

GRADE

6



# STUDY GUIDE

*Texas Assessment of Knowledge and Skills*

## Reading



**A Student and Family Guide to Grade 6 Reading**



# **TAKS STUDY GUIDE**

*Texas Assessment of Knowledge and Skills*

**Grade 6**

**Reading**

**A Student and Family Guide**



Dear Student and Parent:

The Texas Assessment of Knowledge and Skills (TAKS) is a comprehensive testing program for public school students in grades 3–11. TAKS replaces the Texas Assessment of Academic Skills (TAAS) and is designed to measure to what extent a student has learned, understood, and is able to apply the important concepts and skills expected at each tested grade level. In addition, the test can provide valuable feedback to students, parents, and schools about student progress from grade to grade.

Students are tested in mathematics in grades 3–11; reading in grades 3–9; writing in grades 4 and 7; English language arts in grades 10 and 11; science in grades 5, 8, 10, and 11; and social studies in grades 8, 10, and 11. Every TAKS test is directly linked to the Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS) curriculum. The TEKS is the state-mandated curriculum for Texas public school students. Essential knowledge and skills taught at each grade build upon the material learned in previous grades. By developing the academic skills specified in the TEKS, students can build a strong foundation for future success.

The Texas Education Agency has developed this study guide to help students strengthen the TEKS-based skills that are taught in class and tested on TAKS. The guide is designed for students to use on their own or for students and families to work through together. Concepts are presented in a variety of ways that will help students review the information and skills they need to be successful on the TAKS. Every guide includes explanations, practice questions, detailed answer keys, and student activities. At the end of this study guide is an evaluation form for you to complete and mail back when you have finished the guide. Your comments will help us improve future versions of this guide.

There are a number of resources available for students and families who would like more information about the TAKS testing program. Information booklets are available for every TAKS subject and grade. Brochures are also available that explain the Student Success Initiative promotion requirements and the new graduation requirements for eleventh-grade students. To obtain copies of these resources or to learn more about the testing program, please contact your school or visit the Texas Education Agency website at [www.tea.state.tx.us](http://www.tea.state.tx.us).

Texas is proud of the progress our students have made as they strive to reach their academic goals. We hope the study guides will help foster student learning, growth, and success in all of the TAKS subject areas.

Sincerely,



Lisa Chandler  
Director of Student Assessment  
Texas Education Agency

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# READING

## INTRODUCTION

### What Is This Study Guide?

This is a study guide to help you strengthen the skills tested on the sixth-grade TAKS reading test.



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### How Is the Reading Study Guide Organized?

The reading study guide has four parts and will help you understand and apply the reading skills tested on the sixth-grade TAKS.

- Part One: “Skills and Strategies” explains the skills and strategies tested on the sixth-grade TAKS test while guiding you through some practice questions.
- Part Two: “Guided Practice” leads you through sample reading selections and practice questions that will give you a chance to practice the skills and strategies you learned in Part One of this guide.
- Part Three: “Independent Practice” provides you with sample reading selections and questions like those on the TAKS test. These selections and questions give you a chance to see how well you

understand the skills and strategies tested on TAKS.

- Part Four: “Answer Key” gives you the answers to the practice questions in this guide and explains each of the answer choices.

### What Is Tested on TAKS?

Careful readers use many different skills to get the most out of what they read. On TAKS, these reading skills and strategies are grouped under four objectives, or goals for learning. You show how well you understand an objective by answering questions related to some of the skills grouped under that objective. The reading selections and questions in this guide provide help and practice with all four reading objectives.

### What Does a TAKS Reading Test Look Like?

The reading section of the sixth-grade TAKS test includes several reading selections. These might be short stories, newspaper or magazine articles, or informational essays. After reading a selection, you will be asked to answer some multiple-choice questions about the passage.

### Tips for Parents or Guardians

- Designate a study space and study time each day.
- Pace your student through the selections and questions in this guide.
- Work in short sessions.
- Stop and start again later if your student becomes frustrated.
- Make reading relaxing and low-key for a short part of the day.

# Steps to Success

\_\_\_\_\_  
*Student's Name*

**Directions:** Use the following steps as you work through the Study Guide. When you complete each of the numbered steps below, place a check mark in the box.

READING		
1	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Getting Started</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● Read “What a Careful Reader Does” on page 9.</li><li>● Now read “Jun Ming’s Fortune” on pages 10–12.</li></ul>	
2	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Help with Skills</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● Read “Help with Skills” on pages 13–53. You should review all the skills and strategies presented there.</li></ul>	
3	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>“Jun Ming’s Fortune” Again</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● Read “Jun Ming’s Fortune” again on pages 57–60. Answer the questions in the margins of the story as you read.</li><li>● Read “Practice with Reading Skills” on pages 61–65.</li></ul>	
4	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>“Mariachi Nuevo Santander”</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● Read “Mariachi Nuevo Santander” on pages 67–70. Answer the questions in the margins of the story as you read.</li><li>● Answer the practice questions on pages 71–75. Check the answers in the answer key on pages 89–90.</li></ul>	
5	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>“A Dream Turns 70” and “Dear Sarah”</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● Read “A Dream Turns 70” and “Dear Sarah” on pages 79–81.</li><li>● Answer the practice questions on pages 82–85. Check the answers in the answer key on pages 91–92.</li></ul>	

# SKILLS AND STRATEGIES

- What a Careful Reader Does
- “Jun Ming’s Fortune”
- Help with Skills

The purpose of pages 9–53 is to explain the skills and strategies tested on the sixth-grade TAKS reading test. Read through each part and practice with the examples.

Throughout the skill and strategy explanations in this section, you will find “Try It” boxes with a number of blank lines following some questions. Practice your writing skills by writing your answers to these questions on the blank lines provided.

This section is not meant to be read all at once. You will benefit from working in short sessions that take place every day. If at any time you feel frustrated, take a break, ask for help, and try again later.



# What a Careful Reader Does

**BEFORE reading, a careful reader sets a purpose for reading. The reader might ask**

Why am I reading this selection?

Am I reading for entertainment or for information?

What does the selection seem to be about?

Is it about something or someone I already know?

Is it about something new I am learning?

Is it about something I want to learn?

What kind of reading will I do?

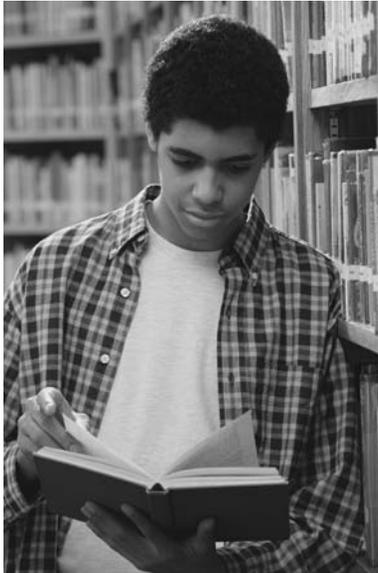
Will I read to enjoy a story about characters?

Will I read to learn how to do something?

Will I read to discover interesting facts?



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**DURING reading, a careful reader asks**

Do I understand what I'm reading?

Do I need to slow down?

Are there any words I don't know? Can I figure out what they mean?

Do I need to look for clues?

Do I need to read some parts over again?

How can I connect with what I'm reading?

Is it something I already know?

Is it something new I am learning?

Is it something I want to know more about?

**AFTER reading, a careful reader asks**

What do I remember about the selection?

Can I tell others about it in my own words?

Can I name the most important ideas in it?

Can I tell someone what the story is about?

Can I think of other ways to show that I understand it?

What do I think about the selection?

Did it add to something I already knew?

Did it tell me something new?

Did it make me want to learn more?



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# “Jun Ming’s Fortune”

Read the story below. It will be used throughout the skill and strategy explanations in the “Help with Skills” section that follows. The italicized text just below the story’s title is provided to give you background information about the selection. Text like this will often accompany TAKS reading selections. Always read any additional information that is included with a reading selection.

## Jun Ming’s Fortune

*In 1862 construction began to connect existing tracks and create a railroad across the United States, linking the East to the West. The work was hard, and the 20,000 men who completed the work were treated harshly. Most of the workers were immigrants. This story describes the experiences of one of the many young men who came from China to work on the railroad. It takes place in Cape Horn, a steep mountainous area of northern California.*

- 1 Jun Ming scrambled down the steep face of Cape Horn, causing loose rocks to bounce and tumble into the canyon below. As day turned into evening, he thought of the way the lantern in his family’s farmhouse glowed comfortingly at this time of day. He longed for the beautiful homeland of China he had left so eagerly. Men had come to rural areas like his to recruit strong, young Chinese to help build a great railroad. Jun Ming had been thrilled by their promises of money and adventure in the United States. He had left home with plans to send his family a great fortune.
- 2 Since then, Jun Ming had learned that life in the United States was not all that he had dreamed. First of all, 25 dollars a month would not soon add up to a fortune. He had to pay his bosses for a spot to sleep in a crowded tent. He and the other workers also paid a Chinese cook to import pressed duck, dried squid, and the other things needed to prepare proper meals. And his work was not glamorous—just hard. Jun Ming was too young to chip rock or set dynamite, so it was his job to carry boiled tea to the workers. This he did for 12 hours a day. On his first day, Jun Ming had felt slow and awkward moving over the steep rock. But he had soon learned to slide with the rocks for short distances and to slow himself by locking the side of one foot into a small niche or foothold. He took pride in his skill and in doing his job. Even at the end of a long workday, Jun Ming was quick and surefooted.

*Continued*



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3 “Thank you, Jun Ming,” said Mr. Lai as the boy filled his cup with warm tea. “I was hoping I could have some tea before I set the last charge of the day.”

4 Jun Ming stepped back across the rock and out of the way. When the dynamite blasts were being set, each worker had to look out for himself. Flying rock could easily send a man tumbling to his death in the canyon below.

5 Mr. Lai was working from a small ledge that had been chipped into the mountainside. Mr. Kwan, the other blaster, was in a large wicker basket dangling from a rope. Each man worked steadily with a hand drill to make holes in the rock where sticks of dynamite could be placed. Each explosion would rip away another bit of the steep mountainside. Bit by bit, the blasters were creating a flat ledge where railroad tracks could be laid. Jun Ming watched as Mr. Kwan gave Mr. Lai the signal that he was ready to set the blast. Mr. Lai signaled back, and the two men lit the fuses. Mr. Lai scrambled quickly across the rock. Mr. Kwan yanked on the rope, and workers at the top of the mountain pulled him up as fast as they could.

6 As the basket bounced and swayed its way up the face of the cliff, the fuses burned shorter and shorter. Just as the basket neared the top, the first blast rocked the mountain. The force flung the basket out over the canyon. As it hurtled back toward the cliff, Jun Ming stared in horror. Mr. Kwan was certain to crash to his death. No one could help him. But Mr. Kwan didn’t look for help. Racing to beat the blast he had set with his own hands, Mr. Kwan leaped up and grabbed the rope. As sure and

*Continued*



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quick as a cat, he lifted himself out of the basket and scrambled up the rope. Just as the basket smashed against the rock and shattered, he reached the top of the rope. Mr. Kwan felt his hands begin to slip. He cried out. Desperately, he reached for the outstretched hands of his friends. One man got a firm hold on Mr. Kwan’s hand, and the others quickly grabbed his arm. They yanked him to safety and then dropped to the ground to brace for the next blast. Mr. Kwan’s clear thinking and quickness had saved his life.

7 Weary and relieved, the workers picked up their tools and headed down the mountain. Jun Ming was proud to walk with them. These were men of quiet honor who did their job well. Jun Ming wanted to be like them. He knew that no other workers were as brave or as skillful at blasting away rock to make way for the rails. This railroad couldn’t be built without them. For that reason alone, Jun Ming knew that the Chinese men deserved his respect.

8 Jun Ming picked up his pace as he thought hungrily of the fine dinner that was waiting for them at the camp. He felt exhausted, but tonight Jun Ming decided he would write a letter home—a letter about the courage of Mr. Kwan and Mr. Lai.

You’ve finished Step 1 in your “Steps to Success.” Be sure to place a check mark in your chart on page 6.

# Help with Skills

Careful readers use many different skills to get the most out of what they read. These reading skills are grouped under four objectives, or goals for learning, that are listed throughout this section. Read through each objective and practice with the examples.

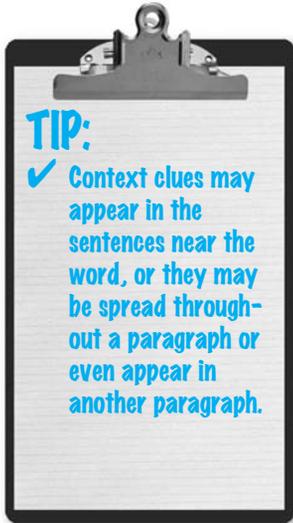
This section is not to be done all at once. Take a break when you need one. Remember that the information presented in “Help with Skills” will refer back to “Jun Ming’s Fortune.”

## **Objective 1: The student will demonstrate a basic understanding of culturally diverse written texts.**

### **What is “a basic understanding”?**

Having a basic understanding involves being able to do the following:

- Recognize words and their meanings while reading
- Learn the meanings of new words that you come across while reading
- Learn parts of words and how they are used to help with meaning
- Find the main idea of a paragraph, article, or story
- Find the supporting details in a paragraph, article, or story
- Paraphrase and summarize what you have read



## Context Clues

Sometimes when you read, you will see a word that you do not know. Don't worry. Often you can use the words you *do* know as clues to the meaning of a word you *don't* know. These clues are called **context clues**.

What are some examples of context clues?

**Synonyms**—A synonym is a word that means the same or almost the same as another word. *Delicate* and *fragile* are synonyms, as are *sturdy* and *strong*.

Read the sentences below. Can you find a synonym for the word *lethargic*?

“You sure seem lethargic this morning,” Justin’s mom said. Although he was tired, Justin managed to drag himself to the breakfast table.



The word *tired* is a synonym for *lethargic*.

**Antonyms**—An antonym is a word that means the opposite of another word. *Boring* and *fascinating* are antonyms, as are *rowdy* and *calm*.

Read the sentences below. Can you find an antonym for the word *accurate*?

Santos checked over his math assignment to make sure his answers were accurate. Last time, he had forgotten to check them, and many of his answers had been wrong.

The word *wrong* is an antonym for *accurate*.

**Explanations, Definitions, and Descriptions**—These explain, define, or describe the meanings of other words.

Read the sentence below. Can you find an explanation for the word *patella*?

“You’ve injured your left patella,” said Dr. Morrow, pointing to Cam-Ha’s kneecap.



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The word *kneecap* explains the meaning of *patella*.

**Example**—An example is an item that is similar to other items in a group. Football, tennis, and basketball are examples of sports. Texas, Oklahoma, and Arkansas are examples of states.

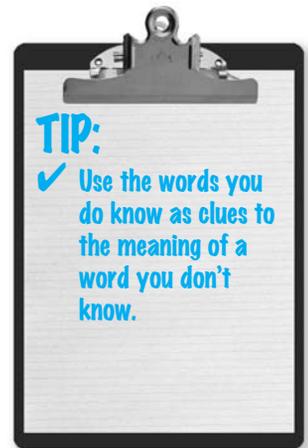
Read the sentences below. Can you find the word that helps you figure out the meaning of the word *viper*?

