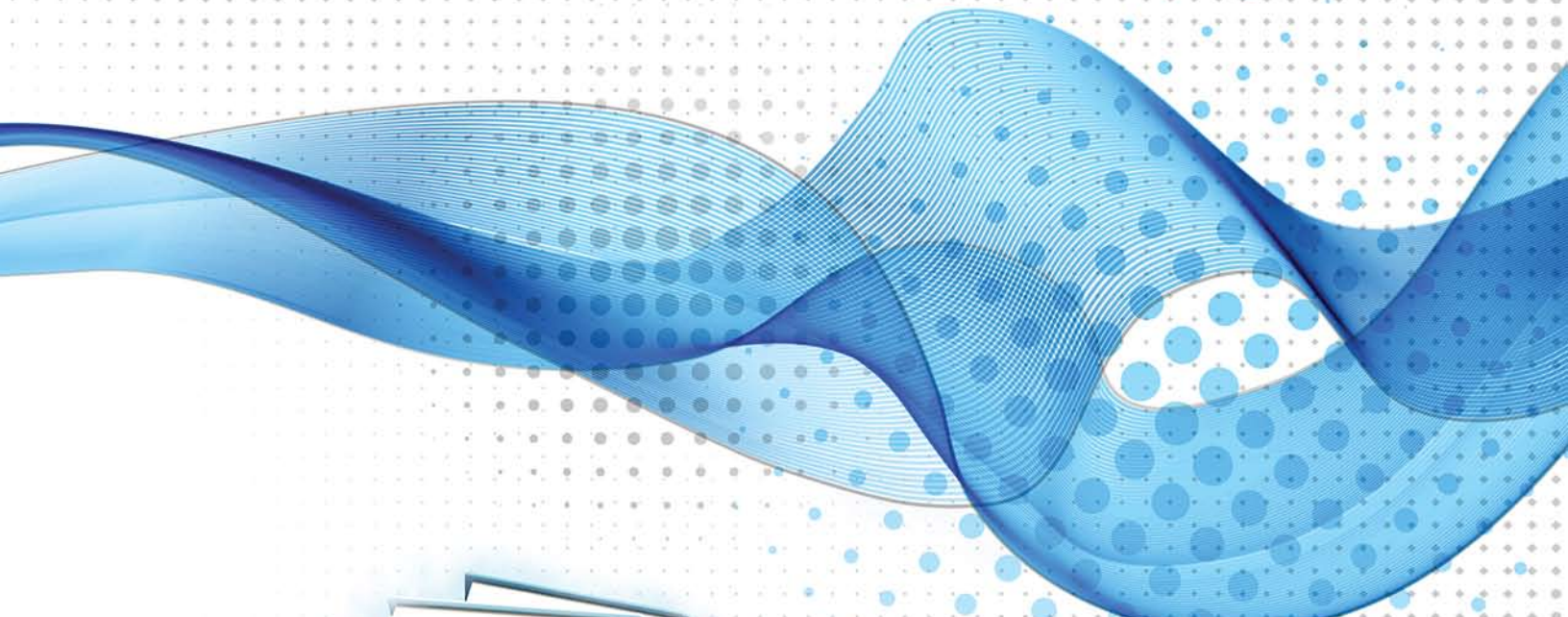


# ESSENTIAL READING SKILLS

*Preparation for High School Equivalency Tests*



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**Senior Consultants**  
Bonnie Goonen  
Susan Pittman-Shetler



**Essential Education**  
*Learning Made CERTAIN*

INTERACTIVE PRACTICE WORKBOOK

Aligned to the Common Core State Standards and College and Career Readiness Standards



**Essential Education**  
*Learning Made CERTAIN*

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# Essential Reading Skills

*Interactive Practice Workbook*

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# Introduction

**T**he *Essential Reading Skills* workbook will help you understand what you read at a deeper level. You will learn the DARE process for reading, which makes the connection between your purpose for reading and the way you read. By acquiring new strategies, you will become a better, more effective reader. You'll be able to tailor your reading style to the task you're doing, whether you're gathering specific information, studying, or reading for pleasure.

Reasoning is an essential part of the reading process. Truly understanding what you're reading means being able to analyze and develop your opinions about what the writer is saying. This workbook will help you understand and evaluate arguments and viewpoints as you read and compare texts.

You can use this workbook to get extra practice to supplement a class or online learning program, such as Essential Education's GED Academy™ and Essential Skills Online reading programs. If you're in a class, your teacher can help you choose appropriate sections from this workbook to supplement your learning. If you're studying on your own, you can identify the sections that are most relevant to what you're learning.

This workbook can also be used on its own as a stand-alone learning tool, by working through each lesson. Using this workbook, you'll solidify the foundations of your reading skills and learn to apply reasoning to career- and college-level texts.



Each lesson has four parts:

- **Connections** introduces important ideas for the lesson. Connect what you'll learn to what you already know, and learn how the concepts apply to your life.
- **Learn It!** guides you through a strategy to achieve the goal for the lesson and get more from your reading.
- **Practice It!** provides practice for the strategy you've learned. You'll also think about how to apply the strategy to varying situations.
- **Check Your Skills** gives you a check-up to see what you've learned. You'll answer question types from the 2014 GED® test as well as questions that test your mastery of the lesson.

This reading book contains practice exercises that require different levels of knowledge and thinking:

- ★ If an exercise has one star, it's checking if you can follow the procedure you've been learning. You need to apply reading skills, identify elements of a text, or complete part of a clear-cut strategy.
- ★★ If an exercise has two stars, it will require more thought. You'll have to consider options and show a deeper understanding of reading.
- ★★★ If an exercise has three stars, it will really get you thinking about how you approach reading and how you think about what you read.

*Using*

**D A R E**

DARE is a strategy-driven process. Based on your purpose, you will choose helpful reading strategies.

