4 Which is probably the least stressful time to shop?
- 5 In this paragraph, the word "stress" means \_\_\_\_\_.

## *Exercise*

If you are tired much of the time, why not think about starting an exercise program? Check with your doctor before you begin. All of us can benefit from some form of exercise each day. It helps increase blood flow. This gives us more energy and makes us feel better. Best of all, exercise burns fat. It helps tone muscles too. Begin with a warm-up that includes stretching. This helps loosen muscles. It also aids in preventing soreness after a work out. Then choose something that you like to do, perhaps running, brisk walking, or some sport. Try to spend at least 15 to 30 minutes daily at this. Increase the amount of time spent at the activity gradually. Remember to end with a cool-down period. This means slowing down the activity before you stop. It helps prevent cramps. After one week of regular exercise, you will feel more alert and energetic.

- 1 What is the first thing you should do before starting an exercise program?
- 2 Which is not a benefit of daily exercise?
- 3 Pick the sentence that means the same as: "A warm-up aids in preventing soreness".
- 4 Why should you end an exercise program with a cool-down period?
- 5 You should start your exercise program with \_\_\_\_\_.

### *The Job Resume*

A job resume is like an ad for yourself. You want an employer to see you as a skilled person. You want to be seen as someone he or she would want to hire. Your resume should be complete but to the point. It should be neat, easy to read, and free from mistakes. It should be no more than 2 or 3 pages long. Use short sentences and precise wording to describe your experience. Divide your resume into sections. Some of these should be: education and training, work background and experience, and personal interests. You may give references or offer to give them on request. A good resume makes a good impression. That can be the key to an interview for the job you want.

- 1 A resume can be the “key” to getting an interview because \_\_\_\_\_.
- 2 This paragraph says you should make your resume neat and \_\_\_\_\_.
- 3 What is a resume?
- 4 What impression do you hope to give with your resume?
- 5 How long should a resume be?

## Chapter 36

# Senior Comprehension Stories—Level 5 Canadian

Stories in this chapter:

- Back to Work?
- Money Matters
- Going South?
- Granddad's Car
- Healthy Fast Food?
- Energy Wise
- Cars
- Shopping On-line
- Self-Health



### *Back to Work?*

Marta used to be a bank teller. Eight years ago, she left work to raise her children. Now they are in school and Marta wants to return to work. In her interview, the manager explained how a teller's job has changed since she left. "It used to be," he said, "that a teller's job was handling withdrawals and deposits." He went on, "Today, people want one-stop service. They expect the teller to be very knowledgeable and helpful. The teller still does the basics but also helps customers with a wide range of money matters. Today's teller needs to know as much as a manager did when you were here, Marta. Computers have also changed the job quite a bit, so you'll need to learn how to use them." Marta was surprised at the changes over the years. But she was up for the challenge. She was ready to go back to work.

- 1 What was Marta's career before she left to raise her children?
- 2 When did Marta decide that she wanted to return to work?
- 3 What kind of challenges did Marta face?
- 4 What must a modern bank teller do differently than in Marta's time?
- 5 What had changed about how tellers do their jobs?

## *Money Matters*

It took just one month of keeping track of all expenses for Mr. and Mrs. Lopez to know that their budget was not working. They had not been able to save any money. The ten percent they had planned to save was too high. They looked at some of their flexible expenses. Their budget records showed that they were spending too much money eating out at restaurants. Mrs. Lopez also said that they could cut down on their grocery bill. Instead of buying frozen foods and pre-cooked meals, she decided to use fewer prepared foods. They were shocked to see how much interest they were paying on their credit card bills. From now on, they would limit their use of these cards. They would monitor their spending for another month to see if these steps helped them to save money.

- 1 For how long had Mr. and Mrs. Lopez been on a budget?
- 2 Which part of their budget had failed?
- 3 Which expression in the text means the same as “prepared foods”?
- 4 Mr. and Mrs. Lopez hoped to solve their budget problem by \_\_\_\_\_.
- 5 How did they plan to cut down the high interest charges on their credit card bills?

### *Going South?*

The Larabie family was on a winter vacation in Florida. They wondered what it would be like to move from the north to the south. They loved many things about the south: the warmth, the sun, the beach, the light, and casual clothing. They felt that they would never miss snowstorms, heating bills, and heavy winter jackets and boots. They were sure that the warm climate would mean cheaper living. So they began to check into costs and housing. They were surprised by what they learned. They found that to rent an apartment or townhouse near the water was very expensive. They would be paying high costs for air conditioning. They found out that on some winter days it gets cold enough that they would need to heat their home. Rather than snowstorms, they heard about the damage caused by hurricanes. They decided to rethink the idea of moving south.

- 1 What is the main idea in this story?
- 2 Which is usually more dangerous, a snowstorm or a hurricane?
- 3 Name two things the Larabie family loved about the south.
- 4 What costs could be greater in the south than in the north?
- 5 When they had checked into the cost of living in the south, what did the Larabies decide to do?

## *Granddad's Car*

Granddad's photograph album gave the family a picture history of the development of the American automobile. His first car was a Ford. It had a cloth roof, no doors, and small lights that looked like lanterns. One snapshot showed him at the front of the car. He was turning a crank to start it. Other pictures from the 30's and 40's showed much larger cars. Some had four doors and huge, round headlights sticking out like the eyes of a frog. Perhaps the oddest looking car was a '59 Buick. It had wide wings, or fins, at the back, with bullet-like taillights. The children said it looked like a giant insect from space. Now they thought, cars seem so plain and small, like boxes on wheels.

- 1 What make, or kind, of car was Granddad's first car?
- 2 What did Granddad have to do to his first car?
- 3 A simile compares two things using "like" or "as" to make the comparison. Which simile was used in the story?
- 4 What did the children think was the oddest looking?
- 5 Which two words in the story mean the same as "photograph"?

### *Healthy Fast Food?*

Like most people, you probably enjoy the convenience of a fast food restaurant every now and then. But you may also be concerned about good nutrition. Is it possible to choose healthy foods at a fast food restaurant? You may be surprised to learn that it is. Here are some guidelines to help you make the healthy choices. Choose meat or fish that is broiled or baked, not fried. Select salads and vegetables instead of fries. Ask for low calorie dressings on the side. Have low-fat milk or fruit juice instead of a soft drink. Choose whole grain bread or rolls and avoid pastries.