“Over here you’ll see a viper,” said the zookeeper. The snake slithered away from the glass and curled up underneath a rock.



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A *viper* is an example of a snake.



## Try It

Go back to the italicized paragraph of “Jun Ming’s Fortune” on page 10. Look at the word *immigrants*.

1. Think about the story. Which words in that paragraph are clues that help you understand what *immigrants* means?

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2. Using these words as clues, I can tell that the word *immigrants* means \_\_\_\_\_

---

1. One possible clue in the italicized paragraph is “Most of the workers were immigrants.” The sentence tells you that the immigrants in this story are workers of some kind. Another clue in the introduction is “one of the many young men who came from China.” You learn from this text that the main character is someone who comes from another country—in this case, China.

2. Using these clues, you can tell that the word *immigrants* means “people from one country who move to another country.” Paragraph 1 provides other clues to support this conclusion: “homeland of China he had left” and “. . . thrilled by their promises of money and adventure in the United States.” These clues confirm that Jun Ming is one of many immigrants who left their homeland (native country) to come work and live in the United States.

## Multiple-Meaning Words

Since some words have more than one meaning, you have to consider which meaning the author intends. Keep in mind the context in which you read the word. The context will tell you which meaning to choose.

What does the word *scrambled* mean in the sentence below?

Marty scrambled the eggs with a beater, mixing in bits of onion and pepper.

If you look up the word *scramble* in a dictionary, you might see something like this:

**scramble** \ˈskram-bəl\ v **1.** to move with urgency or panic **2.** to struggle eagerly for possession of something **3.** to gather something with difficulty **4.** to toss or mix together

In this sentence the word *mixing* helps you know that *scrambled* means “tossed together.”



### TIP:

✓ Some words have more than one meaning. Clues can help you pick the right meaning.

## Try It

Now look at the sentence below, taken from paragraph 5 of “Jun Ming’s Fortune” on page 11.

“Mr. Lai scrambled quickly across the rock.”

1. What does the word *scrambled* mean in this sentence? Look back at the dictionary entry for *scramble* on page 17.

---

2. What clues help you know this?

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You know from the story that the men have just lit dynamite fuses. This knowledge, combined with the words “quickly across the rock,” helps you know that in this sentence *scrambled* means “moved with urgency or panic.”

## Prefixes and Suffixes

You can understand the meaning of an unfamiliar word by breaking it into its parts. You may recognize a prefix or a suffix that has been added to a word. A **prefix** is added to the beginning of a word to make a new word. Here are some prefixes that you might see as you read:

*dis-* means “the opposite of”  
*pre-* means “before”  
*un-*, *im-*, and *in-* mean “not”

Can you figure out the meaning of the underlined word in the sentence below? Use what you know about prefixes.

Kendra disliked having to wear a rabbit costume in the play.

*dis-* (the opposite of) + *liked* (enjoyed) = did not enjoy

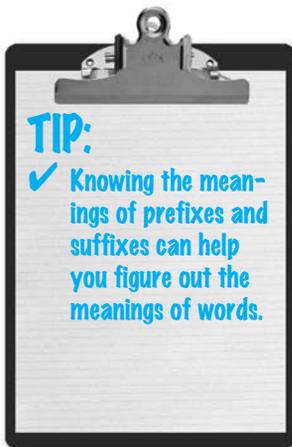
A **suffix** is a letter or group of letters that is added to the end of a word to make a new word. Here are some that you might see as you read:

*-able* and *-ible* mean “able to”  
*-er* means “one who does or is”  
*-ful* and *-ous* mean “full of”

Figure out the meaning of the underlined word in this sentence from “Jun Ming’s Fortune.” Use what you know about suffixes.

“He knew that no other workers were as brave or as skillful at blasting away rock to make way for the rails.”

*Skill* (ability) + *-ful* (full of) = full of ability



## Denotative and Connotative Meanings

The **denotation** of a word is its dictionary definition, or meaning.

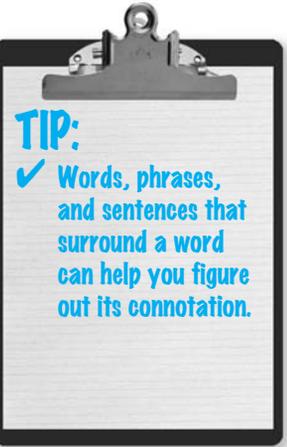
The **connotation** of a word is the feeling associated with it, in addition to its dictionary meaning.

Words with the same denotation can have very different connotations—for example, *surprised* and *amazed*. Both words have similar meanings, but *amazed* has a stronger feeling connected with it than *surprised* does. Knowing word connotations can help you understand an author’s message.

Do you think Jun Ming was *tired* or *exhausted* at the end of his workday? *Tired* and *exhausted* have similar meanings, but *exhausted* is connected with a stronger feeling. Jun Ming probably did get *tired* during the day, but because of the hard physical labor involved with his job, he was probably *exhausted* at the end of the day.



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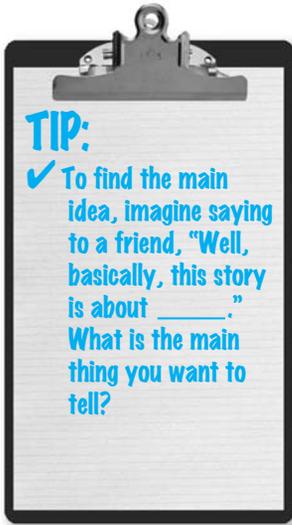


Read the sentence below from paragraph 6 of “Jun Ming’s Fortune” on page 11.

“The force flung the basket out over the canyon.”

Why do you think the author uses the word *flung* rather than the word *threw* in this sentence?

Think about what is happening in paragraph 6. Mr. Lai and Mr. Kwan have just lit some dynamite, and Mr. Kwan is being hauled up the cliff in a basket by some men. The dynamite suddenly explodes, pushing the basket away from the cliff and out over the canyon. *Flung* gives you a better picture of Mr. Kwan’s dangerous situation than *threw* would.



## Main Ideas, Supporting Details, and Summary

**Main idea**—The main idea of a story or paragraph answers the question “What is this story or paragraph mainly about?”

Sometimes the main idea is stated clearly, making it easy to find.

Reread paragraph 7 from “Jun Ming’s Fortune” on page 12.

What is the main idea of paragraph 7?

Jun Ming knows that the Chinese men deserve his respect.

How do you know this is the main idea?

It is stated clearly in the last sentence of paragraph 7.



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Other times the writer does not state the main idea directly. In such cases, you have to pay attention to the supporting details to figure out the main idea.

Return to “Jun Ming’s Fortune” and reread paragraph 2 on page 10.

What is the main idea of this paragraph?

Jun Ming becomes skillful at his job, even though the work is hard and the money is poor.

How do you know that this is the main idea?

The first few sentences tell you that Jun Ming is paid “25 dollars a month” and that his work “was not glamorous—just hard.” You learn later in the paragraph that he used to feel “slow and awkward” but quickly learned how to do his job. Now he takes pride “in his skill and in doing his job.” These details from the paragraph support the main idea.

**Supporting details**—Supporting details in a story work together with the main idea. Supporting details tell more about the main idea. They can explain an idea or make it clearer. Details that tell how something looks, feels, sounds, smells, or tastes can bring a story to life. Such details usually tell *who*, *what*, *when*, *where*, *why*, and *how*.

Another way to think about supporting details is to imagine a bicycle. A bicycle has a frame, a seat, brakes, and two wheels. Think of this bicycle as the main idea.



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Now think of a few “extras” that make the bicycle more appealing—15 speeds, an adjustable seat, a shock absorber, and off-road tires. Think of these extras as supporting details. Just as extras can make a bicycle look and perform better, supporting details can make a story more interesting and fun to read.



Photo courtesy of Cannondale Corp.

**TIP:**  
 ✓ Supporting details tell:  
 Who  
 What  
 When  
 Where  
 Why  
 How

## Help with Skills: Objective 1

### TIP:

✓ Summarizing is briefly restating the most important ideas and making connections between them.

**Summary**—A summary is a way to briefly restate the most important ideas and show they are connected. When you write a summary, it is important to paraphrase, or restate, the author’s ideas in your own words. A good summary usually tells what the whole story is about but focuses only on the supporting details included in the story.

Read the following story. What is the main idea? What are the supporting details? How would you summarize the story?

### A Better Mousetrap?

“Bob! Help! Help me!” Hal yelled as he waved his arms and shook the right sleeve of his shirt. I should have helped my brother, but I was doubled over with laughter, totally helpless. Two nights ago we had seen a mouse scampering across my bedroom floor. We had set a mousetrap and baited it with a small piece of peanut butter cracker. The next morning Hal and I were disappointed to find the trap empty—no mouse, no cracker. So we made our own mousetrap by placing a piece of cheese under a soup pan that was propped up with a pencil and a string. Our plan was to wait for the mouse to crawl under the pan. Then we would pull the string, which would jerk the pencil out from under the pan and capture the mouse. We waited for our little mouse to arrive on the scene. In the semidark room we saw the mouse dash under the pan. I quickly jerked the string and yelled, “We got him!” As Hal slipped a piece of cardboard under the pan, the mouse scurried out and up inside his sleeve! Finally we had captured the mouse but in the most unlikely of places—Hal’s sleeve!



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### Main Idea of “A Better Mousetrap?”

When two brothers try to trap a mouse, the mouse runs up one brother’s sleeve.

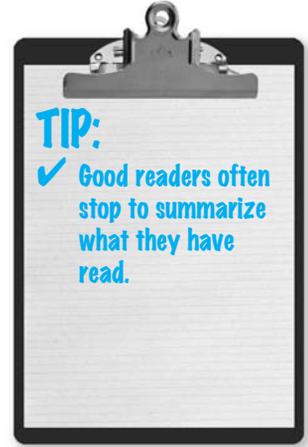
### Supporting Details of “A Better Mousetrap?”

<b>Who</b> is the story about?	The narrator and his brother Hal
<b>What</b> are the brothers doing?	They are trying to trap a mouse.
<b>When</b> does the story take place?	The story takes place over several nights.
<b>Where</b> does the story take place?	The brothers are in the narrator’s bedroom.
<b>Why</b> do the brothers make a mousetrap?	The brothers make their own trap because the first one they try doesn’t trap the mouse.
<b>How</b> does the story end?	The brothers capture the mouse, but it runs up Hal’s sleeve.

### Summary of “A Better Mousetrap?”

Using the supporting details listed above, you can summarize the story as follows:

One night Bob and Hal see a mouse in Bob’s bedroom and set a mousetrap. When the trap doesn’t work, the brothers design another one. They capture the mouse, but it runs up Hal’s sleeve.



## Try It

Return to “Jun Ming’s Fortune” on pages 10–12. As a review of the story, answer the following questions about the supporting details of the story.

1. Who is the story about? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

2. Where does the story take place? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

3. Why did Jun Ming leave his home? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

4. Why is Jun Ming disappointed? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

5. How does Jun Ming change by the end of the story? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

6. What happens that causes this change in Jun Ming? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

1. The story is about Jun Ming and other Chinese workers.
2. The story takes place in the Cape Horn area of northern California.
3. Jun Ming left his home in the hope that working in the United States would bring him good money.
4. Jun Ming is disappointed because his life in the United States is not what he expected.
5. Jun Ming changes by gaining a deeper appreciation of the courage and skill of the men who work with him.
6. This change in Jun Ming happens after he watches another worker narrowly escape death.

You can use the answers to the previous questions as supporting details to write a summary of “Jun Ming’s Fortune.” One possible summary follows.

Jun Ming is recruited to come to the United States to help build the railroad. At first he is disappointed because life in the United States is not what he expected. As Jun Ming watches a worker narrowly escape death while doing his job, he realizes that building the railroad takes courage and skill. He is proud of the job that he and the other workers are doing.

### Important Note

Readers can get confused about main ideas, supporting details, and summaries, so here is a comparison of the three. The **main idea** is the most important idea in a paragraph or reading selection. It can be stated in one sentence. The answers to questions such as *who*, *what*, *when*, *where*, *why*, and *how* are **supporting details**. You create a summary when you take the main idea and the supporting details and put them together in your own words. It usually takes several sentences to write a good summary.

## Objective 2: The student will apply knowledge of literary elements to understand culturally diverse written texts.

### What are “literary elements”?

Literary elements are the basic parts that an author uses to create a story. These parts include the characters, the setting (time and place of the story), the plot (events in a story), and conflict (the main problem).

Developing an understanding of literary elements includes being able to do the following:

- Examine characters, including their traits, motivations, conflicts, and points of view
- Examine characters’ relationships
- Examine the changes that characters go through, both personally and in their relationships with others or the world around them
- Recognize the story problem(s) and identify events that affect the plot
- Identify a story’s setting and its effect on the story’s meaning
- Recognize how literary devices such as flashback, foreshadowing, and symbolism shape the reader’s understanding of characters, events, and meaning

### Analyzing Characters

Characters are the people or animals in a story. You can tell a lot about characters by what they say and do in a story. An author may not tell you directly that a character has a certain trait, but you can look for clues in the story to figure out what the character is like.

You can tell a lot about a character by asking these questions as you read:

How does the character feel?

What does the character do?

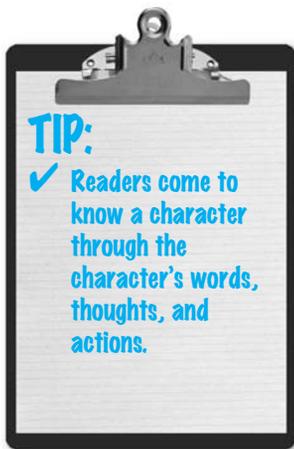
What does the character say?

How does the character change in the story?

How do other characters feel about the character?

What do other characters say about the character?

**Traits**—A character in a story has certain traits, or qualities, that set him or her apart from other characters. How can you identify a character’s traits? Look at what the character says and does.



In “Jun Ming’s Fortune,” what are some of Jun Ming’s traits? In other words, what words could describe Jun Ming? You might have answered hardworking, responsible, and proud.

What examples from the story tell you that Jun Ming is hardworking, responsible, and proud?

Paragraph 2 of the story reveals Jun Ming’s traits. Even though carrying tea to the workers is difficult, Jun Ming shows that he is responsible by doing the job well. He reveals his hardworking nature by doing his job quickly and skillfully even at the end of a 12-hour workday. He is proud of the skill with which he performs his job.

**Motivation**—What makes characters behave the way they do in a story? A character’s motivation is something that makes the character think, feel, or act in a particular way. When you know the reasons for a character’s actions, you understand his or her motivation.

Think back to “Jun Ming’s Fortune.” What is Jun Ming’s motivation for coming to the United States? How do you know this? He wants to make money for his family. Paragraph 1 states that he eagerly left his homeland and that he was thrilled by the recruiters’ promises of money and adventure. He also planned to earn a fortune to send back to his family in China.

You can see that a character’s motivation influences his or her actions. The actions, in turn, reveal the character’s traits.

**Conflict**—A conflict is a struggle between two opposing forces. For example, a conflict can be

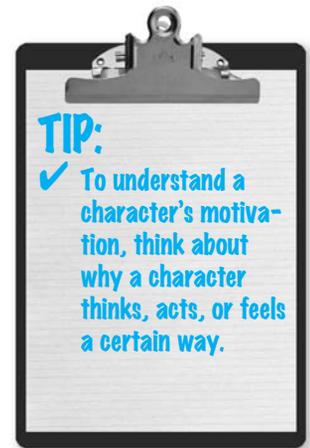
- between two or more characters
- between a character and an outside force
- within a character

Sometimes a character’s traits will contribute to a conflict in a story. In most cases, a character’s conflict is resolved by the end of the story.