**D**etermine Purpose

**A**pproach the Text

**R**ead

**E**valuate

As you work through this book, keep track of ideas and concepts that are important and useful. Practice your reading skills every day. Don't limit your reading to what you're required to do. Read things that you enjoy and that interest you. It will help you become a better reader.

# Note-Taking and Summarizing

---

## Connections

### Have you ever tried to...

- Study for a test but didn't know what was important?
- Explain what you just read but couldn't remember it?
- Read a textbook but didn't feel you learned anything?

It's one thing to read words on a page, but understanding and remembering can be tough. **Taking notes** or **summarizing** allows you to find and focus on the important information. These strategies help you...

- Understand better.
- Remember more.
- Focus on what you're reading.

---

**Note-taking** means writing down and organizing information, then restating it in your own words. The notes you take depend on why you are reading and what you are hoping to learn. Keep in mind that regardless of the purpose, note-taking always involves figuring out what's important. Note-taking also helps you learn and remember details.

When you **summarize**, you identify the main ideas. You pick out the most important parts of what you read and restate them in your own words. When you reduce what you read to the main points, you'll be able to better understand and remember the information.







## Taking Notes through Preview → Note → Review

Writing down information, organizing it, and restating it in your own words helps you understand and remember. A good note-taking strategy is to:

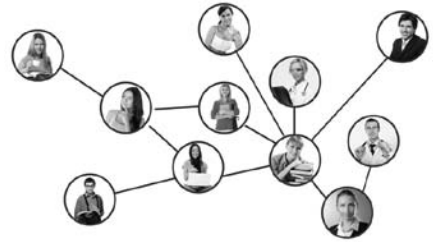
**Preview → Note → Review**

Use this passage for the exercises that follow.

### An Online Presence

One of the first things many employers will do after you apply to a job is plug your name into Google or look for your LinkedIn profile. LinkedIn gives employers a good idea of your work history, who you might know in common, and what your additional skills are.

However, your profile needs to match what you have included on your résumé. If they don't match, employers might get the impression that you left out important information. It's becoming common practice for managers to request LinkedIn pages instead of résumés, and it could be beneficial to create a LinkedIn profile and include a link to it on your résumé.



### D Determine the Purpose

Imagine you're looking for a job in your career field. You've heard how important networking and creating an online presence are and want to know how they can help you. Keep your purpose in mind when you select important information for your notes.

### A Approach the Text

Before you read, **preview**. Look at the table of contents, heads, subheads, images, or charts. Then, write down questions you have. This will help you decide what notes to take.

?

1. The passage includes the subheads "Networking," "An Online Presence," "Internships," and "Skill Building." Choose the sections where you'll want to take notes, and write one question to answer for each section.

Your purpose for reading is to learn to network and build an online presence, so you would want to take notes on those sections. Some possible questions might be:

- What is a successful way to network?

- What steps do I take to create an online presence?
- What do employers look for in an online presence?

### **R** Read

As you read, **note** answers to your questions, important ideas, helpful examples and details, and unfamiliar vocabulary and definitions.

- ? 2. Note three important ideas and details from the passage.

You might choose to take notes on the following ideas and details:

- Create a LinkedIn profile and add a link on your résumé.
- One of the first things many employers will do after you apply to a job is plug your name into Google or look for your LinkedIn profile.
- Your profile needs to match what you have included on your résumé.

### **E** Evaluate

After you take notes, **review**.

- Organize your notes.
- Rewrite them in your own words.
- Evaluate them.

Did you find the information you needed?

- ? 3. Rewrite one idea that you selected in the previous exercise in your own words.

You could restate your ideas as a to-do list:

- Update my LinkedIn page and make sure it matches my résumé.
- Include a link to my LinkedIn on my résumé, and be prepared for a manager to request it.

### Try Using a Simple Table to Preview → Note → Review

Preview	Note	Review
Questions?	Answers	Organize
	Important points	Restate

Practice  
It!

**Read the passage and answer the questions that follow.**

---

**Infants of Women Who Take Vitamin C Have Better Lung Function**

Mothers who smoke during pregnancy risk their children developing lung problems, but a new study shows that if mothers take vitamin C during pregnancy, they could prevent these problems. Researchers found that if a pregnant woman can't quit smoking, taking vitamin C may help protect the baby's lungs.



Researchers studied 159 women who were less than 22 weeks pregnant and unable to quit smoking. Some women were given a 500-milligram capsule of vitamin C and others were given a placebo to take each day for the rest of their pregnancy. The babies were evaluated 48 hours after birth. The babies whose mothers had taken vitamin C had healthier lungs. The healthy lung function was shown to continue through the first year. Wheezing was present in just over 20 percent of infants whose mothers took vitamin C. It was considerably higher in mothers who took the placebo. Of infants born to nonsmokers, 27 percent wheezed. A smaller group of infants needed medication for their wheezing. In the placebo group, 22 percent of infants needed medication, considerably more than in the group that took vitamin C (13 percent) and in the nonsmoking group (10 percent).

- 
- ★★ 1. Imagine that you are pregnant but just can't seem to quit smoking. You want your baby to be as healthy as possible. Preview the text. What questions do you have?

Preview

- ★★ 2. Read the passage. Take notes on your reading, including answering your questions.

Note

3. Review your notes.

### Review

4. If you were a smoker and an expecting mother, what would you do to make sure your baby is as healthy as possible?
5. Eva is taking notes on the American Revolution from an online article. She will be using the information to write a history paper. She isn't sure what notes to take, so she starts writing down every detail that includes a statistic or a number. When she's done and goes back over her notes, she isn't sure what the statistics actually mean.
- What steps should Eva follow to take effective notes?
  - What did Eva do correctly?
6. Ron is trying to understand the safety procedures that he must follow at his job by reading the safety manual. He wants to remember the important information, so he has decided to take notes. He writes down the technical terms that are in bold.
- What steps should Ron follow to take effective notes?
  - What did he do correctly?

### *Reading for Understanding*

Using a graphic organizer in your notes can give you a visual of how ideas and details relate.