- 1 What is the main topic in this paragraph?
- 2 What do most people enjoy about a fast food restaurant?
- 3 Name three healthy food choices you can make at a fast food restaurant.
- 4 Would deep-fried fish be a healthy fast food choice? Why or why not?
- 5 People who make healthy food choices may be concerned about \_\_\_\_\_.

## *Energy Wise*

We all must do our part to use energy wisely. By doing so, we will save not only our natural resources but our dollars too. A lot of energy is used to heat and cool our homes. Whether it is as a tenant or owner, someone pays the cost. On cold days, we can open blinds and drapes to let the sun heat the rooms. On hot days, we can close them to help keep the rooms cool. When we are away from home, we can lower heating or raise cooling temperatures. If we have unused rooms, we can close them off to reduce energy use. All of us can lower the heat setting on our hot water heaters. We can all be more careful about the amount of hot water use too. We can all be energy wise.

- 1 Which sentence best tells the main focus of this paragraph?
- 2 On what type of days can we best save energy?
- 3 If we use energy wisely, we can \_\_\_\_\_.
- 4 How do we use a lot of energy?
- 5 Which pair of words used in the text is related in the same way as “open and close”?

## *Cars*

Since the turn of the century, the automobile has changed life in North America. Much farmland has become a network of roads. Some of them look like concrete ribbons. They seem to increase our pace of life and our love of speed. To meet these needs, gas stations have popped up all over. Signs and billboards coax us to buy both cars and gas. Our newspapers and magazines carry the same messages. So do radio and television. Cars are now an essential part of our lives. We use them for transportation in our business and personal lives. Cars and the freedom they give us have made us a mobile society.

- 1 This paragraph is mainly about \_\_\_\_\_.
- 2 The term “mobile society” means:
- 3 The phrase “concrete ribbon” describes \_\_\_\_\_.
- 4 Cars are now an essential part of \_\_\_\_\_.
- 5 According to the paragraph, where do we find messages that coax us to buy cars and gas?

## *Shopping On-line*

On-line shopping has many advantages. Probably the major one is the saving of time. You don't have to travel to different stores looking for an item. All you do is look through the on-line web pages and pick out what you want. Then you simply fill out the on-line order form and choose your method of payment. Another advantage is its ease. Many people find it hard or even physically impossible to go to stores. But on-line shopping solves the problem. They don't have to leave their homes. This "at-home" shopping also gives us time to choose with care. It frees us from crowds and allows us to do a lot of comparison shopping in just a few minutes. Remember to fill out the on-line order form carefully before you click on the "submit order" button. This way your on-line shopping will be a success!

- 1 One major advantage to on-line shopping is \_\_\_\_\_.
- 2 What does on-line shopping mean to those who find to difficult or impossible to go to stores?
- 3 Which disadvantages of on-line shopping are mentioned in this paragraph?
- 4 What is the main idea in the paragraph?
- 5 "At-home" shopping frees us from \_\_\_\_\_.



### *Self-Health*

Life is filled with responsibilities. One of the main ones is to look after our own health. Of course, health problems can appear that are not related to our own habits. In most cases though, good habits lead to good health. We need regular exercise. This improves lung capacity and tones muscles. Our bodies need regular sleep. The number of hours each person needs varies but we cannot make up for lost sleep. Proper diet is another vital factor. Each day should start with breakfast and we should plan our meals from the basic food groups. Finally, we should see a doctor if there is a sudden change in our health.

- 1 Which would make the best title for this paragraph?
- 2 Good habits lead to good health; this means they \_\_\_\_\_.
- 3 What helps to develop lung capacity?
- 4 \_\_\_\_\_ are related to our personal health care.
- 5 This paragraph lists good habits that lead to good health. Which is not listed in the paragraph?

## Chapter 37

# Senior Comprehension Stories—Level 6 Canadian

Stories in this chapter:

- Taking The Bus
- Smart Shopping
- New Accounts
- The Lease
- Alice's Lease
- Public Transit
- Read The Manual!
- Eating well
- Childcare

### *Taking The Bus*

Steven is trying to decide if taking the bus is the best way of getting to and from work. He knows that it is important for him to arrive on time. He telephoned the local transit system and told them his home address, where he worked, and the time he had to arrive at work. Steven found out what routes he should take, how long the trip would take, and the cost. He also asked for a copy of route maps so he wouldn't get lost. He used all this information and learned it would take 30 minutes to get to work and that he would have to transfer only once. He would arrive at work 10 minutes before starting time. Taking the bus to and from work was going to work out just fine for Steven.

- 1 What is Steven trying to decide?
- 2 What phrase used in the paragraph means “bus company”?
- 3 What word could you use to describe how Steven is going about making his decision?
- 4 Why did Steven ask for a map of the routes?
- 5 What seems to be the most important point guiding Steven's decision about getting to and from work?

## *Smart Shopping*

Buying food takes a large portion of our incomes. Because of this, the wise shopper follows certain rules and guidelines. To avoid impulse buying, never shop when you are hungry and always use a list. Read the grocery store advertisements and specials, clip coupons, and plan menus before going to the store. Read the “unit prices” on the shelf for similar items. They can show you the best buy. When possible, buy local fruit and vegetables. They will usually be cheaper. Remember that foods you prepare yourself will often cost less than those that are ready to use. Try to avoid buying junk foods. They have little food value and are expensive. Finally, it is a good idea to replace some meat purchases with things like eggs, cheese, beans, and lentils.

- 1 What two rules are mentioned to avoid impulse buying?
- 2 Why are local fruits and vegetables usually cheaper?
- 3 What’s the difference between foods you prepare yourself and foods that are ready to use?
- 4 Why will you not find junk foods on a smart shopper’s grocery list?
- 5 What use is suggested here for eggs, cheese, beans, and lentils?

### *New Accounts*

To open a bank account, go to the desk in the bank marked “New Accounts”. The person at the desk will give you an information card to fill out. The bank needs to know your full name and address, including your postal code. You will also tell them your birth date and your telephone number and the type of work you do. For identification, you may use your Social Insurance Number or your driver's license. Your signature on the card shows how you sign your name. It will be used to compare with the signature on any of your checks. This comparison is made by the bank to protect your money.

- 1 When you open a bank account, you may use \_\_\_\_\_ for identification.
- 2 An information card serves this one main purpose:
- 3 Which phrase would make the best title for this paragraph?
- 4 What is one way the bank protects your money?
- 5 What is your “signature”?