What conflict does Mr. Kwan face in “Jun Ming’s Fortune”? The conflict is between Mr. Kwan and an outside force, the dynamite explosion.

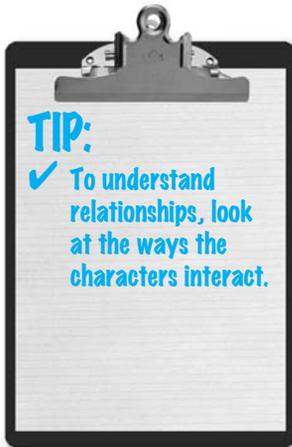
How do you know?

Paragraph 6 on pages 11–12 of the story describes the life-threatening experience.



**Point of View**—A character’s point of view is the way he or she views the events or circumstances in which he or she is involved. Characters often have differing points of view about a situation or another character. This leads to a conflict.

In “Jun Ming’s Fortune,” how does Jun Ming’s point of view affect his attitude toward his fellow workers? Because Jun Ming is a Chinese immigrant worker, he can see clearly the troubles his fellow workers experience. He is also able to see how brave and hardworking they are and believes these “men of quiet honor” deserve his admiration. Someone with a different point of view, say, a railroad supervisor who was not from China, might not view the workers with such respect. A supervisor might have a different point of view.

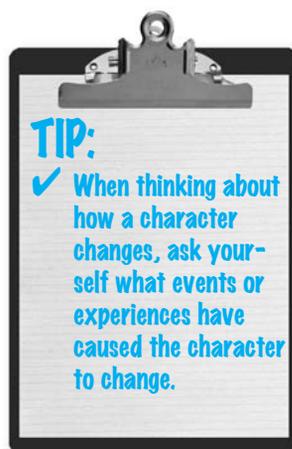


**Relationships**—One way to understand a character is to look at the character’s relationships with other characters in the story. Does the character get along with others? Is he or she in conflict with another character? Does the character have a best friend?

What can you tell about Jun Ming’s relationship with Mr. Lai in this passage from “Jun Ming’s Fortune”?

“Thank you, Jun Ming,” said Mr. Lai as the boy filled his cup with warm tea. “I was hoping I could have some tea before I set the last charge of the day.”

They seem to have a friendly relationship; they treat each other kindly.



**Changes**—Just as we are changed by our experiences in real life, characters in stories also undergo changes as different events occur in the story. For example, a grouchy person may become kinder because of another’s kindness toward him.

As you read, notice the ways in which characters change through their experiences. Do these changes sometimes help you understand your own changes? That’s exactly what an author hopes will happen.

## Try It

Return to “Jun Ming’s Fortune” on pages 10–12.

1. What is one change that Jun Ming undergoes after coming to the United States?

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2. How do you know? What clues in the story tell you this?

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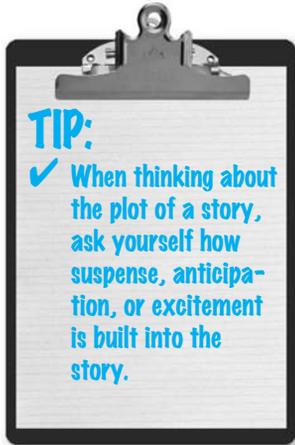
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1. Jun Ming changes his expectations for life in the United States. Before coming to the United States, Jun Ming dreams of adventure and of making a fortune to send back to his family, but he learns that the work is hard, the pay is low, and he won’t soon make a fortune. Once he realizes this, he changes his expectations about his life in the United States. He may not make a fortune, but he learns to take pride in the job that he is doing.

2. Paragraph 2 in the story states that “Jun Ming had learned that life in the United States was not all that he had dreamed.” It also says that his work “was not glamorous—just hard,” but Jun Ming takes “pride in his skill and in doing his job.” You can conclude from these clues that his expectations for his life in the United States have changed.



## Story Plot and Problem Resolution

The plot is the sequence of events that make up a story. This sequence of events is usually arranged around a **conflict**, or problem. You can often find the problem in a story by asking, “What’s going wrong for the main character?”

As one or more characters try to solve the problem, events build to a **climax**, or turning point. Then comes the **resolution**, in which the reader learns how the problem turns out.

What is Jun Ming’s major problem in the story?

Jun Ming’s major problem in the story is that life in the United States is not how he expected it to be, full of adventure and fortune.

How is the problem resolved?

Jun Ming realizes that the work he and the other workers are doing is important. Without them the railroad could not be built. He may not make much money, but he is a part of something that he can be proud of, which is a kind of fortune in itself.

## Setting and Its Importance

The **setting** is the time and place in which the events of a story happen. In some stories the setting is very specific. In others the setting is not as specific.

Four minutes before the tardy bell was scheduled to ring, Emmitt was still asleep in his bed.

This sentence tells when something happened.

A large crowd gathered outside the building where the city council was meeting.

This sentence tells where something happened.

At four o’clock on a hot afternoon, Kiki and her friends were playing volleyball at a July Fourth picnic.

This sentence tells when and where something happened. It is very specific.

Setting can be an important part of the plot. It can also help you understand why characters act as they do. Often, setting creates a particular mood or atmosphere in a story. When you read, look for clues that tell you about the setting.

## Try It

Return to “Jun Ming’s Fortune.” Reread the italicized paragraph on page 10. Then answer these questions about setting.

1. Where does the story take place?

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2. In what time period does the story take place?

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3. Why are time and place important in the story?

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1. *The italicized paragraph tells you that the story takes place in a mountainous area of northern California known as Cape Horn.*

2. *The story takes place in the 1860s.*

3. *Knowing the time and place of the story helps you understand that the men were working at a time when immigrants did not have many rights. It also helps you understand how dangerous it is for the men to work among the steep rocks of the canyon.*



## Understanding Literary Devices

Writers bring their stories to life by using special tools called **literary devices**. These tools include flashback, foreshadowing, and symbolism. Literary devices help you understand the characters, the events, and the meaning of a story.



**Flashback**—Have you ever watched a movie in which the image on the screen becomes wavy or hazy and the action shifts from the present to the past? This is known as a flashback. A flashback interrupts the sequence of events in a story to show something that happened before the story’s beginning. The flashback helps the reader understand a character’s present situation.

Can you find a flashback in this story?



### Glimpsing the Past

Mariah was helping her brother Ben slide into his wheelchair from the seat of the car. The two were arguing playfully about which of them was better at a word game they liked to play together. As Mariah watched her brother use his strong arms to ease himself into the wheelchair, she slipped back in time to three years ago. She was nine, and Ben had just turned 11. It was the first day of summer. Ben had been rushing through the house all morning. “Where are my sandals? Where’s my beach towel?” he hollered to no one in particular. When his friend’s dad honked the horn, Ben burst out the front door and skipped down the sidewalk, whistling.

At what point in the story above does the forward movement in time stop?

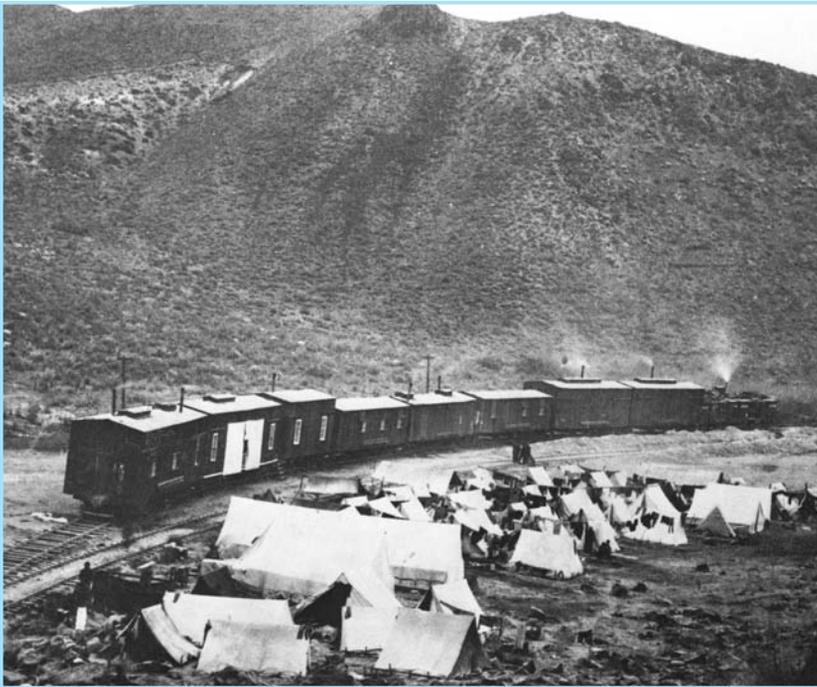
The flashback begins with “she slipped back in time to three years ago.” The author wants the reader to experience Mariah’s memory of an important time. This excerpt shows only part of the flashback. If you were to read it all, you would have a better understanding of why Ben is in a wheelchair and how his life has changed.

Not all stories are told in time order. As you read, pay attention to when each event in a story actually takes place.

**Foreshadowing**—In foreshadowing, an author gives hints about what might happen later in a story. These clues come from events in the story. Hints can also come from information shared by the narrator or a character. Foreshadowing is used to build suspense or tension in a story.

Read the sentences below from “Jun Ming’s Fortune.”

“Jun Ming stepped back across the rock and out of the way. When the dynamite blasts were being set, each worker had to look out for himself. Flying rock could easily send a man tumbling to his death in the canyon below.”



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What is foreshadowed by these sentences?

The description shows that Jun Ming works in a dangerous environment where accidents can easily occur. The author is foreshadowing Mr. Kwan’s narrow escape from death later in the story.



As you read, look for the use of foreshadowing and think about what future event each clue might be suggesting.



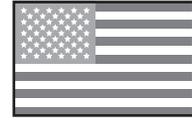
**Symbolism**—A symbol is something that stands for or suggests something else. For example, a dove or a heart can be a symbol. To many people, a dove stands for peace, and a heart symbolizes love. In a story a symbol can be a person, an object, a place, or even a situation. Writers use symbols to make a point, create a particular feeling, or present a theme.



Love



Peace



U.S.A.

Sometimes an author will use a symbol in the story to create a certain feeling in the reader, make an important point, or explain a theme. The writer does this to tell you something important about a character or a situation in the story.

Can you find a symbol in the story “Jun Ming’s Fortune”? Reread paragraph 1 on page 10.

What does the lantern symbolize to Jun Ming?

The lantern symbolizes the comforts of home for Jun Ming.

How do you know?

Jun Ming is feeling homesick as he thinks of the lantern that “glowed comfortingly at this time of day.” To Jun Ming the lantern represents the comforts of home.

### Important Note

Objectives 3 and 4 both require students to analyze culturally diverse written texts.

What does “analyzing a text” mean?

Analyzing a text means recognizing the way an author organizes information in order to understand the author’s purpose. By analyzing a text, careful readers move beyond reading the words on the page and begin to think critically about the information presented.

## Objective 3: The student will use a variety of strategies to analyze culturally diverse written texts.

### What are “reading strategies,” and how do they help students analyze text?

Reading strategies help readers think about what they are reading by providing a structure, or framework, for looking at texts in different ways. This process allows readers to understand how ideas are connected and why the author might have presented those ideas in a particular way. Reading strategies help careful readers gain a deeper understanding of the information they are reading.

Reading strategies include being able to do the following:

- Locate and recall information using organizational clues such as cause and effect and sequential order
- Recognize similarities and differences across texts
- Use outlines, time lines, and graphic organizers to organize information from a story or a book
- Identify the purposes of a text
- Examine the ways an author’s point of view, or perspective, affects his or her writing

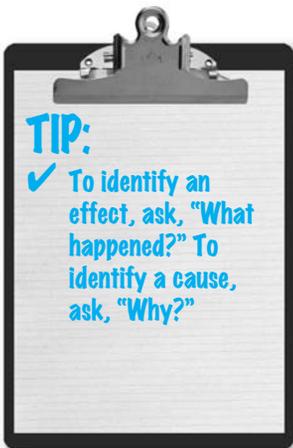


## Using a Text's Structure to Locate and Recall Information

Authors put the events of a story in a certain order so that the events will make sense. When you read, look for patterns in the way events have been organized and how those events relate to one another. You can use patterns of organization, such as cause and effect or chronology, to help you locate information in a selection.

**Cause and effect**—Authors often write stories as a series of causes and effects. Knowing how to recognize these causes and effects helps you better understand a writer's message. A cause makes something happen. An effect is what happens as a result.

As you read stories and articles, you will notice that authors don't always state every cause-and-effect relationship. Instead, you must use clues from the story to figure out these relationships.



### Try It

Find the causes and effects in the paragraphs below.

"Wow, look at this bike!" said Tai to his brother. Kito stopped stirring the chili and set the spoon on the counter.

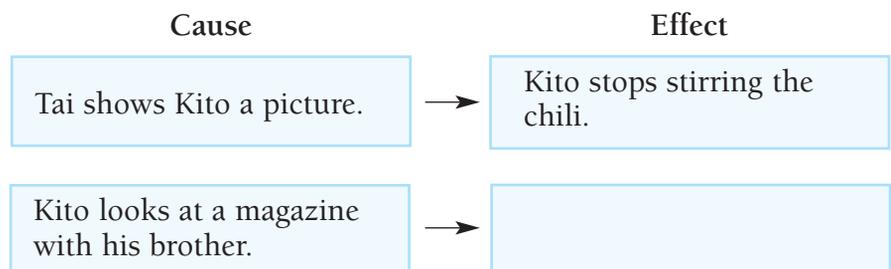
"Let me see that," said Kito, yanking the magazine away from Tai. He stared at the picture of the off-road bicycle. "Look at those tires. You could ride on just about any surface with those," he said.

"If you like these tires, look at the bike on page 37," said Tai excitedly. The two brothers sat down at the table and flipped through the magazine.

After a while Tai sniffed the air. "What's that smell?" he asked.

"Oh, no!" shouted Kito as he raced over to the stove. "I burned it!"

What is the effect of Kito's forgetting to stir the chili? Write your answer in the blank box.



The chili burns on the stove.

**Chronological Order**—An author puts story events in a certain order so that they will make sense to the reader. You’ve already learned that a writer can present events as a series of causes and effects. Another way of presenting events is in the order in which they occur in time. These stories begin with the first event that occurs and end with the last event. Authors will often use clue words to help you see the order clearly.

Read the story below. What clues help you understand the order in which things happen in the story?

### The Tunesmith

James was eager to practice the guitar after school, but he had several things to do first. He made himself a turkey and cheese sandwich and scanned the daily newspaper as he ate. Next he read the list of chores his mother had left on the kitchen counter. Then he set to work on the chores. He made a check mark next to each chore after it was done. After that James sat at the kitchen table and finished the homework he had started at school. Finally he retreated to his room. He carefully removed the guitar from its case, sat on his bed, and began to strum the tune he had written the night before.



In this story what does James do first after he comes home from school?

He makes a sandwich.

What happens after James does his chores?

He finishes his homework.

What happens last in the story?