## Using the 5Ws and H to Summarize

A summary is a brief statement of the important ideas and details of a text in your own words. Summarizing helps you improve your understanding, remember what you read, and inform others about what you read.

*Use this passage for the exercises that follow.*

Cedarville has an 11 percent unemployment rate, and that makes looking for jobs a challenge. Experts say that networking is key to making contacts and finding a new job. In addition to finding internships, expand your professional network by contacting professionals in your desired career field and building relationships with them. Join the local Chamber of Commerce, attend social mixers and industry events, and look into other professional organizations to make contacts in your field of choice. Branching out of your usual social circle can help you stay up to date on your field of interest and make valuable contacts that can help you along in your career.



### **D** Determine the Purpose

Imagine your friend is hunting for a job and is curious about networking. She asks you if you have any helpful information. You want to review the passage and email her a summary.

### **A** Approach the Text

Before you read, think about how to gather information for your summary. One way to summarize is to ask and answer the 5Ws and H:

Who?	What?	When?	Where?	Why?	How?
------	-------	-------	--------	------	------

- ? 1. How do the 5Ws and H help you create a summary?

Asking, “Who, what, when, where, why, and how?” helps you find out what’s happening. It helps you identify important ideas, and that’s what should be in a summary.

### **R** Read

As you read the text, look for answers to the 5Ws and H. After you've finished reading, set aside the text and answer the questions in your own words.

? 2. Read the passage, and answer the following questions.

Who?

What?

When?

Where?

Why?

How?

The 5Ws and H help you find the most important information in a text. You might answer:

- **Who:** People looking for jobs
- **What:** Networking
- **When:** Now
- **Where:** Cedarville (or anywhere the jobseeker lives)
- **Why:** To help build contacts, find a job that's right for you, and stay up to date
- **How:** Join a local Chamber of Commerce, contact professionals in your field

### **E** Evaluate

After reading, write your summary. Include the important ideas and details from the passage, keeping in mind your purpose.

? 3. Write a one-sentence summary of the passage.

An effective summary is written in your own words. A summary includes the central idea of the passage and important details and keeps in mind your purpose. A sample summary is:

Networking by joining a Chamber of Commerce or contacting professionals in your field helps you form connections so you can find a job and stay up-to-date in your field.

Practice  
It!

Read the passage and answer the questions that follow.

---

### Parents Sucking Pacifiers May Benefit Infants' Immune Systems

The results of a new study have many parents shaking their heads. Most parents want to keep their infants healthy, but the study suggests that parents pop their infants' pacifiers into their own mouths before giving them back to their babies. The reason? To protect infants from developing allergies.

Researchers found that transferring oral bacteria from adults to infants helps train the immune system to ignore germs that aren't a threat to the body. Children whose parents sucked on their pacifiers to clean them were less likely to suffer from eczema, asthma, and sensitivity to allergens.

The immune system needs to learn to recognize when foreign material poses a threat to the body and distinguish between threatening and nonthreatening microbes. If your immune system never comes across any germs, it will attack harmless particles, like foods, cat dander, or dust mites.

A report shows that the number of American children with allergies has seen a large increase. Around 17 percent of children have breathing-related allergies, and 13 percent report allergies that affect the skin.



- 
1. Answer the 5Ws and H to help you write your summary.
  2. Use the answers to the 5Ws and H to write a one-sentence summary.
  3. Review the passage “Infants of Women Who Take Vitamin C...” on page 36. Explain the process you would use to summarize the passage. What steps would you take?



## Check Your Skills

Imagine you are doing research for a paper about earthquakes and their relationship to aftershocks.

**Read the passage and answer the questions that follow.**



### Aftershock from 2011 Earthquake in Virginia

A magnitude 2.3 earthquake struck Louisa, Virginia, on May 15, 2013 at 7:01 A.M. local time.

Wednesday’s earthquake was an aftershock from the magnitude 5.8 earthquake of August 23, 2011.

That previous earthquake startled tens of millions of people in the eastern U.S. and southeastern Canada, and damaged schools and houses in the epicentral area.

Since the 2011 earthquake, more than 450 aftershocks have been recorded. These events were catalogued by the USGS National Earthquake Information Center (NEIC), using data from portable seismographs that were deployed by several organizations immediately after the earthquake.

More than 50 of the aftershocks were large enough to be felt, and 38 were the size of today’s earthquake, or larger. Scientists expect that these aftershocks will continue for many months.

Earthquakes in this area are not unprecedented, as they are within the Central Virginia seismic zone. This zone has been identified on USGS seismic hazard maps for decades as an area of elevated earthquake risk.

Although earthquakes are less frequent in the East, their damaging effects can extend over a much larger area as compared to the western United States. The difference between seismic shaking in the East versus the West is due in part to the geologic structure and rock properties that allow seismic waves to travel farther without weakening.

### *Reading for Understanding*

When you summarize, answer the 5Ws and H to identify the important ideas.

Source: U.S. Geological Survey, adapted from “Magnitude 2.3 Earthquake in Virginia,” [http://www.usgs.gov/blogs/features/usgs\\_top\\_story/magnitude-2-3-earthquake-in-virginia/](http://www.usgs.gov/blogs/features/usgs_top_story/magnitude-2-3-earthquake-in-virginia/)



1. What is important about the 2013 earthquake in Virginia?
  - a. This event was catalogued by the USGS.
  - b. In the East, earthquakes' damaging effects can extend over a large area.
  - c. The earthquake was an aftershock from a 5.8 earthquake in 2011.
  - d. This zone has been identified as an area of elevated earthquake risk.
  
2. What is different about East Coast earthquakes versus West Coast earthquakes?
  - a. Earthquakes can damage a larger area on the East Coast.
  - b. Earthquakes are usually stronger on the East Coast.
  - c. Most earthquakes on the East Coast are aftershocks.
  - d. Earthquakes are just as frequent in the East, but they tend to be small.
  