## *The Lease*

All tenants have some rights that are not put in the lease. But they must also be completely aware of what is in the lease. They should not expect any statement or promise that is not in it to be upheld. A tenant should not sign a lease if he or she objects to any clause or conditions in it. Instead, he or she should discuss it with the landlord. Together, they may then decide to remove or alter a part of the lease so that it is acceptable to both the tenant and the landlord. Both parties should initial any changes since a lease is a legal document. A wise tenant will also know the name and address of the owner as well as the superintendent. Often problems can be solved faster if a tenant can speak directly to the owner of the property.

- 1 What kind of legal document is being discussed in this paragraph?
- 2 What is the most important reason why a tenant should read the lease?
- 3 What can a tenant do about a clause in the lease that is not acceptable?
- 4 When should a tenant accept changes to the lease that are not in writing?
- 5 A wise tenant will \_\_\_\_\_.

### *Alice's Lease*

Before Alice signed the lease for her new apartment, she read it carefully. She understood most of it but she had trouble with some of the legal terms. She asked a friend to read it over with her. She wanted to know just what her obligations were. She wanted to know what the landlord's obligations were too. Alice found out she had to pay for the heat and electricity as well as for small repairs and maintenance such as painting. The landlord had the right to inspect the apartment at any time. She didn't like this point at all. The thought of her landlord going into her apartment at any time made her very uncomfortable. She met with the landlord and he agreed to change the lease to limit visits to no more than one per month, and by appointment only. This change satisfied Alice and she signed her new lease.

- 1 What three things was Alice expected to pay for under the terms of the lease?
- 2 When did Alice decide to read the lease carefully?
- 3 What change was made in the lease?
- 4 What facts show that Alice is a wise consumer?
- 5 Why do you think the landlord wanted to inspect the apartment?

## *Public Transit*

For many of us who live in urban areas, public transit is a practical means of getting to and from work. The driver has all the worries. He has to think of crowded, wet, or slippery roads. As passengers, we just have to sit and relax. Once at work, we don't have to think about finding a parking place. Also, we don't have the expense of monthly parking. In some areas, express buses bring commuters from outlying places. This cuts down the need for transfers. In other regions, buses travel in special lanes. Some buses have their own transit roads. All this saves time for the rider. Using public transit may also save on car insurance costs. Premiums are usually lower if a car is not being used for work.

- 1 The word "transit" means \_\_\_\_\_.
- 2 Public transport is helpful because \_\_\_\_\_.
- 3 One benefit of the use of public transit not mentioned in this paragraph is \_\_\_\_\_.
- 4 Car insurance premiums may be lower if \_\_\_\_\_.
- 5 Which of these words also means the same as the word "premiums" in this paragraph?



### ***Read The Manual!***

When we purchase an appliance, we should receive a manual with it. A manual describes in words and pictures how to use and care for appliances. These days, many appliances do complex operations. For example, a telephone can be programmed to dial a number when we touch only one button. A video recorder can tape one TV program while we watch another one. An oven can be set to turn on and cook while we are at work. A manual gives us all the facts we need to make full use of an appliance. It is important to read it and to look at the pictures. This is the way to learn all the things the appliance can do. We will find tips too on how to fix certain problems. This can save repair costs. So, it is wise to read the manual.

- 1 In what you just read, the main idea is about \_\_\_\_\_.
- 2 Which appliances are mentioned in this paragraph?
- 3 Instructions for how to use and care for an appliance are found in a \_\_\_\_\_.
- 4 Why do the instructions in a manual use both words and pictures?
- 5 To help us make full use of an appliance, a manual will give us \_\_\_\_\_.

## *Eating well*

We spend a large part of our income on food. Still, we need guidelines to help us make sure we eat well. Many people eat only certain foods and believe that they eat well. But experts have determined what types of food our bodies need. These foods fall into three basic groups: proteins, fats, and carbohydrates. Protein foods build and repair body tissue. We get protein from meats, nuts, legumes, and grains. Fats provide fuel and energy. They are in meats, oils, and dairy products. Carbohydrates provide energy too. They are found in fruits, vegetables, cereals, and sugar. Vitamins and minerals, found in all three food groups, are also essential for good nutrition. It is helpful to keep these groups in mind as you plan meals and shop for food.

- 1 What is the main topic of this paragraph?
- 2 What are the three basic food groups?
- 3 What do protein rich foods do?
- 4 Which food groups are a good source of energy?
- 5 Vitamins and minerals can be found in \_\_\_\_\_.

## *Childcare*

There are many kinds of childcare arrangements for working parents to consider. One is to have children looked after at home. Caregivers may live in their own homes and come in daily to look after children in their homes. Or the caregiver may live with the family and be there all the time. In either case, children and parents will benefit. There is less upset in routine and no transportation to consider. Also, children like being in their own surroundings. Childcare outside the home can be provided in several ways. There are daycare centres, nursery schools, and private homes. All of these have benefits. A major one is the chance for children to play together and develop social skills.

- 1 There are many forms of childcare outside the home. Which one is considered to have no benefits?
- 2 A major benefit of childcare outside the home is \_\_\_\_\_.
- 3 The term “daycare” suggests more than the word “baby-sitting” because it implies \_\_\_\_\_.
- 4 For which type of childcare arrangement does child transportation not have to be considered?
- 5 “Children like being in their own surroundings.” Means they like being in their own \_\_\_\_\_.

## Chapter 38

# Senior Comprehension Stories—Level 7 Canadian

Stories in this chapter:

- Problem Landlord
- New Car?
- Consumer News
- Environmentally Friendly
- Tenants' Rights
- Carpooling
- Comparison Shopping
- A Problem
- The Job Interview

### *Problem Landlord*

The Willards had seven months left in the one-year lease on their apartment and they were having problems with the landlord. In their unit, there were no screens on the windows. This was a danger for their young child in the summer months. In the lobby, not only was the floor often dirty but also many of the tiles were broken or turning up. The Willards spoke to the landlord several times but he refused to make any repairs without increasing their rent to cover the costs. He said they knew of these conditions when they signed the lease. However, the Willards did not give up and decided to check the housing bylaws at City Hall. They were sure there were bylaws to handle their situation.

- 1 What complaint did the Willards have about their apartment?
- 2 What complaint did the Willards have about the lobby?
- 3 What did the landlord do when the Willards spoke to him?
- 4 What did the Willards decide to do in this situation?
- 5 Why did the landlord think that he didn't have to make the repairs?