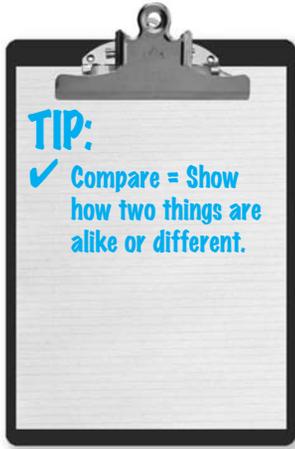
James plays his guitar.

#### TIP:

✓ Most stories are told in the order in which the events happen.

#### TIP:

✓ Use these clue words when you are looking for the order of events: *next, then, after that, yesterday, earlier, later, finally.*



## Comparing Two Selections or Stories

Have you ever watched a movie or a television show and thought, “Hey, that was kind of like another show I saw”? If you have, you already know how to compare two stories.

No two stories are exactly alike. However, sometimes two stories or pieces of writing can have a lot in common. Here are some ways in which two or more pieces of writing might be similar and different:

- **Main Idea:** Two stories might be about different characters in different settings but still have the importance of honesty or some other theme as the main idea.
- **Subject:** You might read a narrative story about a scuba diver, a nonfiction essay about a real scuba diver, an article about the history of scuba diving, or a poem about the thrill of scuba diving. Each of these has the same subject or topic (scuba diving), but each presents the subject in a different way.
- **Setting:** Stories might be set in the same place and time but be about different characters.
- **Characters:** You might read two stories about the same characters. Or you might read the same story told by two different characters.
- **Plot:** Stories might have the same plot. Even if the setting and the characters are different, you might recognize that the action is the same in each story.
- **Conflict:** Two stories might have the same basic conflict, such as a struggle against the forces of nature.
- **Organization:** Two authors might choose to organize their writing in similar ways, such as in chronological order.

Sometimes the sixth-grade TAKS reading test will have two stories that are meant to be read together. These are called paired selections. When reading paired selections, you must be able to recognize how the two stories are similar and how they are different.

Compare the two stories that follow. First, take a look at this story:

### **The Gift**

“Gotta go,” said Sam quietly. He handed me a small wad of newspaper and closed my hand around it. “Don’t lose this. I’ll want it back.” I waved good-bye and watched the plane take off. I wondered when I would see my cousin next—maybe next summer or during spring break.

I carefully opened the crumpled newspaper and stared at the contents inside. I couldn’t believe it. It was the rusty key, the one we had found near the lighthouse. Sam thought it had probably once belonged to a pirate. Maybe he was right. He wore it on a string around his neck all summer while we explored the cape. And now, for a brief time, it was mine.

Now look at this story:

### **The Key**

“Gotta go,” I said, looking at the floor. I dug deep into my pocket and pulled out the key that I had wrapped in newspaper the night before. I put it in Kira’s hand. “Don’t lose this,” I told her. “I’ll want it back.” She stared at the wad of newspaper, somewhat puzzled. I wanted to tell her what was inside, but I decided to let her find out on her own.

We waved good-bye, and I boarded the plane. I took my seat and thought about the day we had found the old key near the lighthouse. We had spent the rest of the summer at the cape, looking for pirate treasure. I had known we probably wouldn’t find any, but I hadn’t cared. We had had fun searching for it anyway. Kira wasn’t just my cousin—she was my best friend.

How are these two stories alike?

They both have the same characters, setting, and plot. Both stories are centered around a key, which symbolizes Kira and Sam’s friendship. Both stories contain a reference to the past that lets the reader understand the importance of the key.

How are these stories different?

Each story is told from a different character’s point of view. In the first story, the reader learns what Kira is thinking when Sam gives her the key. In the second story, the reader learns what Sam is thinking. Each story focuses on a different character’s thoughts and feelings.



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## Representing Information in Different Ways

One way to keep track of the information you read is to take notes. Another way is to use graphic organizers such as outlines, sequence charts, and cluster diagrams. Seeing information in a graphic organizer can help you answer questions about what you read.

- An **outline** is an organized list of main ideas and important details. You can use an outline to show the relationship between ideas in informational text.

Outlines usually follow the form shown below.

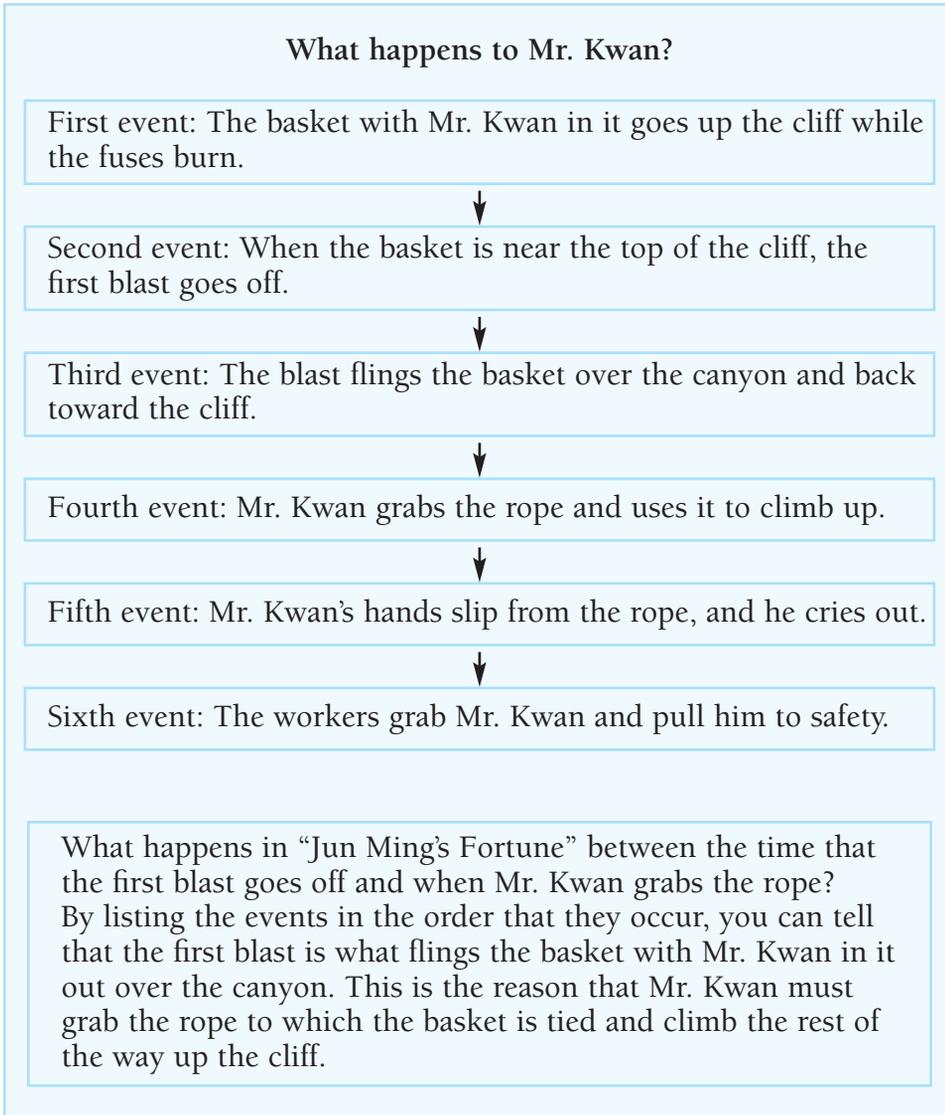
### Camping

- I. Places to go
  - A. National park
  - B. State park
  - C. Private land
    1. Uncle Benny's farm
    2. Will McDonald's Wildlife Ranch
- II. Things to pack
  - A. Food
  - B. \_\_\_\_\_
  - C. Shelter
    1. Four-person tent
    2. Plastic rain tarp

What information could you add to II.B above?  
Think about other items you would need to pack. Some possible answers might be water, maps, or games to play.

- A **sequence chart** is a type of graphic organizer that can help you keep track of the order in which events occur. To make a sequence chart, organize story events in the order they take place.

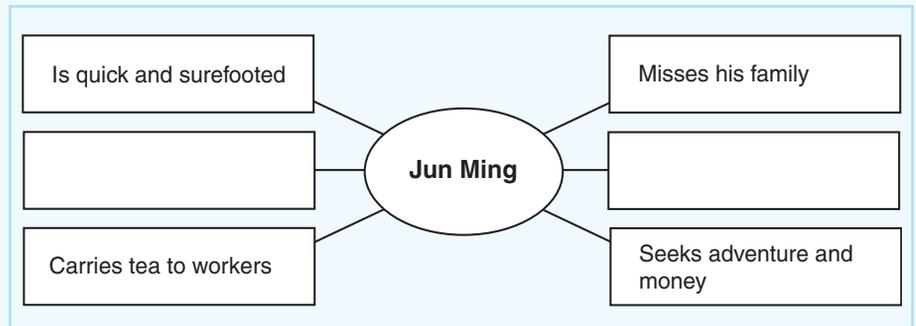
Look at the following sequence chart concerning “Jun Ming’s Fortune”:



By using a sequence chart, you can better understand and appreciate what you have read.

- A **cluster diagram** is another type of graphic organizer that can help you keep track of information. For example, you can list the traits of a main character in a story. A cluster diagram can also help you keep track of ideas or possible solutions to a problem that a character faces.

Here's a cluster diagram you might make to describe the character of Jun Ming.



What information could you add to the blank boxes in the cluster diagram?  
 “Admires his fellow workers” and “works long, hard hours” might be some good choices.

## Purposes of Text

As you read, ask yourself, “Why did the author write this?” Authors write stories and articles for different reasons, or purposes. Some of these reasons include:

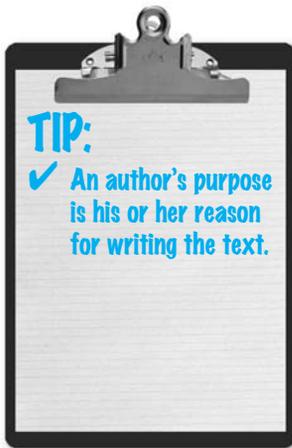
**To inform**—Some types of writing are created to inform readers about topics or events. You read them to find out factual information. Newspapers, encyclopedias, and textbooks are all written to inform.

**To persuade**—If a writer wants to make you feel a certain way about something, he or she is trying to influence or persuade you. The writer uses powerful words to make the reader feel a certain way.

**To explain**—Some pieces of writing are created to give the reader specific instructions or directions.

**To entertain**—Many stories and books are written to entertain readers by telling a good story.

Of course, some writing has more than one purpose. A story about an encounter with a coyote might entertain you and teach you about coyotes at the same time. An advertisement for hand weights might include suggestions for exercises to do with the weights.



Why do you think the author of “Jun Ming’s Fortune” wrote the story?

To entertain and inform the reader.

How do you know?

In “Jun Ming’s Fortune,” the author presents details in such a way as to build suspense in the story—a clue that one purpose of the story is to entertain. In addition, the author provides a factual introduction, a sign that the author is also writing to inform.

## How an Author’s Perspective Affects a Text

An author’s **perspective**, or point of view, is the way the author looks at the world. This perspective is a combination of ideas, beliefs, attitudes, and feelings.

Understanding an author’s point of view is sometimes easier in a nonfiction selection. The author may state his or her opinion directly, as in “I have always loved the sound of a distant train whistle” or “Watching television is the fastest way to turn one’s brain to oatmeal.”

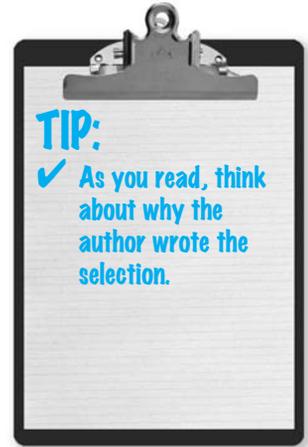
Authors of fictional, or made-up, stories don’t usually state their opinions directly in their works. Still, you can often figure out an author’s point of view by looking closely at story elements such as plot, character, and theme.

What is the perspective of the author of “Jun Ming’s Fortune” toward immigrant workers?

The author seems to sympathize with the workers because of their harsh conditions.

What parts of the story tell you this?

The story introduction and the admiring tone in the descriptions of the men point to the author’s sympathetic point of view.



## Objective 4: The student will apply critical-thinking skills to analyze culturally diverse written texts.

### What are critical-thinking skills, and how do they help students analyze texts?

Critical-thinking skills help careful readers use the information they are reading in order to develop an understanding that goes beyond the lines of texts. Careful readers understand that reading requires them to make connections between what they have read and what they already know. Reading in this way is an important tool for thinking and learning in daily life.

Thinking critically about a text includes being able to do the following:

- Understand when deeper meanings are suggested rather than directly stated in a selection
- Form conclusions based on the information within a selection
- Make reasonable predictions about what might happen next
- Support conclusions, generalizations, and interpretations with ideas and sentences from the selection
- Distinguish between facts and opinions, especially in selections such as newspaper articles and advertisements, whose purpose is to persuade the reader about a specific topic
- Make connections between the themes and issues presented in texts
- Recognize how an author chooses to organize information
- Assess the ways that style, tone, and mood affect a text

## Inferences

Authors don't always directly state every idea in a story or article. When you recognize these unstated ideas, you are making an **inference**. As you read, you make inferences by drawing a conclusion, forming a generalization, or making a prediction.

**Conclusions**—One type of inference is a conclusion. When you draw a conclusion as you read, you ask questions such as:

What is the author suggesting in this selection?

What does my own experience tell me about this?

What “educated guess” makes sense based on what I’m reading?

Drawing conclusions helps you better understand characters and situations in a story.



Read the sentence below from “Jun Ming’s Fortune.”

“He and the other workers also paid a Chinese cook to import pressed duck, dried squid, and the other things needed to prepare proper meals.”



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What conclusion can you draw from this information?

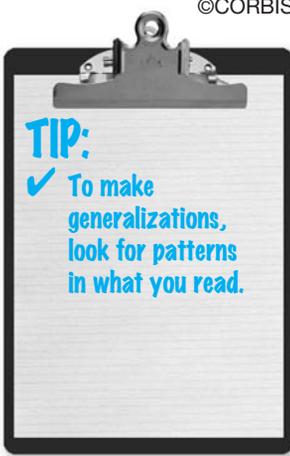
The Chinese workers do not want to eat typical American food.

How do you know?

The workers go to the expense of paying to have their favorite foods brought to the site.



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**Generalizations**—A generalization is a judgment. Drawing conclusions and making generalizations depend on putting together what you know and what you have read.

Suppose you read a magazine article that tells about new soccer leagues that are being formed in many cities across the United States. Based on this information, you might make this generalization:

Soccer is becoming a popular sport in the United States.

For a generalization to be valid, or truthful, it must be based on evidence. Valid generalizations are not guesses. Valid generalizations often use words such as *many*, *often*, and *some*:

Snow falls in many northern states in winter.

Generalizations that aren't valid make statements that are too broad. They may use words such as *all*, *always*, *every*, or *never*:

Every student has read *Charlotte's Web*.

Making generalizations will help you connect information that you read with your own experiences.

## Try It

Reread paragraph 2 of "Jun Ming's Fortune" on page 10. Pay close attention to the details.

1. What generalization can you make about the lives of Chinese immigrant railroad workers based on the information given?

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2. What evidence supports this generalization?

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1. Chinese immigrants working on the railroad lived and worked in difficult conditions.