3. How does this earthquake compare with the other aftershocks?
  - a. It was one of the smaller aftershocks.
  - b. It was one of 50 aftershocks large enough to be felt.
  - c. It caused more devastation than other aftershocks.
  - d. It caused scientists more surprise than other aftershocks.
  
4. Select the best summary of the text.
  - a. An earthquake in Virginia in May 2013 was large enough to be felt and occurred on the East Coast, where earthquakes may affect large areas.
  - b. The difference between seismic shaking in the East versus the West is due in part to the geologic structure and is tracked by the USGS.
  - c. Scientists expect aftershocks, which the USGS tracks, to go on for many months.
  - d. On May 15, 2013, on of many aftershocks of a widespread 2011 earthquake was felt in Louisa, Virginia, a town in the Central Virginia seismic zone.

*Remember the  
Concept*

**Taking notes or summarizing helps you:**

- See what's important
- Understand better
- Remember more
- Focus on what you're reading

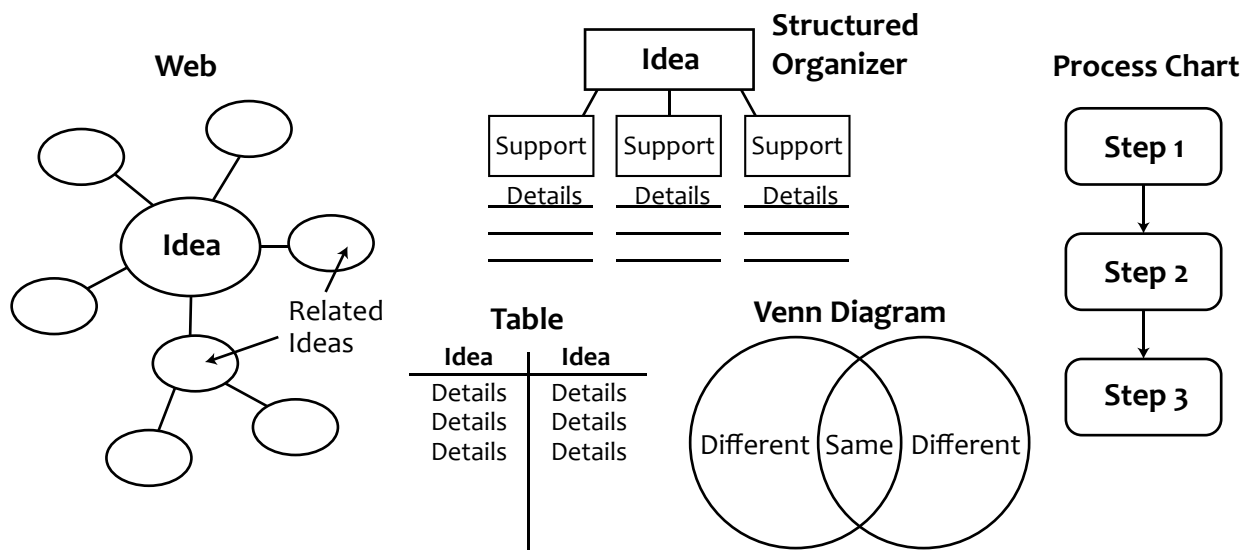
# Graphic Organizers

## Connections

Have you ever ...

- Made a pro and con list to make a decision?
- Mapped out the events in a story?
- Created or read a timeline of historical events?

These are all examples of **graphic organizers**. A graphic organizer is a visual diagram that shows the relationships among a number of ideas. You can use a graphic organizer to make new connections and better understand the meaning of what you read.



Graphic organizers help you ...

- Organize and remember information.
- Understand how ideas are related.
- Relate new information to what you already know.



## Using a Graphic Organizer

Graphic organizers show information in different ways for different tasks. First, **choose** the best organizer for your purpose. Then, **complete** the organizer as part of your reading plan. Finally, **evaluate** the organizer and draw conclusions.

*Use this passage for the exercises that follow.*

Our neighborhood park needs major improvements. The neighborhood is filled with children and pets that need a place to exercise and play. Some homes are not equipped with backyards and the park provides a place to barbecue and relax.

The park currently does not provide a safe environment for children. Police investigate criminal complaints in the area, and the local newspaper has run a series of articles about the drug culture in the park. There are no working lights in the park, which lends itself to suspicious behavior. The grass is overgrown, and the fields aren't ideal for playing. The playground equipment is rusted and cracking. No parent wants to risk an injury on their child.

The park would be the perfect place for kids to play sports. In a world where children rely more and more on video games and the Internet for entertainment, we need to give them a reason to get outside. It is the only green space in the area, and the ballfield is just waiting to be used.

The future is in our hands, and a little effort could make all the difference. City grants are available for local development, and with city council involvement, the dream could become reality. The city and residents could provide tax dollars, donations, and volunteers. Neighbors could organize cleaning parties, mow the grass, and start a neighborhood watch in the area, but we need the city to help us install lights and upkeep the fields. What was once an eyesore could be our saving grace.

### **D** Determine the Purpose

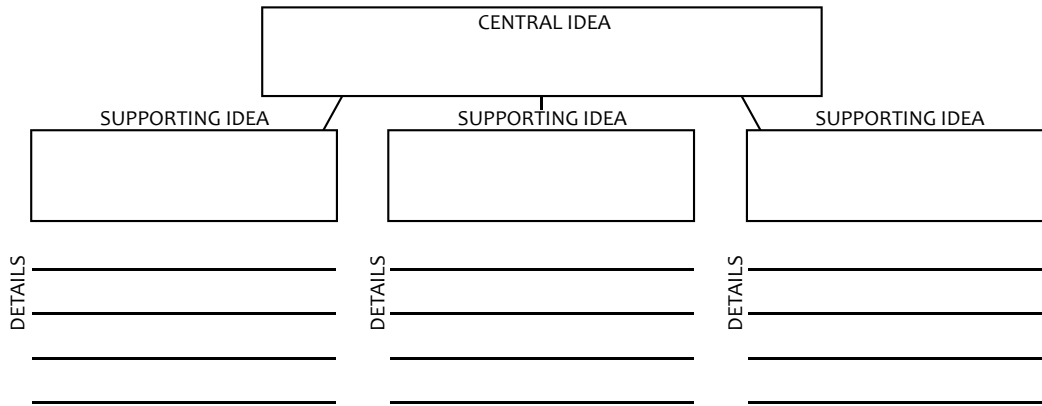
Imagine your neighbor gave you this letter arguing for improvements to the neighborhood park. Is it a good idea? What improvements does she want? What are her arguments?