## *New Car?*

After working for two years, Anita wanted to purchase a car. The factory where she worked was 32 kilometres from her home and the bus trip took over an hour. When she drove a car to work, the trip took only 15 to 20 minutes depending on traffic. However, Anita did not have the money to buy a car nor could she afford monthly payments on a bank loan. She thought of different ways she could obtain the money but they meant holding two jobs or borrowing. She spoke to a friend who had recently bought a new car and asked him how he managed to afford such an expensive purchase. He had planned a budget and put money from each paycheque into a savings account. After three years, he had enough money for the car without having to take out a bank loan.

- 1 What is this story about?
- 2 How much time did Anita save going to work by car rather than by bus?
- 3 At first, what did Anita think she would have to do to get a car?
- 4 Which of these words best tells you about what Anita's friend did to get his car?
- 5 Explain how Anita's friend had managed to buy a car?

## *Consumer News*

A consumer's magazine is made up of articles that describe and compare products. It covers issues of interest to consumers and gives facts on a variety of goods. One issue may cover a range of topics - from baby food, to toys, to cars. The facts are gathered by independent research groups. They aim to present findings that are objective. Sometimes comparisons or factors related to the products are laid out in charts and graphs. This makes them easy to read and recall. A smart shopper is well informed. You should try to know all about the products you plan to buy. Then you will be able to make sound decisions. Some people subscribe to a consumer's magazine to get all the latest consumer news. They want to stay up-to-date on the facts about products and current issues. Others use libraries to research consumer information just before making a big purchase.

- 1 What kind of articles are found in a consumer's magazine?
- 2 What is meant by "independent research group" in this paragraph?
- 3 Why is it important for consumers to be able to read objective information about products?
- 4 What is the point of presenting information about products in charts and graphs?
- 5 Why do some people subscribe to consumer's magazines?

## *Environmentally Friendly*

In recent years, there has been an effort to protect our outdoor environment. In part, this has come about as a result of oil spills and acid rain. We need to be attentive to the environment we live in and work in too. Some of the systems we use to heat and cool our surroundings seem to cause headaches and fainting. Strong lights and poor ventilation will make some people ill too. In addition, too many strong cleaners and synthetic fabrics are being used. There is an excessive use of plastic and disposable goods. This means a lot of chemicals are still being used to make these things. On the other hand, no-smoking laws are helping to clear the air in many workplaces. No smoking is the law in a lot of homes too. We must all strive to use things and do things that are “friendly” to the inner space we live in.

- 1 What is the main idea in this paragraph?
- 2 What are some things in the indoor environment that seems to cause headaches and fainting?
- 3 What kind of laws are mentioned that help to clear the air in many workplaces?
- 4 Explain what it means to be “friendly” to the environment.
- 5 What does the use of strong cleaners and disposable goods indicate?



## *Tenants' Rights*

A landlord no longer has the right to drag a tenant from his or her home, turn off the heat, or raise the rent as he wishes. Today, in most places, a tenant has more rights than those stated in the lease. Tenants can appeal to the city, a rent review board, or a judge to help correct any wrongs. For example, a landlord must keep his rental property in good, safe condition. If he does not, tenants can appeal to have their rents lowered until the conditions are improved. Also, a landlord cannot evict a tenant without good reason, such as failure to pay the rent or damage to the property. Many tenants in large buildings form tenants' rights groups to protect their interests.

- 1 How have the rights of a landlord changed?
- 2 If the landlord allows his apartment building to get run down, a good move for his tenants would be to \_\_\_\_\_.
- 3 To “appeal your rights” means \_\_\_\_\_.
- 4 Where can tenants go to judicially appeal their rights?
- 5 Why are tenants' rights groups formed?

## *Carpooling*

Although she had calculated the monthly costs to drive her car to work, Suki had not considered increases in the price of gas, insurance, and parking. She was spending too much money using her car to get to and from work. The thought of taking the subway really did not appeal to her, so she discussed her problem with a fellow worker and together they came up with a good plan. They would form a carpool, made up of three drivers to share the driving. Each would drive for a week and then be a passenger for two weeks. Each would be responsible for his or her own expenses. They would divide the cost of one parking permit. Suki knew this plan had some disadvantages but at least it allowed her to get to work by car.

- 1 Suki's travel problem stemmed from the fact that \_\_\_\_\_.
- 2 How did Suki feel about taking the subway to work?
- 3 The problem was solved when Suki \_\_\_\_\_.
- 4 What disadvantage of the carpool plan are mentioned in the text?
- 5 In the carpool, Suki's travel costs would be lowered to approximately \_\_\_\_\_.

### *Comparison Shopping*

We all can be wise shoppers if we learn to compare certain factors. Whether we are buying clothes, food, or major items such as cars and appliances, it pays to “comparison shop” first. We should check the price of the particular item in more than one store. It is a difficult task to compare products that look the same but have different labels. For example, when buying shoes, we should consider the material used, how they are made, and the fit. Then we are in a position to judge which pair will be more durable, or last longer. Buying food involves comparing the cost, weight, and quantity of similar products. Some stores help by showing this information as the “unit” price. Comparing can mean saving dollars.

- 1 What is the main idea in the paragraph?
- 2 What factors should be compared when we shop for shoes?
- 3 What factors should be compared when we shop for food?
- 4 What does the phrase “be more durable” mean?
- 5 To do comparison shopping, you should check the price of \_\_\_\_\_.

## *A Problem*

Isabel noticed that her classmate, Manuel, frequently fell asleep in class. For a while she noticed it mainly after lunch, but lately she noticed that he couldn't keep his eyes open in the morning as well. It seemed that Manuel was late for class quite often and when he did arrive he looked pretty rough. They often sat together at the same desk and she saw his hand trembling when he handed her things. When the professor asked where Manuel was, Isabel always tried to cover for him. They had been in school together for a few years and she liked him. She decided to talk to him. Manuel revealed that he was working two jobs in order to pay for school. He was falling asleep in class because he was up all night at work. Isabel suggested he talk to the school administrator. She knew that there were programs at the school that could help Manuel with his financial problems.

- 1 Lately, Manuel appeared to be falling asleep in class \_\_\_\_\_.
- 2 Isabel suspected that Manuel \_\_\_\_\_.
- 3 What happened first in the story?
- 4 What did Isabel suggest to Manuel?
- 5 Isabel decided to \_\_\_\_\_.