2. Jun Ming carries boiled tea to workers 12 hours a day. The workers pay to sleep in crowded tents. They also chip rock or set dynamite for 12 hours a day. Their work is very dangerous, and their pay is low.

**Predictions**—When you make a prediction about a story, you make a guess about what might happen. You use information in the story and your own experience to make the prediction.

To make a prediction, notice the following as you read:

- Details about character, plot, and setting
- What a character says and does
- Foreshadowing, or hints about what might happen in the future

In paragraph 6 of “Jun Ming’s Fortune,” what prediction does Jun Ming make?

He thinks Mr. Kwan will crash to his death.

On what does Jun Ming base his prediction?

He observes the apparent hopelessness of Mr. Kwan’s situation.

Read the story below. What predictions can you make?

### Will the Show Go On?

Tran and his parents are on their way to his first piano recital. Tran tries to ignore the butterflies in his stomach. In his mind he rehearses his piano piece one more time. Then Tran glances at his watch. He guesses that they will arrive at the auditorium with a few minutes to spare. Suddenly Tran notices that traffic has stopped ahead. Tran’s father slows the car to a stop. There are cars as far as the eye can see. And not one of them is moving.



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What is your prediction?

Tran will be late to his recital.

What clues helped you make this prediction?

Traffic is not moving; there are many cars ahead.

#### TIP:

✓ When you read, try to guess what will happen by asking “What do I think will happen next?” and “Why do I think that will happen next?”

#### TIP:

✓ Predictions can be changed as you read new details.

## Supporting Your Interpretation with Text Evidence

A key ingredient in making an inference is the information an author gives. This can be ideas, details, facts, and examples. The author's thoughts and ideas combined with prior knowledge allow a reader to provide powerful **support**, or evidence, for a particular interpretation of a text.

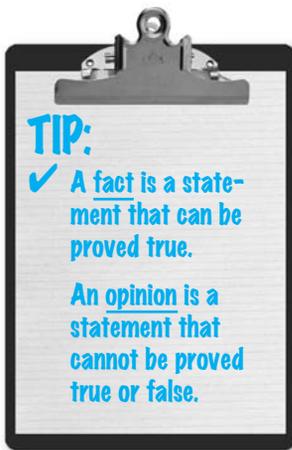
When interpreting a text, you may use the actual words an author has written to support your interpretation. Other times you will paraphrase, or restate in your own words, what the author has written. When you paraphrase, you often think again about how your own knowledge and experiences are connected to what you have just read.

## Fact and Opinion

A **fact** is a statement that can be proved true.

An **opinion** is a statement that cannot be proved true or false. An opinion tells what someone thinks, feels, or believes.

Certain words help you recognize an opinion. Some of these are *I think* and *I believe*. Other clues to opinions are words such as *best*, *should*, *worst*, and *wonderful*.



Read the sentences below. Which sentence states a fact? Which states an opinion?

- Sentence 1: Rob Reiner directed the movie *The Princess Bride*.
- Sentence 2: *The Princess Bride* was the best movie made in the 1980s.

Sentence 1 is a fact. You can prove it by using a reference source about motion pictures.

Sentence 2 is an opinion. It tells what a person believes.

## Try It

Read the excerpt of a report.

The men who built the Transcontinental Railroad were the most courageous men in history. The brave men who were recruited to build the railroad were promised money and adventure in their new life in America. Construction on the railroad began in 1862.

1. Which underlined sentence is a fact?

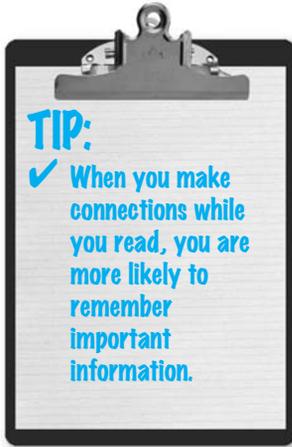
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2. Which underlined sentence is an opinion?

---

1. The second underlined sentence is a fact that can be proved by using a reference source such as an encyclopedia.

2. The first underlined sentence is an opinion. Many of the workers might be described as being courageous, but there is no way to prove that they were “the most courageous men in history.” This is an opinion of the student writing the report.

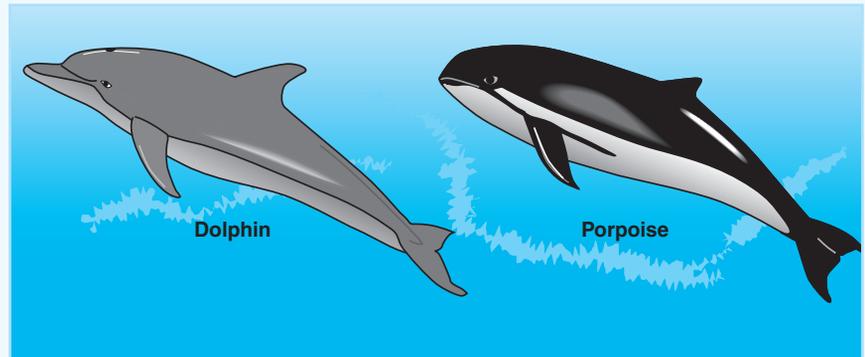


## Connecting and Comparing

An important way to make sense of what you read is to think about the ideas in a story or article. This is especially helpful when you read two selections based on the same topic or theme. Think about the connection between the paired selections by asking these questions as you read.

What can I learn when I connect the main ideas?

How are the ideas alike? How are they different?



Read the following selections about dolphins and porpoises. Think about how you can compare the information contained in each selection.

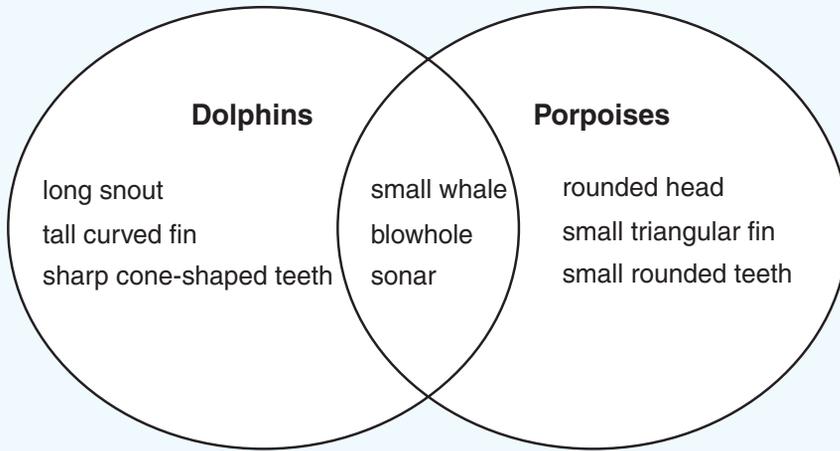
### Dolphins

Dolphins are considered part of the whale family. They use sonar to see underwater, and a blowhole allows them to breathe. These mammals have a long snout, sharp cone-shaped teeth, and a tall curved fin. Dolphins like to come close to a boat in the ocean to bowride, or surf the wave that the boat makes as it travels through the water.

### Porpoises

Did you know that porpoises are part of the whale family, too? They have small rounded teeth, a small triangular-shaped fin, and a rounded head in which there is a blowhole for breathing. They use sonar to see fish and other things underwater. In the water porpoises make wheel-like rolls, surfacing four times a minute to breathe. When swimming fast, they create a V-shaped splash that is known as a rooster tail.

You might compare the ideas in the selections by using a graphic organizer like the Venn diagram below.



## Analyzing the Ways Authors Present Ideas

You already know that authors organize information in their stories in specific ways. They arrange and link ideas in a pattern. If you recognize and understand the pattern, you will have a better understanding of the information the author is trying to present.

Here are some of the patterns authors use to arrange and link ideas:

**Cause and effect:** The author focuses on something that has happened (effect) and tells you why it has happened (cause).

**Comparison:** The author focuses on how two or more things are alike or different.

**Specific-to-general reasoning:** The author begins with facts and examples and leads you to a general conclusion based on the facts and examples.

**Generalization-to-conclusion reasoning:** The author begins with a general statement and provides facts and examples that support the general statement.

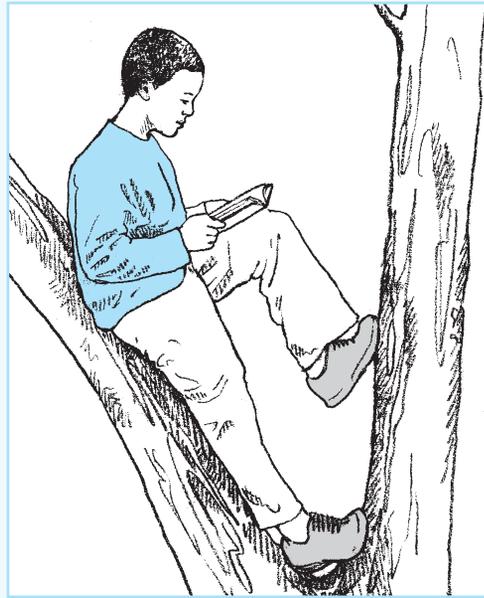
**Chronological order:** The author tells events in the order in which they occur in time.



Read the following story. Which organizational pattern has the author used?

### The Two Brothers

Both boys had inherited their mother's love of nature and their father's sense of humor. But that's where the similarities ended. Wayne was restless and outgoing. He was always on the move, usually with a flock of friends. Keenen, on the other hand, was quiet and solitary. He spent long afternoons hiking in the woods by himself or hiding in a tree, reading a book.



How has the author organized the story?

The author has organized the story through comparison.

What clues tell you this?

The descriptions of how the brothers are alike and how they are different show a pattern of comparison.

Paying attention to how an author organizes a selection can help you understand the information. Often authors will use more than one organizational pattern in their writing.

## Style, Tone, and Mood

Suppose you read a story about someone who survives a bad storm. Then you read a story about the same subject by a different author. What sets these stories apart? The main difference might be that the authors don't use language in the same way. Another difference might be that one author tells the story in a humorous way, while the other tells the story in a serious way. The overall feeling of each story might be different, too.

No two authors write in the same way. The writing of different authors is likely to differ in style, tone, and mood.

**Style** is the way an author uses words, phrases, and sentences. Two authors' styles can be as different as their speaking voices or signatures.

**Tone** is an author's attitude toward the subject he or she is writing about. The tone of a story can be lighthearted, curious, angry, and so on. An author's perspective determines the language he or she uses. Language sets the tone for writing.

**Mood** is the overall feeling of a story. The mood of a story can be peaceful, mysterious, suspenseful, and so on. An author's choice of words and details creates mood.



Return to “Jun Ming’s Fortune” and reread the last two paragraphs on page 12. What mood does the author create with these paragraphs?

The author creates a feeling of inspiration and pride.

How do you know?

Jun Ming admires the courage and honor shown by the workers and wants to be like them. He believes that there is honor in doing a job well, whatever the job may be.

Great work! You’ve finished Step 2 in your “Steps to Success.” Be sure to place a check mark in your chart on page 6.



# GUIDED PRACTICE

- “Jun Ming’s Fortune” Again
- “Mariachi Nuevo Santander”

The purpose of pages 57–75 is to provide you with reading selections so that you can apply the skills and strategies you learned in the previous section. Read each selection carefully, look at the questions in the margins, and try to answer them as you read.

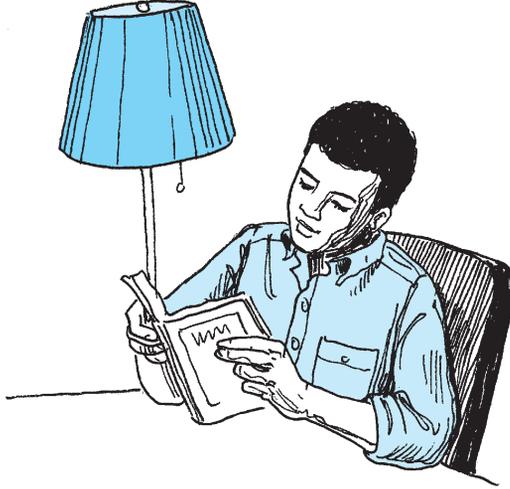
Although the selections on the actual TAKS test do not include questions in the margins, they are provided here as examples of the types of questions you should ask yourself as you read.

Writing the answers to the questions in the margins of both stories will help guide your thinking and will help you practice a very important life skill.



## “Jun Ming’s Fortune” Again

Now you will read “Jun Ming’s Fortune” for a second time. This time you will see questions written next to the story. Although the selections on the actual TAKS test do not include questions in the margins, questions are included here to help guide your thinking as you read. They are examples of the types of questions you should ask yourself when you are reading a narrative. Answer the questions as you read, and they will help you understand the story better.



“Jun Ming’s Fortune” is a **narrative**. It is something you might read for fun, but you might also read it to learn something new. When you read a narrative, look for these things:

- **Characters**, such as people or animals
- A **place** where the story happens
- A **time** when the story happens
- A **conflict** or problem that a character has
- A **resolution** to the problem

## Jun Ming's Fortune

*In 1862 construction began to connect existing tracks and create a railroad across the United States, linking the East to the West. The work was hard, and the 20,000 men who completed the work were treated harshly. Most of the workers were immigrants. This story describes the experiences of one of the many young men who came from China to work on the railroad. It takes place in Cape Horn, a steep mountainous area of northern California.*

(Question 1)

**Why did Jun Ming come to the United States?**

1 Jun Ming scrambled down the steep face of Cape Horn, causing loose rocks to bounce and tumble into the canyon below. As day turned into evening, he thought of the way the lantern in his family's farmhouse glowed comfortingly at this time of day. He longed for the beautiful homeland of China he had left so eagerly. Men had come to rural areas like his to recruit strong, young Chinese to help build a great railroad. Jun Ming had been thrilled by their promises of money and adventure in the United States. He had left home with plans to send his family a great fortune.

(Question 2)

**What does the word recruit mean?**

2 Since then, Jun Ming had learned that life in the United States was not all that he had dreamed. First of all, 25 dollars a month would not soon add up to a fortune. He had to pay his bosses for a spot to sleep in a crowded tent. He and the other workers also paid a Chinese cook to import pressed duck, dried squid, and the other things needed to prepare proper meals. And his work was not glamorous—just hard. Jun Ming was too young to chip rock or set dynamite, so it was his job to carry boiled tea to the workers. This he did for 12 hours a day. On his first day, Jun Ming had felt slow and awkward moving over the steep rock. But he had soon learned to slide with the rocks for short distances and to slow himself by locking the side of one foot into a small niche or foothold. He took pride in his skill and in doing his job. Even at the end of a long workday, Jun Ming was quick and surefooted.

(Question 3)

**What does the United States symbolize for Jun Ming?**

3 “Thank you, Jun Ming,” said Mr. Lai as the boy filled his cup with warm tea. “I was hoping I could have some tea before I set the last charge of the day.”