### **A** Approach the Text

To form an opinion, you can identify and evaluate important ideas and support. A structured overview organizer is a good choice. First, find the central idea by skimming the passage and write it in the top box. You will track supporting ideas and details in the space below the central idea.

## Graphic Organizers

- ? 1. Write the central idea of the passage in the structured overview organizer.



In the passage, the central idea is stated at the beginning: to clean up and improve the park.

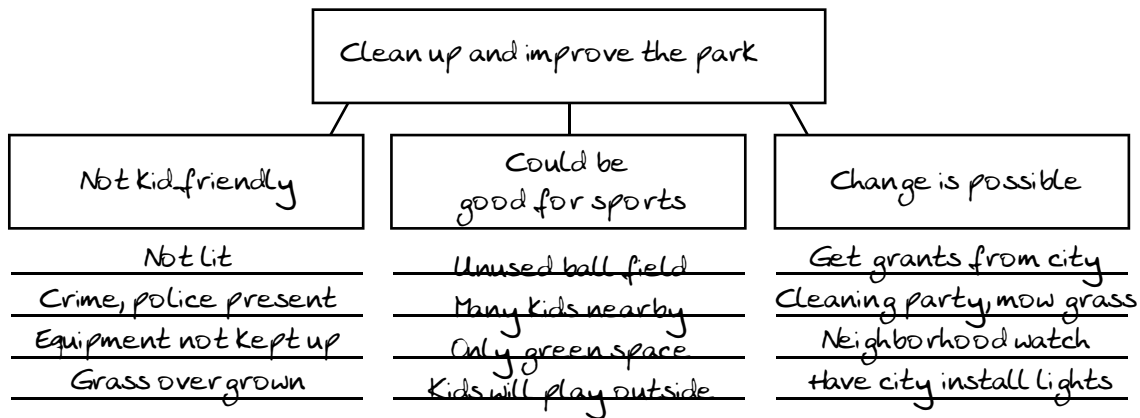
### **R** Read

As you read, complete your organizer with supporting ideas and details.

- ? 2. Read through the passage, and complete the graphic organizer.

### **E** Evaluate

After you read, review the graphic organizer. Look at the ideas and make changes or notes. Do the ideas and organization make sense?



- ? 3. What do you understand better by using this graphic organizer?

Seeing how ideas and details are related can help you understand what the author is saying and why. You can clearly explain why improvements should be made at the park.



Read the passage and complete the exercises that follow.

Despite pressure for the fast food industry to “lighten up” over the years, a new study shows that choices today aren’t much healthier. The nutritional quality of items on the fast food menu has only slightly improved over 14 years.

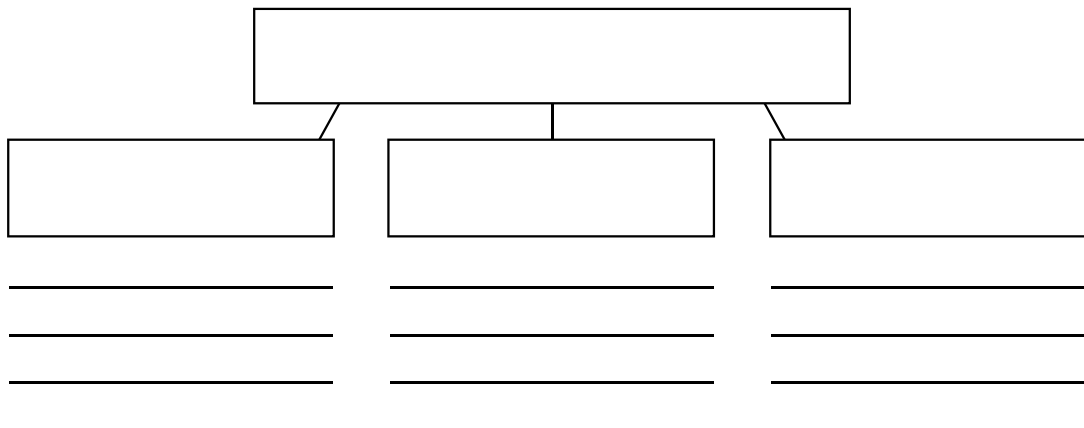
The study used data from eight fast food chains—Arby’s, Burger King, Dairy Queen, Jack in the Box, Kentucky Fried Chicken (KFC), McDonald’s, Taco Bell, and Wendy’s. The researchers used the U.S. Department of Agriculture’s Healthy Eating Index to evaluate the nutritional quality of items on the chains’ menus. The overall score for the eight chains increased from 45 to 48 over 14 years. Scores for meat, saturated fat, and calories from fat and added sugars improved. Scores remained the same for legumes, total grains, whole grains, total vegetables, dark green and orange vegetables, fruit, and oils. Scores for dairy and sodium got worse.

The overall nutritional quality score of 48 was not impressive, researchers said. The score was below that of the average American diet (55), which is considered far from ideal. Researchers said that because fast food is such a large part of Americans’ diets, the restaurants are well positioned to help improve the diet quality in the U.S. by improving nutritional values of menu items. Researchers also said that the improvements on the menu were likely related to legislative efforts, but there is much more room for improvement. The study authors noted that more than one-quarter of American adults eat fast food two or more times a week.