### *The Job Interview*

An invitation to a job interview is a sign that the company is interested in hiring you. Because interviews may be short, it is important to be prepared. You want to appear informed and capable. Learn some facts about the company: its history, its head office location, its products and services. Make sure you know the name of the person with whom you are meeting so that you can use it with confidence. Review the job being offered. Be able to state how your skills and experience make you a good choice. Remember, in an interview your answers to the questions help “sell” you. Finally, think of questions the interviewer might ask and try to prepare answers to them.

- 1 How do you want to appear in a job interview?
- 2 What is an advantage of preparing for an interview by thinking of questions the interviewer might ask?
- 3 When you try to “sell” yourself in a job interview, you are trying to convince someone to \_\_\_\_\_.
- 4 In a job interview, you should talk about your skills and experience so that \_\_\_\_\_.
- 5 Which interview tips would you use to make the interview more friendly and personal?

## Chapter 39

# Senior Comprehension Stories—Level 8 Canadian

Stories in this chapter:

- Just Out Of Reach
- Road Trip
- Job Health
- Home Ownership
- Using Plastic
- Allergies
- Good Job!
- Priorities
- Just Out Of Reach

### *Just Out Of Reach*

This was not the first time the real estate broker had seen disappointment. The young couple had waited a year for a special house to be for sale but now they sat before Mr. Raymond, hearing him say that they were not in a position to purchase the house. They had taken into consideration the down payment, legal fees, and closing costs but had not figured out the monthly expenses. These could not be avoided. Even if they spent forty percent of their income on housing, they still could not manage the monthly costs without a larger down payment. This was out the question because they could not get a larger bank loan. But Mr. Raymond had some advice. “You could buy in a less expensive neighbourhood or a less expensive type of home and then your housing dollars would go further.”

- 1 Who was Mr. Raymond?
- 2 Which words in the text suggest that Mr. Raymond was experienced?
- 3 What costs had the young couple not figured out?
- 4 Name two of the expenses that they had taken into consideration?
- 5 How did the young couple feel?

## *Road Trip*

Renting a car for her holiday was a new experience for Carla and one that she found exciting. The clerk at the car rental agency helped her fill out the necessary forms to rent the car for a week, with unlimited kilometres. Carla clearly understood that her fee included insurance and any normal wear and tear on the car, but did not include gas. On the second day of her trip, 800 kilometres from home, the car would not start even though the car was practically brand new. Carla was upset at first, but then remembered what she must do. She contacted the local branch of the rental car company and explained the problem. They indicated that they would supply another car to her within the hour. However, the second car was a different make and she was shocked when the car arrived. The driver said that Carla would be expected to cover the cost difference between Carla's original car and the upgrade.

- 1 Carla was trying something for the first time. What was it?
- 2 When and where did Carla's rental car break down?
- 3 When the problem arose, whom did Carla contact?
- 4 Why was Carla shocked when she found out she had to pay more for the replacement car?
- 5 How far could Carla travel without paying additional costs?



### *Quality vs. Quantity*

As a single mother, Anna was constantly faced with financial problems because she has bills to pay, plus unexpected expenses. A wise consumer, Anna took time to make comparisons when she shopped. But she was not sure what to do when it came to purchasing clothes for her teenage daughter. Should she buy the best quality she could afford so that the clothes would be durable and last a long time? With fashions and styles changing so quickly, Anna knew her daughter would want new clothes before she wore them out. But buying more clothes more often would mean buying cheaper quality. After much consideration, Anna concluded she could save money on her daughter's everyday school wear, but would shop for good quality jackets and shoes. Her daughter agreed that this was a good compromise and was happy that her mother had considered her desire to stay fashionable despite financial problems.

- 1 What kind of consumer is Anna considered to be?
- 2 Which word used in the paragraph describes the opposite of clothes “that wouldn't last”?
- 3 What was the main decision that Anna was trying to make?
- 4 What did Anna conclude after much consideration?
- 5 Why was Anna concerned about buying expensive clothes for her daughter?

## *Job Health*

Your physical and emotional health can affect your performance on the job. There are different signs that may indicate it is time to get some medical advice. Feeling irritable, tense, or anxious much of the time are some of them. Sudden change in weight, tiredness despite enough sleep, and low energy are also signs. Others are headaches, dizziness, and frequent colds or flu. You may have a greater chance of having health problems if your family has a history of high blood pressure, heart disease, or diabetes. It is wise to visit your doctor, the staff health service, or a health clinic if you have any of these signs frequently or for extended periods of time.

- 1 How might your physical health affect your performance at work?
- 2 How might your emotional health affect your performance at work?
- 3 What three signs indicate that it is time to seek medical help?
- 4 What do we mean when we say that someone is feeling “irritable and tense”?
- 5 What family history of health problems may put you at risk?

## *Home Ownership*

For a variety of reasons, most people want to own a home some day. For many of them living in large cities, home ownership will only be a dream because of high real estate costs. The reason they want to buy can be as simple as wanting to feel a sense of pride in a home. Some want to build equity in property. Others want to enjoy the increased space, freedom, and privacy a house can provide. If the cost of a single-family home is too high, alternative forms of housing may provide a solution. For example, a semi-detached house, a townhouse, or a condominium will often be cheaper. Buying a home of any type is a major financial investment and takes careful planning.

- 1 What is usually the major factor in deciding what type of home to buy?
- 2 The word “equity” refers to \_\_\_\_\_.
- 3 Why is home ownership only a dream for many?
- 4 If the cost of a single-family home is too high, what might be an alternative?
- 5 Which title best describes the theme of this paragraph?

## *Using Plastic*

Many consumers are in the habit of “buying with plastic”. The word “plastic” refers to credit cards. These cards allow us to charge purchases rather than pay cash. Certainly, this is one advantage of credit cards. They also can serve as identification and allow us to purchase goods and services in emergencies when we don’t have enough money. They permit us to travel more safely as we can carry a minimum amount of cash. However, credit cards have their disadvantages. They are easy to use and sometimes encourage us to be impulsive and to spend too much. In addition, the monthly interest charged on an unpaid balance is very high. Wise consumers avoid this problem by being careful and moderate when they use credit cards.

- 1 What is the main idea in this paragraph?
- 2 What does the word “plastic” refer to in this paragraph?
- 3 High interest rates are \_\_\_\_\_ of using credit cards.
- 4 Which is not an important advantage to having a credit card?
- 5 When you can travel with a minimum amount of cash, \_\_\_\_\_.