(Question 4)

**What information suggests that the men who hired the workers lied?**

(Question 5)

**What does the word glamorous mean?**

(Question 6)

**What words would you use to describe Jun Ming?**

*Continued*



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- 4 Jun Ming stepped back across the rock and out of the way. When the dynamite blasts were being set, each worker had to look out for himself. Flying rock could easily send a man tumbling to his death in the canyon below.
- 5 Mr. Lai was working from a small ledge that had been chipped into the mountainside. Mr. Kwan, the other blaster, was in a large wicker basket dangling from a rope. Each man worked steadily with a hand drill to make holes in the rock where sticks of dynamite could be placed. Each explosion would rip away another bit of the steep mountainside. Bit by bit, the blasters were creating a flat ledge where railroad tracks could be laid. Jun Ming watched as Mr. Kwan gave Mr. Lai the signal that he was ready to set the blast. Mr. Lai signaled back, and the two men lit the fuses. Mr. Lai scrambled quickly across the rock. Mr. Kwan yanked on the rope, and workers at the top of the mountain pulled him up as fast as they could.
- 6 As the basket bounced and swayed its way up the face of the cliff, the fuses burned shorter and shorter. Just as the basket neared the top, the first blast rocked the mountain. The force flung the basket out over the canyon. As it hurtled back toward the cliff, Jun Ming stared in horror. Mr. Kwan was certain to crash to his death. No one could help him. But Mr. Kwan didn't look for help. Racing to beat the blast he had set with his own hands, Mr. Kwan leaped up and grabbed the rope. As sure and

(Question 7)  
Why does Mr. Kwan yank on the rope?

(Question 8)  
What feeling is the author trying to create by using the word hurtled?

*Continued*

quick as a cat, he lifted himself out of the basket and scrambled up the rope. Just as the basket smashed against the rock and shattered, he reached the top of the rope. Mr. Kwan felt his hands begin to slip. He cried out. Desperately, he reached for the outstretched hands of his friends. One man got a firm hold on Mr. Kwan’s hand, and the others quickly grabbed his arm. They yanked him to safety and then dropped to the ground to brace for the next blast. Mr. Kwan’s clear thinking and quickness had saved his life.

7 Weary and relieved, the workers picked up their tools and headed down the mountain. Jun Ming was proud to walk with them. These were men of quiet honor who did their job well. Jun Ming wanted to be like them. He knew that no other workers were as brave or as skillful at blasting away rock to make way for the rails. This railroad couldn’t be built without them. For that reason alone, Jun Ming knew that the Chinese men deserved his respect.

8 Jun Ming picked up his pace as he thought hungrily of the fine dinner that was waiting for them at the camp. He felt exhausted, but tonight Jun Ming decided he would write a letter home—a letter about the courage of Mr. Kwan and Mr. Lai.

(Question 9)  
Why does Jun Ming respect the workers?



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## Practice with Reading Skills

Question 1: Why did Jun Ming come to the United States?

Let's go back to the first paragraph of the story on page 58. Sentences 3, 4, and 5 of this paragraph help you answer the question. Sentence 3 tells you that Jun Ming left China eagerly. The next sentence explains that men had come to Jun Ming's area to persuade young men to help build a railroad in the United States. Sentence 5 says "Jun Ming had been thrilled by their promises of money and adventure in the United States." This sentence is important because it tells you the specific reasons Jun Ming came to this country—for money and adventure. This information is an important supporting detail in the story.

Turn to page 21 for more help with finding supporting details.



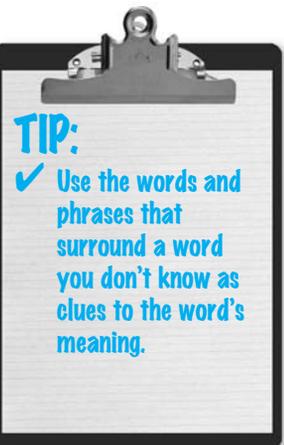
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Question 2: What does the word recruit mean?

Let's go back to paragraph 1 of the story on page 58 and find the word *recruit*.

When you read "Jun Ming's Fortune," you might not have known what the word *recruit* means. But paragraph 1 helps you figure it out. Look at the words around *recruit*. In that same sentence the story says "strong young Chinese to help build a great railroad." These words provide a clue to the meaning of *recruit*. They suggest that someone is asking for help with a job. The words help you know that *recruit* means "to get the services of."

Turn to page 14 for more help with context clues and vocabulary words.



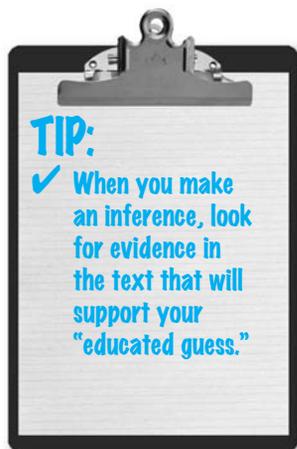
Question 3: What does the United States symbolize for Jun Ming?

Let’s look at paragraph 1 on page 58. Find the sentence that mentions the United States in this paragraph. In the next-to-last sentence, the author writes, “Jun Ming had been thrilled by their promises of money and adventure in the United States.”

From this sentence, you can tell that the United States symbolizes wealth and excitement to Jun Ming.

Turn to page 34 for more help with recognizing symbolism.

Question 4: What information in the story suggests that the men who hired the workers lied?



Suppose you made this statement: “The men who hired the workers lied about what the workers could expect in the United States.” What evidence in the text supports your statement?

First review the information in paragraph 1 on page 58 that tells about the promises the men made to the workers in China. The next-to-last sentence tells about “promises of money and adventure.”

Now look at the first few sentences in paragraph 2 for evidence that the promises had not come true. The second sentence says that Jun Ming is not being paid very much. The next two sentences tell you that the workers have to pay for a place to sleep and for a cook. You learn from the following sentence that the men work very hard—the job is hardly the adventure they had been promised.

All this information suggests that the men who hired the workers lied to them about what they could expect in the United States. You could quote any one—or all—of these sentences as evidence. Or you could paraphrase the ideas in a sentence such as this: Even though the workers were promised money and adventure, they were paid little and worked long, hard hours.

Turn to page 48 for more help with using text to support responses.

Question 5: What does the word glamorous mean?

To figure out the meaning of *glamorous*, look for a word that you recognize. The word *glamor* (or *glamour*) means “attractiveness.” The suffix *-ous* means “full of.” You can put together the meanings of the word and suffix to figure out that *glamorous* means “full of attractiveness.”

Turn to page 18 for more help with prefixes and suffixes.

Question 6: What words would you use to describe Jun Ming?



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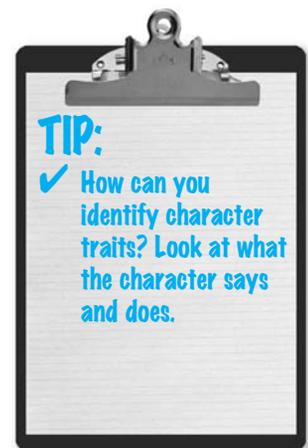
Let’s look at paragraph 2 on page 58. Information in the paragraph tells you that Jun Ming works 12 hours a day. What trait does this reveal? One word you could use to describe Jun Ming is *hardworking*.

Other information in the paragraph tells you that Jun Ming takes “pride in his skill and in doing his job” and that he is “quick and surefooted” even at the end of a long workday. What words sum up these traits?

Based on this information, you could say that Jun Ming is *proud* and *skillful*.

Thinking about what a character says and does as you read will tell you a lot about that character. Thinking about how you would feel if you were that character may also help you identify character traits.

Turn to page 26 for more help with analyzing characters.



Question 7: Why does Mr. Kwan yank on the rope?



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In paragraph 5 on page 59, Mr. Kwan is hanging in a basket, placing dynamite in the side of the mountain. He lights the dynamite fuse and then yanks the rope. So far the information in the paragraph hasn't told you why he yanks the rope. But after Mr. Kwan yanks the rope, workers pull him up as fast as they can. What the workers do tells you why Mr. Kwan yanks on the rope. Mr. Kwan yanks on the rope as a signal for the workers to pull him up the mountain before the dynamite explodes.

Turn to page 45 for more help with inferences.

Question 8: What feeling is the author trying to create by using the word hurtled?

Look at the word *hurtled* in paragraph 6 on page 59. If you look up *hurtled* in a dictionary, you will see that its denotation, or dictionary meaning, is “moved rapidly.” Now look at the words and phrases near *hurtled* in the story: the basket is “flung” out over the canyon and back toward the cliff as Jun Ming stares “in horror,” sure that Mr. Kwan will “crash” to his death. All these words help you see that *hurtled* has a connotation of danger.

Turn to page 19 for more help with denotative and connotative meanings of words.

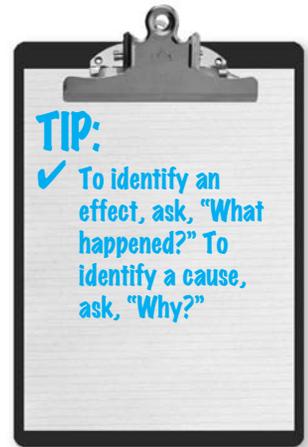
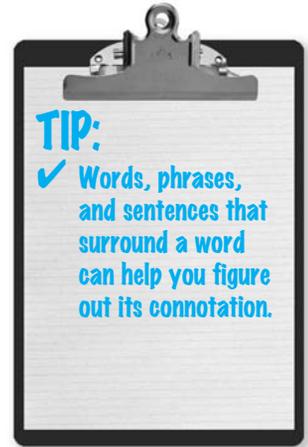
Question 9: Why does Jun Ming respect the workers?

Notice that the answer to this question isn’t something that is directly stated in the story. You have to use information in the story to understand why Jun Ming feels the way he does about the workers. The question itself tells us that Jun Ming respects the workers, but we have to determine why.

The information in paragraph 7 on page 60 tells you that the workers are “men of quiet honor” who do their jobs well. They are brave and skillful. Jun Ming understands that the “railroad couldn’t be built without them.” These clues tell you why Jun Ming respects the workers.

Turn to page 36 for more help with cause-and-effect structure.

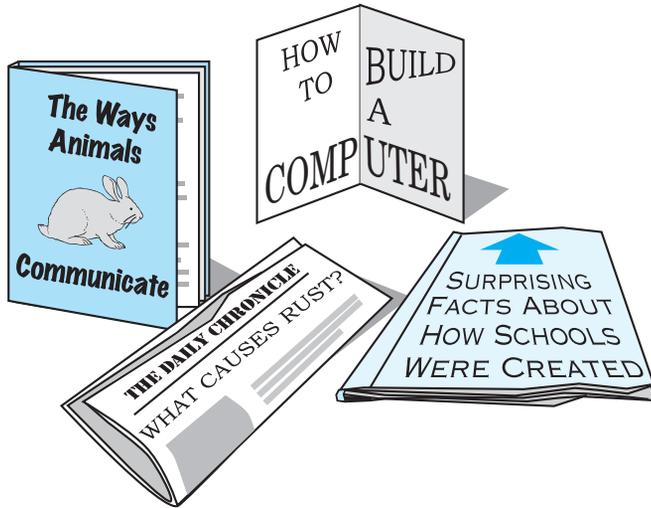
Excellent! You’ve finished Step 3 in your “Steps to Success.” Be sure to place a check mark in your chart on page 6.





# “Mariachi Nuevo Santander”

Next you will read “Mariachi Nuevo Santander.” This is an **informational** article. An informational article contains facts. It can describe someone or explain something. It might also tell how to do something.



When you read an informational article, look for these things:

- Facts about the real world
- Information about . . .
  - what something is like
  - how to do something
  - what happened long ago
  - an interesting person, place, or thing
- Examples to help readers understand the topic
- New words to learn

Informational reading will help you learn more about the world around you. You may want to read an informational article more slowly than a narrative. An informational article can give you a lot to think about.

Here are some helpful hints for when you read an informational article:

- Take notes while you read.
- Try to connect the information with what you already know.
- When you have finished the article, try to retell the main ideas in your own words.

Just as with the story “Jun Ming’s Fortune,” you will see questions written next to the article. Although the selections on the actual TAKS test do not include questions in the margins, they are provided here as examples of the types of questions you should ask yourself as you read an informational article. They will help guide your thinking and help you understand the information in the article better.

## Mariachi Nuevo Santander

How can you tell that the author admires the mariachi program at Roma High School?

1 Roma, Texas, may be a small city on the border with Mexico, but this quiet town is making a lot of noise. The students at Roma High School have formed the band Mariachi Nuevo Santander. Their music has won contests, recognition, and lots of attention.

2 Mariachi music developed from the rich, complex rhythms of Mexican folk music, and many see it as representative of Mexican culture. The word *mariachi* can refer to an individual or to a group of musicians. Mariachi music is sung in Spanish to the accompaniment of such instruments as the violin, guitar, harp, and trumpet. A huge bass guitar, called a *guitarrón*, is unique to the mariachi tradition.

What does unmistakable mean in this paragraph?

3 In addition to having an unmistakable sound, mariachi bands stand out because of their dramatic clothes. Mariachi costumes are different for every group, but they all have certain things in common. The men usually wear a white shirt, a jacket, a big sombrero (hat) with embroidery, and tailored pants with leg seams lined with silver studs. The women can be more versatile in their clothing choices, wearing either long, flowing skirts or the traditional men's costumes.

4 Inspired by their heritage, students at Roma High School came up with the idea to start their own mariachi band, and in 1993 students, parents, teachers, and others in the community cooperated to create a temporary mariachi program. After much practice the student musicians held their first performance. The superintendent of Roma schools was so impressed that he made the mariachi program a permanent part of the school curriculum, offering students an alternative to the regular band and choir programs.

Continued



Photo courtesy of Mariachi Roma, Roma, Texas.

Why did the school decide to hire Yamil Yunes?

- 5 The school hired Yamil Yunes, a veteran mariachi performer, to lead the new program. Since there were no textbooks available for mariachi teachers, music director Yunes had to create his own. “This is a full-time job,” says Yunes, who now has two assistants and a secretary to help him run the mariachi department.

Why is the author quoting Yunes?

- 6 When asked how he gets students interested in mariachi music, Yunes says, “I don’t have to. Mariachi has become so popular that the whole school auditions. Auditions are three days long.”

How do you know that not every student becomes a member of the mariachi band?

- 7 Both boys and girls try out for Mariachi Nuevo Santander, but the mariachi tradition has not always welcomed female members. According to Yunes, mariachi players in Mexico were mostly men because they performed in places women did not usually go. “But here in the United States,” Yunes adds, “we need the female voice.” In addition to singing, female students can also play violin, guitar, or trumpet. Yunes hopes to build a unique all-female mariachi band at Roma High School.

What does the word source mean in this paragraph?

- 8 Mariachi music is extremely demanding, but once mastered, it offers musicians an exciting way of life. To Yunes, mariachi music is a beautiful art form. It brings confidence, cultural pride, new experiences, and national recognition. For some students, their experience could even provide a source of future income.

- 9 Mariachi Nuevo Santander has brought about many positive changes in its student musicians. Yunes proudly tells the story of one student who was able to overcome a speech problem. “He now sings in the front row to all the girls in the audience,” Yunes says.

*Continued*

What information helps you know that the mariachi band gives excellent performances?

10 When students tour the country to perform, they are able to see how important mariachi music is to their heritage and culture. Not only do they enjoy the rare chance to travel, but they also find an abundance of support and enthusiasm outside Roma.

11 The student mariachi band has won many awards. For the last three years, it has claimed first place at San Antonio’s annual mariachi competition, which involves more than 100 public school mariachi bands from across the United States. In 1998 the members of Mariachi Nuevo Santander were named national champions at a contest in Albuquerque, New Mexico. Back home the city of Roma has honored the musicians by naming one week in July “Mariachi Week.”