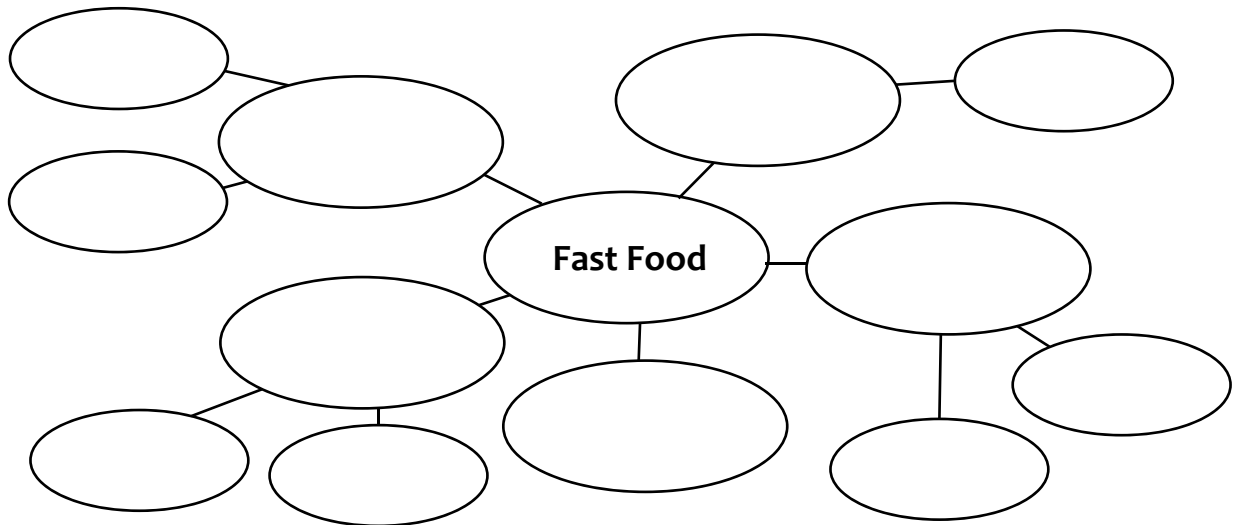
Experts are calling the increase disappointing and surprising. Many of these restaurants report adding healthier menu options, switching to healthier cooking fats, and reducing sodium.



1. Organize the central idea, supporting ideas, and details into this structured overview graphic organizer.



2. Based on the information in your graphic organizer, explain how smaller ideas relate to an overall idea in a text. What role do the details play in a text?
3. What conclusions can you draw about fast food in America, based on this passage? Is there anything that doesn't make sense?
4. Create a word web about the idea "fast food" based on the passage. Fill in the circles with related ideas, and add more circles if you need them. How does this graphic organizer affect your ideas? How does it compare to the structural overview?

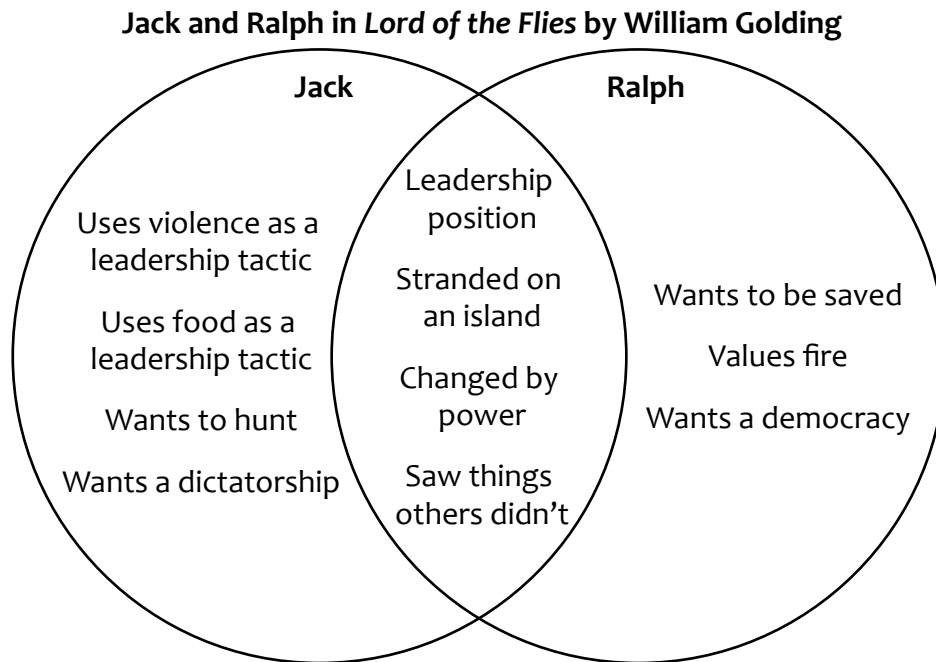




## Evaluating Information in a Graphic Organizer

Evaluating is an important step when you're using a graphic organizer. Interpreting the results of a graphic organizer helps you draw conclusions about what you read. It allows you to think of information in a new way.

A **Venn diagram** is a type of graphic organizer that helps you make comparisons between characters, themes, ideas, topics, settings, and arguments. Each circle contains qualities that describe one person or idea. The qualities they share go in the overlapping area.



### Review the Graphic Organizer

First, look at the graphic organizer. Review the heads, labels, and information.

- What is the purpose of the organizer?
- What ideas does it show?
- How is it organized?



1. What is the purpose of this Venn diagram?

The purpose of this diagram is to compare two characters from the book *Lord of the Flies* by William Golding.

### Ask Questions

Next, ask and answer questions:

- What are the relationships between information?
- What inferences you can make?
- What does the graphic organizer make you wonder?

In this Venn diagram, your questions should help you compare the characters and draw conclusions about their personalities.

- ?
2. Write a question about the characters in the Venn diagram, and use the diagram to answer it.

*Using*

**D A R E**

When your **purpose** for reading is trying to understand complex information or relationships, graphic organizers can help.