## *Allergies*

Many people now suffer from allergies. These are sensitivities to foods they eat or chemicals they breathe or touch. Things such as dust, pollen, and pet hair can also cause allergic reactions. Although these reactions may vary, common ones are headaches, skin rashes, and nausea. A more severe type results in swelling of the air passage to the lungs and, sometimes, leads to sudden death. Many food allergies seem to result from eating foods rich in protein such as shellfish, eggs, nuts, and milk. People who suffer from food allergies are often on special diets and must avoid certain foods. On the other hand, chemicals fill our modern world and are harder to avoid. They are found in cleaners, building materials, garden supplies, and even clothing. As a result, allergies to chemicals pose a great health threat to many.

- 1 What is the main topic of this paragraph?
- 2 Which type of food seems to be the main cause of allergies?
- 3 What are allergies?
- 4 Which is the most severe type of allergic reaction?
- 5 Why do allergies to chemicals pose a greater threat to health than food allergies?

## *Good Job!*

There are specific things that an employee can do to keep a job and advance in it. There is more to holding a job than doing good work. Two of the main reasons why employees are fired are absenteeism and an inability to get along with fellow workers and bosses. Therefore, plan to always get to work. If you cannot get to work one day, make sure you contact your employer well before starting time. Keep personal business out of your job. Be careful in your involvement with other workers. Listen carefully to your supervisor and, before you become involved in an argument, consider if it will help in the long run. If you do your job well, attend work regularly, and get along with the people you work with, your chances for promotion should be good.

- 1 What are the two main reasons why employees get fired?
- 2 In this story, what is the best way to improve your promotion chances?
- 3 In this story, what should you do if you cannot get to work one day?
- 4 You should try not to argue with your supervisor unless you are sure that \_\_\_\_\_.
- 5 Which answer states the central focus of the paragraph?

### *Priorities*

Nina is a single mother with two children under six years of age. She has an opportunity to go back to work as a legal secretary. Nina feels it is most important to find good childcare before she accepts the job. She knows that she will need a reliable caregiver for her children so she can go to work regularly and be punctual. These are habits her employer values highly, as most employers do. Frequent lateness and time off work would not be acceptable, even when her children are the cause. If she has dependable child care and good back-up plans for emergencies, she knows she will be able to make a full commitment to her job.

- 1 What does Nina have to do before she accepts the job offer?
- 2 What is the main idea that is stressed in this paragraph?
- 3 What does Nina mean by “good child care”?
- 4 What habits does her employer value?
- 5 How do we know that Nina will likely make a good employee?

## Chapter 40

# Senior Comprehension Stories—Level 9 Canadian

Stories in this chapter:

- The Inspection
- Commuting
- Buyer Beware!
- Stress
- Human Rights
- World Trade
- It's Guaranteed
- Drug Abuse
- Figurative Language



### *The Inspection*

After weeks of searching, the Wongs wanted to make a thorough inspection of a particular house. The real estate agent had shown them through it one evening and they had been impressed by the size and layout of the rooms, the closet space, and the excellent maintenance. But before they made a final decision to buy, they had hired an experienced house inspector, for a fixed fee, to determine the condition of the house. Outside, he inspected the siding, the roof, the windows, and the eavestroughing used to carry water away from the building. All were in satisfactory condition. Inside, he listened for squeaking floors and doors, for banging pipes, and then spent considerable time in the basement. Much of a house's structural condition can be determined by looking at the basement. To their delight, the inspection results were positive and the house inspector said the house appeared to be in very good condition.

- 1 What shows the Wongs were good consumers?
- 2 What are some of the things the house inspector looked at?
- 3 What is eavestroughing used for?
- 4 Was the house inspector's fee related to the price of the house?
- 5 In what condition did the inspector say the house appeared to be?

## *Commuting*

For those who live outside of the city, commuter buses and trains are useful options for getting to and from work each day. Many of the smaller bus companies offer commuter services from the suburbs and other outlying areas. This mode of transportation is both economical and friendly. The drivers get to know their customers well. They often can be seen scanning the street for their regulars who might be late. Commuter buses aim to make fewer stops than city buses on regular runs, to accommodate those who use them. They also aim to be convenient for standard working hours. The commuter bus routes start early and the drivers know that being punctual and reliable is important to their clients.

- 1 What mode of transportation is the topic in this paragraph?
- 2 Which detail in this paragraph best describes how personal bus service can be?
- 3 What is another way of saying “method” of transportation?
- 4 What qualities do the commuter bus clients appreciate in their bus driver?
- 5 At what time in the afternoon would you expect a commuter bus to leave the city?

### ***Buyer Beware!***

More and more shoppers are taking time to read the list of ingredients and nutritional information on food labels. The main thing to know about ingredient lists is that they start with the one that occurs in the largest amount and they proceed in descending order to the ingredient that is present in the smallest amount. People can also refer to the nutritive listing on labels. These can be used to check that daily menus are well-balanced and healthful. Some labels have nutritional claims like “cholesterol-free”, “low-fat”, and “high-fibre”. Very specific rules govern when and how these claims can be made and, as a result, these claims are usually true. However, buyer beware! For most foods, there are no rules on giving information about the other nutrients. So “high-fibre” cookies may also be high in sugar and in fat. Read the whole label. If you don't find what you want to know, don't buy the product. If you have questions about ingredients or nutrients, write to the manufacturer.

- 1 What is the main thing to know about ingredient lists?
- 2 According to this paragraph, why are nutritional claims usually true?
- 3 What does this paragraph try to encourage shoppers to do?
- 4 How might nutritional labels help people on specific diets?
- 5 What does the “high-fibre” claim tell us about fat and sugar in food?

## *Stress*

After some thought, Angelo realized that Ms. Jenkins, his company's counsellor, had given him some good advice about coping with stress. For weeks, Angelo had not felt well. He couldn't sleep. He had headaches and he was overeating. Ms. Jenkins had suggested that these conditions may have come from too much stress on the job and that he should prepare a plan to reduce his stress. We all need a certain amount of stress to motivate us and keep us alert. Excessive stress, however, is harmful. Angelo's plan included regular physical activity and deep breathing exercises. He set aside some time in each day for these activities. In addition, Ms. Jenkins felt it was necessary for Angelo to learn how to discuss and solve difficult situations at work before they became major concerns. By following this advice, he felt that he would be on the right track to dealing with stress.

- 1 Who was Ms. Jenkins?
- 2 Which phrase best tells what this story is about?
- 3 What are the advantages of the right amount of stress?
- 4 What were some of the symptoms of stress that Angelo suffered from?
- 5 List the two main parts in Angelo's stress management plan.