How does the mariachi program benefit students?

12 The Roma mariachi program has also given students a lasting love of music. Before the program was started, only five percent of the students in the Roma High School band and choir became music majors in college. In contrast, about 25 percent of mariachi graduates now become music majors.

13 In addition to finding pride and recognition, some student mariachis have found a way to earn money for college. Each senior in the mariachi program receives a \$1,000 scholarship, and many go on to play in college mariachi bands. Some of these resourceful high school and college students earn money for college by forming private mariachi bands outside school.

14 Why has this mariachi band been so successful? Yunes gives the credit to his students. Their energy and determination have pushed them to excel. The music director also cites the school’s and community’s willingness to treat mariachi music as a way of life instead of just an extracurricular activity.

How would you summarize this article?

15 “If looked at from an artistic point of view, mariachi will change the lives of the teachers and the students,” says Yunes. “Especially in the schools that don’t have a symphony, mariachi provides a musical culture.”

Why did the author write this article?

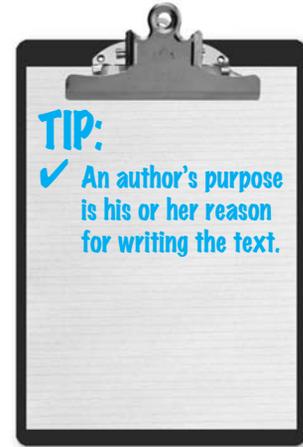
## Practice Questions

Here are some questions that are similar to the questions you thought about as you read “Mariachi Nuevo Santander.” Each question now has four answer choices. See whether one of the choices matches the answer you thought of as you were reading. If not, think about the four choices and choose the best one. Mark your answer in the book.

### Question 1

The author most likely wrote this article in order to —

- A share an exciting story about the adventures of a mariachi band
- B describe how mariachi programs in high schools should be designed
- C tell the history of the Roma High School mariachi band
- D persuade other high schools to start their own mariachi programs



Answer Key: page 89

### Question 2

How can the reader tell that the author admires what the mariachi program has been able to accomplish?

- A The author gives information about the history of mariachi music.
- B The author says that mariachi music is representative of Mexican culture.
- C The author describes in detail the costumes that the band members wear.
- D The author describes the many positive outcomes students enjoy as a result of being in the band.



Answer Key: page 89

### Question 3

The reader can conclude that the band Mariachi Nuevo Santander gives excellent performances because —

- A the band has gained the support of parents, teachers, and other community members
- B more students are becoming music majors when they go to college
- C the band has won contests and tours the country to perform
- D the people of Roma named one week in July “Mariachi Week”



Answer Key: page 89

**Question 4**

In paragraph 3, the word unmistakable refers to a sound that is —

- A easy to identify
- B original
- C exciting
- D painfully loud



Answer Key: page 89

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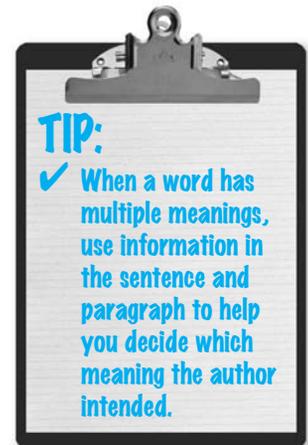
**Question 5**

Read the dictionary entry below for the word source.

source \ˈsɔrs\ *n* **1.** the cause of something’s beginning **2.** the place where a river begins **3.** a person who gives information **4.** a book or document

Which definition represents the meaning of source as it is used in paragraph 8?

- A Definition 1
- B Definition 2
- C Definition 3
- D Definition 4



Answer Key: page 90

**Question 6**

What information from the article suggests that not every student becomes a member of Mariachi Nuevo Santander?

- A Students must speak Spanish fluently.
- B Students have to audition.
- C Students must play the violin, guitar, or trumpet.
- D Students who are female cannot join the band.



Answer Key: page 90

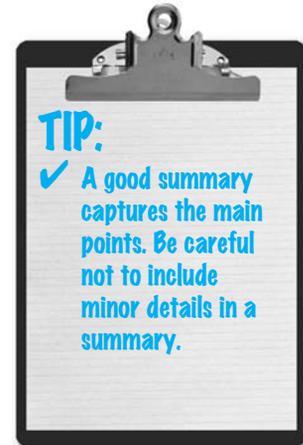
**Question 7**

Read this beginning to a summary of the article.

**The students at Roma High School in Texas have formed the Mariachi Nuevo Santander band. The band’s dress and music are representative of Mexican culture.**

Which of these best completes the summary?

- A Male band members wear a white shirt, a jacket, a big sombrero (hat) with embroidery, and tailored pants. Female members can wear either the traditional men’s costumes or a long, flowing skirt.
- B After the mariachi band’s first performance, the superintendent of Roma schools decided to make the mariachi program a permanent part of the school curriculum. Yamil Yunes, an experienced mariachi performer, runs the Roma mariachi program. Yunes says that mariachi is a beautiful art form.
- C Students have gained a lasting love of music by participating in the mariachi program. Many band members go on to play in college mariachi bands and earn money for college by playing their music. In the city of Roma, one week in July is “Mariachi Week.”
- D The male and female students who make up the band tour the country to perform, sharing their heritage and culture. By playing mariachi music, band members have won a variety of competitions, found pride and recognition, and earned money for college.

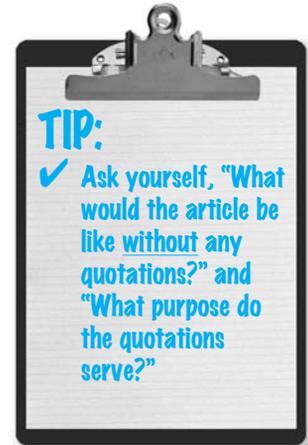


Answer Key: page 90

**Question 8**

The author includes quotations from Yamil Yunes in order to —

- A make the article more interesting to read
- B prove that the mariachi program really exists
- C show the community’s support for the mariachi program
- D emphasize that the music director is more important than the band

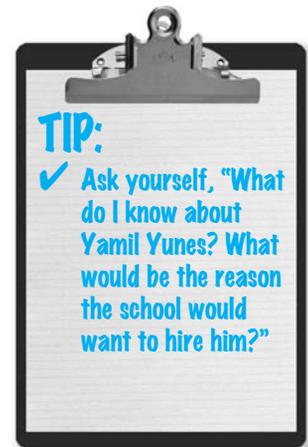


 **Answer Key: page 90**

**Question 9**

According to information in the article, why did the school decide to hire Yamil Yunes?

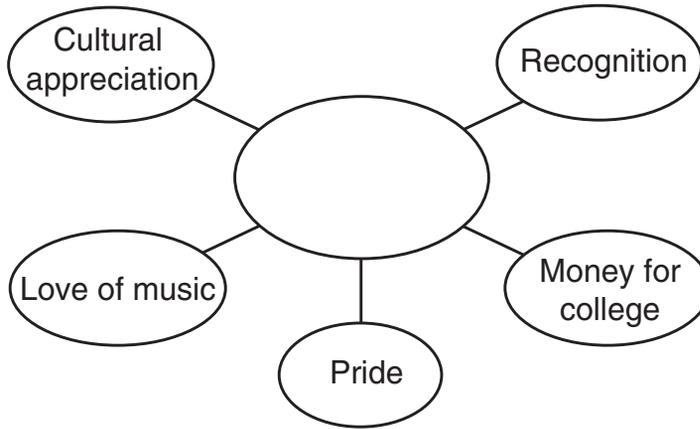
- A Yunes was part of the band when he was in high school.
- B Yunes was an experienced mariachi performer.
- C Yunes had taught at the high school before.
- D Yunes had thought of the idea to form a local mariachi group.



 **Answer Key: page 90**

**Question 10**

Look at the diagram of information about the Roma High School mariachi band.



Which information belongs in the empty oval?

- A Ways student mariachis have helped the community
- B What student mariachis have gained by being in the band
- C Competitions and awards student mariachis have won
- D Qualities students must have to become part of the mariachi group



Answer Key: page 90

You have finished Step 4 in your “Steps to Success.” Be sure to place a check mark in your chart on page 6.



# INDEPENDENT PRACTICE

- “A Dream Turns 70” and “Dear Sarah”

The purpose of pages 79–85 is to provide you with an opportunity to practice what you have learned by reading stories and answering questions similar to those that are on the TAKS test. The two selections, “A Dream Turns 70” and “Dear Sarah,” on pages 80–81 are paired selections and should be read together before you answer the questions that follow. Like the selections on the TAKS test, selections in this section do not have questions in the margins to guide your thinking. You may want to use “What a Careful Reader Does” on page 9 to help you remember what types of questions to ask yourself as you read.



## “A Dream Turns 70” and “Dear Sarah”

Now you will read two selections, “A Dream Turns 70,” and “Dear Sarah.” These are paired selections and should be read together before you answer the questions that follow.

The first selection, “A Dream Turns 70,” is an informational article written for a newspaper. Do you remember what an informational article is? It contains facts and can describe or explain something (a person, place, or event). It can also tell you how to do something. You might want to read this article slowly because it has a lot of information in it.

The second selection, “Dear Sarah,” is written in the form of a friendly letter. The letter is a narrative because it has characters, a setting, a problem, and a resolution to the problem. It is also informational because it contains facts.

As you read “A Dream Turns 70” and “Dear Sarah,” remember to use what you have learned so far about being a careful reader. Answer the questions *who?* *what?* *when?* *where?* *why?* and *how?* while you are reading. If you come across a word that is new to you, remember to use context clues and your experiences to figure out the meaning. Also think about how the two selections are alike and the ways they are different.

I just read something interesting. It was about how some doctors have to fly in planes to help people who live in remote areas of Australia.



# The Morning Star

Section E: Lifestyles

Sunday, May 17, 1998

## A Dream Turns 70

### Australia's Flying Doctors Still Flying High

- 1 SYDNEY, Australia—Early afternoon finds the base for Australia's Royal Flying Doctor Service a blur of activity. A 35-year-old man has been seriously injured. In less than 90 minutes, a medical team will be airborne, on its way to the victim 200 miles away. Flying to give emergency care to the victim is just another day at the office—or in this case, away from the office—for the men and women of the medical service, which today celebrates the 70th anniversary of its first flight.
- 2 That first flight, on May 17, 1928, was a dream come true for John Flynn, the medical service's founder. Flynn came to the Outback in 1911. At that time only two doctors served this remote area of Australia. Flynn set up hospitals throughout the region. His goal was to make medical care readily available to everyone living there. However, because of the Outback's vast size, many people were still not able to reach help quickly.
- 3 Flynn refused to give up. He continued to look for ways to improve medical care in

the Outback. A friend suggested using airplanes to fly doctors to people in need of emergency care. Flynn liked the idea and began asking for donations to start a flying medical service.

It took Flynn years to raise the money to make his dream a reality, but his efforts were finally successful. On May 15, 1928, the Aerial Medical Service was born. Just two days later it made its first flight. During its first year it made 50 flights, treated 225 patients, and saved at least four lives.

Much has changed since then. The Royal Flying Doctor Service, as it has been known since 1955, helps thousands of people every year. Its 40 planes, equipped much like hospital emergency rooms, make thousands of flights from bases across Australia.

Technology continues to affect life in the Outback. However, the medical service's vital role has not diminished. Doctors still fly to people in need of emergency care, and the service still flies patients to hospitals when necessary. After 70 years, people in the Outback still depend on the flying doctors.

4

5

6

August 1, 1928

Dear Sarah,

1           You'll never believe what happened to your nephew Billy. It all started last Saturday when he woke up with a fever and stomachache. He's at the age when kids always seem to get sick, so we weren't concerned at first. However, his fever wouldn't go down, and the stomach pains got worse. I knew then that it had to be serious. I thought he might have been bitten by a poisonous spider.

2           I wanted to take him to see a doctor, but the nearest one is more than 300 kilometers away. Then I remembered the Aerial Medical Service. I had heard about this new service last month while I was in town buying supplies. It uses airplanes to fly doctors to people in the Outback who need emergency care. The service has set up places called outstations. The outstations have two-way radios that are used to call the medical service for help.

3           The nearest outstation is an hour away. When I arrived, the manager contacted the service by radio and gave directions to our farm. A pilot and a doctor were soon on the way.

4           The doctor said that Billy had a condition called appendicitis. Billy needed emergency surgery. Within a few minutes he was in the plane on his way to a hospital. The plane was not big enough to accommodate his mother and me, so we had to drive. When we arrived the next morning, Billy was feeling much better. He is quite proud of his new scar and eager to fly again as soon as possible.

5           In the next few months, the medical service is planning to set up clinics that can be moved from place to place. Traveling doctors will use these mobile clinics to make regular visits to areas without doctors. Soon we won't have to wait for an emergency to see a doctor. I had often wondered what we would do if one of us got badly hurt or became seriously ill. Now I feel much safer. Maybe this expanded service will encourage more people to move to the Outback.

6           We will leave for home tomorrow if Billy can travel. His mother and I hope he can avoid any more airplane rides for now. I will mail you another letter when I am in town next month.

Your loving brother,  
Arnold

# Practice Questions

Answer these questions about the selections you just read, “A Dream Turns 70” and “Dear Sarah.” Mark your answers in the book. As you do, think about the skills you have learned already in reading “Jun Ming’s Fortune” and “Mariachi Nuevo Santander.”

Use “A Dream Turns 70” to answer questions 11–13.

### Question 11

What is the newspaper article mainly about?

- A The development of an emergency medical service in the Outback
- B The importance of modern technology to the Outback
- C The types of hospitals located throughout the Outback
- D The modern airplanes now used by the medical service

 Answer Key: page 91



### Question 12

Which sentence shows that John Flynn was a determined person?

- A *His goal was to make medical care readily available to everyone living there.*
- B *At that time only two doctors served this remote area of Australia.*
- C *It took Flynn years to raise the money to make his dream a reality, but his efforts were finally successful.*
- D *Doctors still fly to people in need of emergency care, and the service still flies patients to hospitals when necessary.*

 Answer Key: page 91



### Question 13

The tone of paragraph 1 is one of —

- A urgency
- B disbelief
- C anger
- D sorrow

 Answer Key: page 91

Use “Dear Sarah” to answer questions 14–16.

**Question 14**

In paragraph 4, the word accommodate means to —

- A satisfy
- B impress
- C hold
- D follow



Answer Key: page 91

**Question 15**

Why does Arnold feel safer after the experience he describes?

- A He thinks that his family might go home the next day.
- B He plans to visit a doctor when he next goes to town.
- C He thinks more people will move to the Outback.
- D He knows that the Aerial Medical Service can provide emergency help.



Answer Key: page 91

**Question 16**

The reader can conclude that stomach pain and fever —

- A are two of the symptoms of appendicitis
- B usually require an emergency operation
- C often occur on a plane trip
- D are symptoms of all common illnesses



Answer Key: page 92

Use “A Dream Turns 70” and “Dear Sarah” to answer questions 17–20.

**Question 17**

One similarity between the selections is that both discuss —

- A the number of planes used by the Aerial Medical Service
- B the difficulty of reaching medical care in the Outback
- C the Aerial Medical Service’s first flight
- D a boy’s medical condition that requires immediate attention



Answer Key: page 92

**Question 18**

Why is Billy fortunate that his illness did not happen a year earlier?