**D**etermine Purpose

**A**pproach the Text

**R**ead

**E**valuate

You could ask a comparison question, such as: Which character is more likely to solve a problem with violence? By reviewing the diagram, you can see that Jack uses violence as a leadership tactic.

### Draw Conclusions

After asking and answering questions, pull together what you've learned into a bigger idea. Based on your comparisons, you might conclude that one character is a better leader. What else do you notice about the characters based on their similarities and differences? What does this tell you about leaders and power? These questions don't have one right answer, but they should be supported with evidence.

- ?
3. Which character would make a better leader and why?

You could answer the question this way: Ralph would make a better leader because he doesn't use violence or bribery to bring people to his side. He has a goal of being saved and values a democracy, where everybody has a voice.



Practice  
It!




**Read the passage and answer the questions that follow.**

---

World War I and World War II had similar roots and causes. Both began with threats to power and revolved around conflicts of entire nations and groups of people, rather than between governments. However, the methods of warfare were very different between the two wars. Armies used trench warfare in World War I, but by World War II military technology had expanded to bombing and air attacks on civilians and military groups.

World War I left approximately 10 million military personnel dead, 7 million civilians dead, 21 million total wounded, and 7.7 million imprisoned or missing. In World War II, estimated deaths ranged from 50 to 80 million. Up to 55 million civilians died due to the war, including 13 to 20 million from war-related disease and famine. In World War I, the Ottoman Empire committed genocide against Armenians. In World War II, German Nazis committed genocide against Jews and other minorities.

---

-  1. Create a Venn diagram comparing World War I and World War II, based on the passage.
  
-  2. What factors might have caused the higher death toll in World War II?
  
-  3. What connections do you see between the two World Wars?



## Check Your Skills

*Read the passage and answer the questions that follow.*

---



A study found that it's generally a bad idea to grocery shop while hungry. People who hit the grocery store when hungry tend to reach for higher-calorie foods and more of them. This affects not only their meal that night, but their meals for the rest of the week.

The study found that when people are hungry, they think high-calorie foods can provide them with more energy. Candy, salty snacks, and red meat are higher-calorie foods hungry people bought in the study. Vegetables, fruits, and chicken breasts were lower-calorie choices. Researchers are now investigating whether having a snack before food shopping makes people more likely to choose lower-calorie foods.

Researchers speculate that, based on the study results, dieting by skipping meals might not be a good idea. Study results indicate that when the body is deprived of food, the body doesn't know the difference between dieting and famine. It goes into survival mode because it does not know when there will be another meal.

In the study, researchers performed two experiments. In the first, people were told not to eat for five hours before the study. A portion of the 68 participants snacked on crackers at the beginning of the study. Then, all the participants shopped in a simulated online grocery store. The participants who had not eaten crackers tended to choose higher-calorie foods such as regular ice cream over low-fat ice cream, the researchers found. In the second experiment, researchers followed 82 actual shoppers during the course of the day at times when they were most likely to be full or hungry. They found that hungry shoppers bought more high-calorie products compared to shoppers who weren't hungry.

Nutritionists say that it is important to eat at regular intervals. This signals the body that fuel is readily available, so the body's metabolism continues at normal levels. Enough energy is available for biological functions and daily activities.

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1. Create a Venn diagram to compare the passage about fast food on page 44 with the passage on page 49.
2. Becca is trying to make some healthier choices in her life. After reading both articles, what conclusions might she draw? Select all correct answers.
- Eating fast food and shopping while hungry are two unwise choices that many Americans make.
  - When you are hungry, you tend to make unwise food choices.
  - Grocery stores hold some of the blame for shoppers' unhealthy choices.
  - Americans are too lazy to make wise eating choices.
3. Based on the passages, what can Becca do to prevent herself from making unhealthy choices? Select all correct answers.
- Have a snack before grocery shopping
  - Never eat out at restaurants
  - Eat more meals at home
  - Have a friend do her grocery shopping for her
  - Skip a meal here and there
4. Using your Venn diagram from the first exercise, write a short comparison of the information in the two articles. What did each article emphasize about healthy eating? What advice did it give consumers? What makes eating healthily a challenge?

*Remember  
the Concept*

**Graphic organizers**

show information visually. They help you:

- Make new connections.
- Understand better.

# Unfamiliar Words

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## Connections

While reading a book for school or a document for work, how often do you come across a word you don't understand? Do you continue to read and hope you still get the meaning? Do you try to understand it? Do you give up and put the book down?



The degree of clarity or sharpness of a television image or broadcast signal is received.

**def·i·ni·tion** n. 1.  
The teacher gave definitions of the new words.  
of an image (picture) on a TV screen

Understanding words is fundamental to reading. You can't make sense of what you're reading if you can't make sense of the words.

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Looking up words in a dictionary isn't always practical, and it isn't always the best way to really understand a word's meaning. By using **context clues** and **word parts**, you can understand unfamiliar words while you're reading.

**Context clues** are clues in nearby words and sentences that help you find a word's meaning.

### Context = What's Nearby

**Word parts** are the root word, prefixes, and suffixes that make up a word.

- A **root word** forms the base or main part of a word.
- A **prefix** comes before the root and changes the meaning of the word.
- A **suffix** comes after the root and changes the meaning of the word.

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**Word Meaning = Prefix Meaning + Root Meaning + Suffix Meaning**

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## Using Context Clues

If you come across a word you don't know, you can use context clues in nearby words to find the meaning. Read around the word to see if the rest of the sentence and paragraph can help you.

### Look for Examples

When you identify a word you don't know, look for examples that show what the word might mean, and use them to try to understand the word.

**Signal words** are words that give you clues about what's nearby.

**Signal words for examples:** *such as, for example, including*

?

1. Many early pioneers who headed west faced **tribulations**, such as starvation, illness, and extreme weather.

What examples of tribulations are in this sentence?

This sentence includes examples of tribulations: starvation, illness, and extreme weather. Based on the examples of tribulations in the sentence, you can guess that tribulations are severe problems.