## *Human Rights*

Many countries have human rights laws. They can protect people from unfair treatment in the workplace. An employer cannot hire or fire someone because of race, colour, place of birth, or religion. In most areas, it is against the law to discriminate on the basis of sex, age, medical history, and criminal record. Governments now have programs to correct past wrongs. Some of these are called “affirmative action plans” and ensure the hiring of groups of people that have been underrepresented in the workplace. In the past, these groups have not been treated fairly. While the laws may vary, most countries are attempting to bring fairness and equality to the workplace in hiring, salary and promotion policies, regardless of a person's physical and social attributes.

- 1 What is the main purpose for human rights laws discussed in this paragraph?
- 2 Name two factors that should never determine whether or not a person is hired or fired:
- 3 What are many governments attempting to do with their human rights laws?
- 4 What is meant by the word “discriminate” in this paragraph?
- 5 Who are affirmative action plans designed to help?

## *World Trade*

Transportation is the moving of goods and people from one place to another. It plays a major role in today's world. In fact, the wealth of a country as well as the world trade market depend to a large extent on transportation networks, or systems. Several methods are used to move goods between countries. Ocean freighters are used for things such as oil, coal, cars, wheat, lumber, and dry foodstuffs. Once goods reach a port, they are then sent to areas of the country by plane, train, truck, and inland freighter. Airplanes are also usually used to carry goods and mail over long distances. Perishable items that spoil easily, like dairy goods and flowers, are often transported by plane.

- 1 What is the main theme in this paragraph?
- 2 The word "perishable" means \_\_\_\_\_.
- 3 In a crisis, our country would send medical supplies to Africa by \_\_\_\_\_.
- 4 A transportation system is a major factor in determining \_\_\_\_\_.
- 5 Which are perishable goods?

### *It's Guaranteed*

Modern industry has increased the production of most consumer items with techniques such as assembly lines and computerized machinery. In spite of this, defective items are still produced. But most goods come with written guarantees or warranties. These are statements that the products are free from defects in workmanship. They usually provide a time period during which the maker will do repairs without charge. They also explain steps a consumer should follow if problems arise. It is important for the consumer to read the details of the guarantee and to keep a proof of purchase. This proof is the original receipt from the store. The consumer should also complete and mail in any guarantee card that comes with the item as soon as it is purchased.

- 1 What does this paragraph do?
- 2 Which two terms do not mean essentially the same thing?
- 3 What has helped to increase the production of most consumer items?
- 4 A product guarantee or warranty is a statement that \_\_\_\_\_.
- 5 A product guarantee states that the maker will do repairs without charge \_\_\_\_\_.

## *Drug Abuse*

Substance abuse is a topic often discussed in schools with students. Educating adults too should be of concern, not only from a legal but also from a health viewpoint. Research indicates that use of alcohol, drugs, and tobacco has harmful effects. More than half of all traffic deaths involve drivers under the influence of either alcohol or drugs. Both these substances decrease a person's ability to think clearly and remain in control. Excessive use often leads to poor work habits as well as family and social problems. Poor eating habits also result from overuse of these drugs. Prolonged tobacco use causes lung disease and breathing problems. It may also lead to cancer. Each person should consider his or her use of these drugs and their impact on personal health as well as the health of others.

- 1 Educating adults and students about substance abuse should be done from these two viewpoints:
- 2 People who drink or take drugs and drive should know that \_\_\_\_\_ of all traffic deaths involve drugs or alcohol.
- 3 According to this paragraph, what is often first thing affected by drug and alcohol use?
- 4 When a person's abilities are decreased by drugs or alcohol, his or her ability to behave responsibly \_\_\_\_\_.
- 5 Which term from the paragraph means the same as "excessive use"?



## *Figurative Language*

We use figurative language to say things in an imaginative way. This is different from the literal way, which aims to use exact meanings. Figurative language can add different shades to a meaning. It calls for imagination from both speaker and listener. It is often based on a comparison. We compare something unfamiliar with something more familiar in order to bring clarity to the less well-known. The comparison can have a pictorial effect or an emotional one. When we say, “The path was a ribbon of moonlight”, we are comparing the path to a ribbon. We want you to picture something smooth, narrow, winding, and shiny. This comparison, therefore, has a pictorial effect. When we say, “He cried like a baby”, we want the listener to feel the sadness and helplessness of that little person. This comparison, then, is emotional. Figurative language is what makes a message more than just mere words.

- 1 Figurative language brings \_\_\_\_\_ to a story.
- 2 Figurative language doesn't aim for exact meaning like \_\_\_\_\_ language does.
- 3 Figurative language is often based on comparing what kinds of things?
- 4 If a comparison brings “clarity” to something, it provides \_\_\_\_\_.
- 5 In writing, a comparison can be used to create these two effects:

## Chapter 41

# Senior Comprehension Stories—Level 10 Canadian

Stories in this chapter:

- Transportation
- Take It Back
- Too Much Sugar!
- Up-Skilling
- Money Matters
- Airline Troubles
- Smart Shopping
- Clean Environment
- Job Search

## *Transportation*

The methods of transportation in any country depend, in part, on the geography and the social and economic development in that country. In many parts of the world, we use a wide variety of transport, from bicycle to jet. However, in countries where there is not a great deal of personal wealth or where traffic congestion makes car ownership undesirable, people rely on more basic means of transportation. For example, China has more bicycles per capita than any other country. It also has a large number of people who use boats and waterways as their means of moving about. The same is true for people living on some of the more remote islands in the South Pacific. In other countries where there are few roads, horses, donkeys, and even camels are still used to transport goods and people.

- 1 Why is a bicycle a good means of transportation in a developing country?
- 2 On what factors does the development of methods of transportation in any country depend?
- 3 What you are told about the methods of transportation in China?
- 4 How do horses, donkeys, and camels fit into the message in this paragraph?
- 5 What word is used in this paragraph as a synonym for “methods”?

## *Take It Back*

All consumers will likely have the experience of buying a new product that is defective. Certain steps should be taken immediately to correct the situation. Whether it is food, clothing or household goods, take the item and the receipt back to the store where it was purchased. Most stores will replace the item promptly. However, if the store refuses to help and the manager is of no assistance, then write a letter to the manufacturer stating the exact nature of the problem. If the letter brings no acceptable action, the local Better Business Bureau might help. There are also “action lines” for consumer complaints in the newspaper and on television. Just remember that all complaints should be made in a calm and polite way, without any insulting remarks.