- A The family had not yet moved to the Outback.
- B The Aerial Medical Service did not yet exist.
- C Airplanes at that time could not fly into the Outback.
- D The Aerial Medical Service had never treated appendicitis.



Answer Key: page 92

**Question 19**

Which of these is an idea present in both Arnold’s letter and the newspaper article?

- A Donations were collected to start and maintain the medical service.
- B The Aerial Medical Service made the Outback a safer place to live.
- C The Aerial Medical Service encouraged more people to move to the Outback.
- D Technology continues to change the Outback, but people still depend on the medical service for help.



Answer Key: page 92

**Question 20**

Based on information in both selections, the reader can tell that Billy —

- A** needed to go back to the hospital for additional medical care
- B** wanted to become a pilot for the medical service someday
- C** was the Aerial Medical Service’s first patient
- D** was one of the 225 patients helped by the medical service during its first year



**Answer Key: page 92**

Congratulations! You’ve finished the last step in your “Steps to Success.” Be sure to place a check mark in your chart on page 6.



# ANSWER KEY

- “Mariachi Nuevo Santander”
- “A Dream Turns 70” and “Dear Sarah”

The reading answer key on pages 89–92 provides the answers and explanations for the practice questions that follow “Mariachi Nuevo Santander” and the paired selections “A Dream Turns 70” and “Dear Sarah.” Check your answers to see whether you got the questions right. Don’t worry if you miss some; the explanations included with each question will help you know how to answer the questions correctly.



## “Mariachi Nuevo Santander”

### Question 1 (page 71)

- A** Incorrect. The article does not describe adventures, although the story of the band’s history can be described as exciting.
- B** Incorrect. The article is not written as a how-to description for other mariachi programs, although schools wishing to develop their own programs can get useful information from the article.
- C** **Correct.** The author begins by talking about the history of mariachi music and then describes how the mariachi band at Roma High School got started and what the results of the program have been.
- D** Incorrect. The article does not use persuasive language. While some high schools might be inspired to start their own mariachi program after reading this article, the author’s purpose for writing is not persuasive.

If you missed this question, turn to page 42 to read more about an author’s purpose for writing.

### Question 2 (page 71)

- A** Incorrect. Paragraphs 2 and 3 do give information about the history of mariachi music, but these paragraphs say nothing about the mariachi program at Roma High School.
- B** Incorrect. Paragraph 2 does say this, but the statement does not prove that the author admires the mariachi program at Roma High School.
- C** Incorrect. Paragraph 3 does describe mariachi costumes, but this does not prove that the author admires the mariachi program.
- D** **Correct.** In paragraphs 8 through 15, the author tells of the program’s positive results, such as helping students develop confidence, allowing them to travel, and giving them a lasting love of music.

If you missed this question, turn to page 43 to read more about how an author’s perspective affects a text.

### Question 3 (page 71)

- A** Incorrect. Paragraph 14 does say that the community supports the band, but that does not necessarily mean the band gives good performances.
- B** Incorrect. Paragraph 12 does say that the band has produced music majors, but that does not necessarily mean the band gives good performances.
- C** **Correct.** The fact that Mariachi Nuevo Santander performs outside Roma and wins contests, as mentioned in paragraphs 10 and 11, leads you to conclude that the band gives very good performances.
- D** Incorrect. Paragraph 11 does mention that a week has been named “Mariachi Week,” but this doesn’t necessarily mean the band gives good performances.

If you missed this question, turn to page 45 to read more about drawing conclusions.

### Question 4 (page 72)

- A** **Correct.** If you look at the meanings of the prefix *un-*, the root word *mistake*, and the suffix *-able*, you can figure out that *unmistakable* means “not likely to be confused with something else.” Also, the words *stand out* in the same sentence help you figure out that an *unmistakable* sound is one that is “easy to identify.”
- B** Incorrect. This choice does not make sense if you look at the meanings of the word parts.
- C** Incorrect. This choice does not make sense if you look at the meanings of the word parts.
- D** Incorrect. Nothing in the article suggests that the music is “painfully loud.”

If you missed this question, turn to page 18 to read more about prefixes and suffixes.

**Question 5 (page 72)**

- A Correct.** The context clue “future income” in that sentence tells you that students who learn to play mariachi music could use that skill in the future to earn money. So *source* in this instance means “the cause of something’s beginning.”
- B Incorrect.** The article does not mention rivers.
- C Incorrect.** The article states that mariachi music, not a person, can provide a future source of income.
- D Incorrect.** Nothing in the sentence or paragraph suggests that a book or document can provide income.

If you missed this question, turn to page 17 to read more about multiple-meaning words.

**Question 6 (page 73)**

- A Incorrect.** Nothing in the article says that students must speak Spanish to join the band.
- B Correct.** Paragraphs 6 and 7 state that students have to audition, or try out, for the band. You can infer from this that some students do not pass the audition.
- C Incorrect.** These are just a few of the instruments that make up a mariachi band. So not every student would need to be able to play one of these instruments to become part of the program.
- D Incorrect.** This choice contradicts information in paragraph 7, which states that Yunes welcomes female mariachis in the band.

If you missed this question, turn to page 48 to read more about using text to support responses.

**Question 7 (page 73)**

- A Incorrect.** This choice leaves out important details, such as how being in the mariachi band benefits students.
- B Incorrect.** This choice leaves out key points from the article and includes facts that are less important.
- C Incorrect.** This choice focuses on the benefits of the mariachi band but leaves out important details, such as what the band does and who can be in it.
- D Correct.** When combined with the beginning of the summary, this choice covers all the key points of the article.

If you missed this question, turn to page 22 to read more about summarizing texts.

**Question 8 (page 74)**

- A Correct.** The quotations make the article more interesting by supporting the author’s main idea. Using quotations is the author’s way of saying “Don’t just take my word for it. Hear it from someone who has firsthand knowledge.”
- B Incorrect.** The use of quotations does not necessarily prove that something exists.
- C Incorrect.** The author has already established that the community supports the program.
- D Incorrect.** The article never suggests that the music director is more important than the band.

If you missed this question, turn to page 53 to read more about how an author’s style affects a text.

**Question 9 (page 74)**

- A Incorrect.** Paragraph 5 says that the Roma High School band was a new program when Yunes was hired, so he could not have been part of it in high school.
- B Correct.** Information in paragraph 5 describes Yunes as “a veteran mariachi performer.”
- C Incorrect.** There is no information in the article that suggests that Yunes had taught at the high school before.
- D Incorrect.** There is no information to suggest that Yunes had thought of forming a local mariachi group.

If you missed this question, turn to page 45 to read more about drawing conclusions.

**Question 10 (page 75)**

- A Incorrect.** Not all the words and phrases describe the ways student mariachis have helped the community.
- B Correct.** All the words and phrases surrounding the center oval show benefits students have gained from being in the band, as described in the article.
- C Incorrect.** None of the words or phrases name competitions or awards.
- D Incorrect.** Not all the words and phrases describe qualities the students must have to become part of the group.

If you missed this question, turn to page 40 to read more about using graphic organizers.

### “A Dream Turns 70” and “Dear Sarah”

#### Question 11 (page 82)

- A Correct.** The newspaper article is mainly about how an emergency medical service known as the Aerial Medical Service was established in 1928 in the Outback to provide emergency medical care and how the service has changed since then.
- B Incorrect.** Paragraph 6 does say that technology affects life in the Outback, but this answer does not include any information from the rest of the article.
- C Incorrect.** Hospitals in the Outback are mentioned, but this is not the main focus of the article.
- D Incorrect.** Paragraph 5 describes modern airplanes, but this answer does not include any information from the rest of the article.

If you missed this question, turn to page 20 to read more about finding main ideas.

#### Question 12 (page 82)

- A Incorrect.** The sentence states that John Flynn had a goal, but it does not show that he was determined.
- B Incorrect.** The sentence explains why an emergency medical service was needed. It says nothing about John Flynn.
- C Correct.** The words “It took Flynn years” and “his efforts were finally successful” suggest that John Flynn was a determined person.
- D Incorrect.** The sentence gives information about the Royal Flying Doctor Service, but it says nothing about John Flynn.

If you missed this question, turn to page 48 to read more about using text to support responses.

#### Question 13 (page 82)

- A Correct.** The words “a blur of activity” and “less than 90 minutes” help create a tone of urgency in this paragraph.
- B Incorrect.** The paragraph is reporting facts. There is nothing in the paragraph to suggest that the author does not believe these facts.

- C Incorrect.** There is nothing in the paragraph to suggest that the author is angry.
- D Incorrect.** A medical team is about to fly to help an injured man, and the medical service is celebrating its anniversary. These are not sorrowful events.

If you missed this question, turn to page 53 to read more about how style, tone, and mood affect text.

#### Question 14 (page 83)

- A Incorrect.** The word *satisfy* does not fit with the last part of the sentence, “so we had to drive.”
- B Incorrect.** The word *impress* does not fit with the last part of the sentence, “so we had to drive.”
- C Correct.** The words “not big enough” and “so we had to drive” are clues that show *accommodate* means “to hold.”
- D Incorrect.** Other information in the paragraph shows that the plane is supposed to rush Billy to the hospital, not follow Arnold.

If you missed this question, turn to page 14 to read more about context clues.

#### Question 15 (page 83)

- A Incorrect.** Paragraph 6 does say that Arnold’s family might go home the next day, but it does not say that this makes Arnold feel safer.
- B Incorrect.** The letter never says that Arnold plans to visit a doctor the next time he goes to town.
- C Incorrect.** Paragraph 5 does say that more people may move to the Outback, but this has nothing to do with why Arnold feels safer.
- D Correct.** Paragraph 5 shows that Arnold no longer wonders what his family would do in a medical emergency, because he now knows all about the medical service.

If you missed this question, turn to page 26 to read more about analyzing characters.

**Question 16 (page 83)**

- A Correct.** Paragraph 1 states that Billy has a fever and stomach pain, and paragraph 4 states that he has appendicitis.
- B Incorrect.** Paragraph 1 shows that fever and stomach pain are nothing that would require an emergency operation unless they get much worse.
- C Incorrect.** Billy has a fever and stomach pain before he gets on the plane.
- D Incorrect.** Paragraph 1 shows that fever and stomach pain are common but not that they are symptoms of all common illnesses.

If you missed this question, turn to page 45 to read more about drawing conclusions.

**Question 17 (page 84)**

- A Incorrect.** Paragraph 5 of the newspaper article tells how many planes the service has today, but the letter never mentions the number of planes.
- B Correct.** Paragraph 2 of the newspaper article states that in 1911 there were only two doctors in the Outback. The paragraph also states that “because of the Outback’s vast size, many people were still not able to reach help quickly.” In paragraph 2 of the letter, Arnold writes, “I wanted to take him to see a doctor, but the nearest one is more than 300 kilometers away.” Also, paragraph 5 of the letter shows that Arnold has worried about what would happen if his family had a medical emergency.
- C Incorrect.** Paragraph 4 of the newspaper article mentions the first flight, but the letter does not.
- D Incorrect.** The letter is about a boy’s medical condition, but the newspaper article never mentions a boy.

If you missed this question, turn to page 38 to read more about similarities and differences across texts.

**Question 18 (page 84)**

- A Incorrect.** If the family had not yet moved to the Outback, Arnold would have been able to drive Billy to a doctor.
- B Correct.** The date at the top of the letter shows that Billy’s illness happened in the summer of 1928. Paragraph 2 of the newspaper article states that the Aerial Medical Service had its first flight in May 1928. So if Billy had gotten sick in 1927, the Aerial Medical Service would not have been created yet.

- C Incorrect.** It is not logical to think that airplanes could fly into the Outback in 1928 but that they couldn’t in 1927.
- D Incorrect.** Neither selection reveals whether the Aerial Medical Service had treated appendicitis before, but it stands to reason that the doctors would have been trained to treat it.

If you missed this question, turn to page 37 to read more about analyzing the order of events.

**Question 19 (page 84)**

- A Incorrect.** Paragraphs 3 and 4 of the newspaper article mention the donations, but the letter does not.
- B Correct.** Paragraph 4 of the newspaper article states that in its first year, the Aerial Medical Service treated 225 patients and saved at least four lives. Paragraph 6 of the newspaper article states that people in the Outback still depend on the service. Paragraphs 3 and 4 of Arnold’s letter describe how the Aerial Medical Service saves his son. Paragraph 5 shows that knowing about the service makes Arnold feel much safer.
- C Incorrect.** The newspaper article never says that the service caused people to move to the Outback.
- D Incorrect.** This idea does appear in the last paragraph of the newspaper article, but the letter is from 1928.

If you missed this question, turn to page 50 to read more about connecting and comparing ideas across texts.

**Question 20 (page 85)**

- A Incorrect.** This idea is not supported by information in either selection.
- B Incorrect.** This idea is not supported by information in either selection.
- C Incorrect.** This idea is not supported by information in either selection.
- D Correct.** This is the only answer supported by information from both selections. The letter is dated August 1, 1928, and paragraphs 3 and 4 of the letter describe how Billy is helped by the medical service. Paragraph 2 of the newspaper article states that 1928 was the first year that the Aerial Medical Service existed. Therefore, Billy must be one of the 225 patients mentioned in paragraph 4 of the newspaper article.

If you missed this question, turn to page 50 to read more about connecting and comparing ideas across texts.

## TAKS STUDY GUIDE EVALUATION FORM

To complete the survey online, go to <http://www.etesttx.com/studyguides/feedback.htm>.

1 Place a (✓) next to all statements that apply to you.

<p><b>I am a</b></p> <p>___ Student</p> <p>___ Parent</p> <p>___ Teacher</p> <p>___ Tutor</p> <p>___ Other (please specify) _____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p>	<p><b>I used this study guide</b></p> <p>___ Alone</p> <p>___ With a family member</p> <p>___ With a tutor</p> <p>___ With a teacher</p> <p>___ With a friend</p>
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### 2 Study Guide Questions

Use a (✓) to mark how much you agree with the following statements.

DETACH HERE BEFORE MAILING

	Strongly Agree	Agree	No Opinion	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1. This study guide is easy to use and well organized.	<input type="checkbox"/>				
2. This study guide is interesting.	<input type="checkbox"/>				
3. I gained new knowledge and skills by using this study guide.	<input type="checkbox"/>				
4. I will be able to apply what I've learned from this study guide when I take the TAKS again.	<input type="checkbox"/>				
5. I believe my TAKS scores will improve as a result of using this study guide.	<input type="checkbox"/>				

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### 3 General Information

Use a (✓) to mark the grade and subject of this study guide.

**Grade:**

- \_\_\_ 3    \_\_\_ 8
- \_\_\_ 4    \_\_\_ 9
- \_\_\_ 5    \_\_\_ 10
- \_\_\_ 6    \_\_\_ 11 (Exit Level)
- \_\_\_ 7

**Subject:**

- \_\_\_ Reading
- \_\_\_ English Language Arts
- \_\_\_ Writing
- \_\_\_ Mathematics
- \_\_\_ Science
- \_\_\_ Social Studies

**When you have finished with this evaluation form, please detach it from the booklet and mail it to**

Pearson Educational Measurement  
 Study Guide Program Team  
 400 Center Ridge Drive, Suite F  
 Austin, TX 78753

Additional Comments \_\_\_\_\_

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Study Guide Program Team  
400 Center Ridge Drive, Suite F  
Austin, TX 78753**

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