- 1 What is a defective product?
- 2 Describe the first step in correcting the problem when you buy a defective new product.
- 3 How should complaints be made?
- 4 Why is it important to bring the receipt when you return a defective item to a store?
- 5 What role do “action lines” play in dealing with consumer complaints?

### *Too Much Sugar!*

The average North American eats excessive amounts of sugar each year. This huge consumption of sugar results in several conditions. There is a direct link between tooth decay and the amount of sugar in the diet. Decreasing sugar lessens the number of cavities. Many people have been made aware of these facts. Not as much is known about the connection between sugar and behaviour. Hyperactivity is a condition that makes it hard for a child to remain still for more than a few seconds. He or she may have difficulty in social situations and may have trouble staying focused and paying attention. Although it remains a disputed topic, some experts believe the disorder may be caused or aggravated by refined sugar in diets. The problem is sometimes solved or decreased by removing sugar.

- 1 What adjective is used to describe the amount of sugar eaten by the average North American each year?
- 2 What is the known result of eating large amounts of sugar?
- 3 What behaviour disorder is thought to be related to eating too much sugar?
- 4 What evidence is stated to support the theory that hyperactivity is caused or is aggravated by refined sugar in diets?
- 5 What are some characteristics of hyperactivity?

## *Up-Skilling*

Many employers now have training and retraining programs for their employees. Basic job skills need to be at higher levels than ever before. These skills include abilities to listen, read, write, and do math well. Many employees are now also expected to solve problems, communicate, and use new learning techniques on the job. This “up-skilling” of work in America is in part due to the effect of new technology. Often schools do not have the latest equipment on which to train students. As a result, this training must now be done in the workplace. In addition, users of computers and technical manuals require good reading and thinking skills. Although these are exciting changes, they make it necessary for many employees to further develop and enhance many of their skills.

- 1 What is the central idea of this paragraph?
- 2 What is the main reason companies develop training and retraining programs for employees?
- 3 Why may someone with weak thinking skills be at a disadvantage in today’s workplace?
- 4 What are many employees now expected to do on the job?
- 5 What special term is used to describe the trend toward higher levels of basic skills needed in the workplace?

## *Money Matters*

As we go through different life stages, we also go through various financial stages. In all of them, developing a savings program should be important. At first, young single workers may spend most of their money on themselves and may not realize they need to save. Newly married people, and other couples, tend to spend large portions of their incomes on furnishings and other consumer items, leaving themselves with little money to save. Most people with children see the need for planning financially for the future, although saving may still be difficult. However, as children mature, fewer financial demands should mean more money for parents to save or invest. In all stages, experts agree that it is the regular habit of saving which is the most important aspect of a savings program.

- 1 What do experts say is the most important aspect of a savings program?
- 2 At which life stage do people consider saving money to be least important?
- 3 When do many people start to see the need for financial planning?
- 4 Why do people with young children often see the need for a savings plan as being important?
- 5 As people go through different life stages listed in this paragraph, \_\_\_\_\_.

## *Airline Troubles*

Over the past quarter century, the airline industry has faced increased consumer pressure. We demand fast, safe service and, when it is not delivered, we are annoyed. Deregulation of the industry lowered fares and increased the number of flights available. However, the drop in fare prices caused some small companies to go bankrupt because they could not compete with larger carriers. In some of these cases, travellers were stranded far from their homes. The increase in the number of flights has meant lengthy delays in departures at some airports. Violent political activity by terrorist groups has also caused major problems in the airline industry. Governments around the world have tried to combat this by increasing security. The travelling public sees the effect in prolonged security lineups and increasing fares.

- 1 Pick the best alternative title for this paragraph.
- 2 What is the major reason for security delays?
- 3 What kind of impact has deregulation had on the airline industry?
- 4 What is the increased security in the airline industry aimed at combating?
- 5 A quarter century is made up of \_\_\_\_\_.



### *Smart Shopping*

Before you go shopping, it is advisable to determine what items you intend to buy and, importantly, how much money you can afford to spend for each item. Making a checklist beforehand can save you time and money and it may be helpful in avoiding impulsive purchases. Frequently, items bought on impulse are not things that are practical in terms of their cost or in terms of their appropriateness. Avoiding impulse buying is particularly important when major items, or items that need to last a long time, are purchased. Trendy things go out of fashion quickly. Bold and loud colours may become tiresome after a while. Spending too much money on impulse may mean having to go on a tight budget afterwards.

- 1 Which title best states the central focus of this paragraph?
- 2 What is meant by impulsive buying?
- 3 Preparing a checklist before you go shopping can \_\_\_\_\_.
- 4 What is the definition of the word “trendy”?
- 5 Often, things bought on impulse can be characterized as \_\_\_\_\_.

## *Clean Environment*

The environment is a popular topic now. Environmentalists are very concerned about pollution. For years they have warned that the fragile balance in nature is being destroyed as chemicals emitted from factories fill the atmosphere and destroy the ozone layer. These chemicals also result in acid rain, which harms trees such as pines and maples. Some factories dump their waste into lakes and oceans where it contaminates the water and kills birds and aquatic life, such as fish and plants. All of these pollutants have a ruinous effect on our environment. Clean air and water, as well as food sources free of chemicals and pollutants, are all critical to our good health and a healthy environment. Pollutants will endanger the health of future generations if major preventive steps are not taken against them.

- 1 What is the theme of this paragraph?
- 2 What do we call experts concerned about pollution?
- 3 “Pollutants” are materials that make the environment \_\_\_\_\_.
- 4 What is destroying the ozone layer?
- 5 What is mentioned in this paragraph as a cause of contamination in water?

## *Job Search*

There are always jobs available since, at any one time, approximately four percent of all positions in the labour market are open. This comes as a result of retirements, promotions, firings, transfers, resignations, and extended leaves. In addition, new jobs are always being created. If you are serious about finding the best type of work for yourself, be prepared to spend time doing so. Experts recommend spending forty hours each week on job search activities and warn that it may take several weeks to find the most suitable employment. However, your hard work should be rewarded. On the other hand, it might be easier to find work that is less well-suited for you although, in the long run, this would probably not turn out to be a successful course of action.

- 1 A good job search should involve \_\_\_\_\_.
- 2 The tone of this paragraph is \_\_\_\_\_.
- 3 Besides the change in status of many workers, why are there so many job vacancies?
- 4 Experts recommend spending about as much time on job searching activities as \_\_\_\_\_.
- 5 Which word is used in this paragraph to describe someone who is ready to put a lot of effort into looking for a job?

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