### Look for Synonyms

A **synonym**, a word with a similar meaning to the unknown word, can also be a context clue. You'll often find a synonym of the unfamiliar word in the same sentence or paragraph.

**Signal words for synonyms:** *as, is, or, are*

?

2. Cell phones have become **ubiquitous**; you can see and hear them everywhere.

Which word in the sentence is a synonym for *ubiquitous*?

*Everywhere* is a synonym for *ubiquitous*. The second half of the sentence explains what the author means by *ubiquitous*.



### Look for Antonyms

An **antonym** is a word with a meaning that's opposite of the unknown word. Antonyms are often found in nearby text.

**Signal words for antonyms:** *however, than, but, yet, on the other hand, in contrast*



- ? 3. A memo that is brief and to the point is more likely to be read than one that is **verbose** and **rambling**.

In this sentence, what are the antonyms for *verbose* and *rambling*?

The word *than* signals that a word of opposite meaning is coming. *Brief* and *to the point* are antonyms of *verbose* and *rambling*. *Verbose* and *rambling* mean the opposite: *long* and *not keeping to the point*.

### Check Your Meaning Using Substitution

After you have an idea of what an unknown word might mean, check your idea. Substitute your meaning for the unknown word in the sentence. Does it make sense? If it does, you've got the right meaning.

- ? 4. Many early pioneers who headed west faced **tribulations**, such as starvation, illness, and extreme weather.

Replace the word *tribulations* with your definition. Does the meaning make sense?

Here is an example of a definition substituted for the word:

Many early pioneers who headed west faced **severe problems**, such as starvation, illness, and extreme weather.

The definition makes sense, so it's probably correct.

Practice  
It!

**Use context clues to determine the meaning of the words in the passages.**

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Most surprising of all, germs can survive on an inanimate object and will eventually be picked up by the next person who touches that object. Think about how many objects we touch each day. We don't even think about germs as we touch tabletops, doorknobs, toilets, light switches, or money, to name a few.

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1. What does the word *inanimate* mean? Write your own definition.
2. How did you reach that conclusion?
3. Write your own sentence using the word *inanimate*.

---

After the altercation with his former best friend, he was asked to pay for the damage the fight had caused and not to return to the location.

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4. What does the word *altercation* mean? Write your own definition.
5. How did you reach that conclusion?
6. Write your own sentence using the word *altercation*.

**Read the passage. Show your understanding of the vocabulary in the passage by answering the questions that follow.**

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Joe balked at the idea that he needed to tip the waitress 20 percent. She had given him slow service in the restaurant all night, despite the fact that there were only two other couples in the restaurant. Joe wanted to show his date that he had impeccable taste in restaurants, but he feared that he had disappointed her with the food and service.

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-  7. Who do you know that has impeccable taste? How do they show it?
-  8. Have you ever balked at something a politician, an actor, a family member, or a friend said? What was it? Why did you react that way?
-  9. Write a question that uses the word *balked*. Answer the question, showing your understanding of the word.
-  10. Write a question that uses the word *impeccable*. Answer the question, showing your understanding of the word.





## Using Word Parts

By breaking up an unknown word into parts—roots, prefixes, and suffixes—it can be easier to find the word’s meaning.

### Break Apart the Word

If an unknown word has multiple syllables, chances are there are parts of the word that might look familiar. Separate the word by prefix, root, and suffix. Have you heard any of the word parts before?

- ? 1. Break up the word *justify* into word parts. Can you recognize any of the parts on their own?

Prefix	Root	Suffix

The word *justify* has no prefix. The root is *just-* and the suffix is *-ify*.

### Determine the Meaning of Word Parts

Chances are you probably have heard the word *just* before, either by itself or as part of other words. The ending *-ify* is also a common suffix. Think about other words you know with similar endings. They probably also have similar meanings.

- ? 2. Based on words you know, guess the meaning of each of these word parts.

*just-*

*-ify*

The root *just-* can be found in words like *justice* and *unjust*, which are about being fair and reasonable. “Fair and reasonable” might be a good definition of the root *just-*. The suffix *-ify* is found at the end of words such as *fortify* (to make secure) or *clarify* (to show or make clear) and means “to make or show.”



### Determine the Meaning of the Word

If you put the meaning of the word parts together, you can get a good idea of what the word means.

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### Word Meaning = Prefix Meaning + Root Meaning + Suffix Meaning

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- ? 3. Based on the root and suffix, what does the word *justify* mean?

If you combine the two word parts, *justify* means to make or show to be fair or reasonable. You might guess it means to show that something's reasonable.

### Check Your Meaning Using Substitution

After you have an idea of what an unknown word might mean, it's time to check your idea. Substitute your meaning for the unknown word in the sentence to see if it makes sense. If it does, you've got the correct meaning.

- ? 4. She **justified** her overreaction by saying that she had not gotten enough sleep the previous night.

Replace the word *justified* with your definition. Does the meaning make sense?

You might put in your definition like this:

She [**showed to be reasonable**] her overreaction by saying that she had not gotten enough sleep the previous night.

The wording sounds a little strange, but the meaning makes sense if you rearrange the words:

She showed that her overreaction was reasonable.

### *Reading for Understanding*

Anytime you think you might know what a word means, you can insert a similar word in its place. Does the similar word make sense?



Answer the following questions.



1. Divide the words below into their parts (prefixes, roots, and suffixes), and think through the meaning of each word part. Combine the meanings of each part to guess the meaning of the word.

	Word	Prefix	Root	Suffix
Word Parts	Ex: Amorphous	a-	-morph-	-ous
Definitions	Having the quality of no shape	None, without	Shape	Having a quality
Word Parts	Ambidextrous			
Definitions				
Word Parts	Transformation			
Definitions				
Word Parts	Nonconformity			
Definitions				



2. The money he had left in his bank account would be **insufficient** to pay for fixing the leak in his roof.

- a. Analyze the word parts of the word *insufficient*.

- b. Write a definition of the word *insufficient*.



3. The police determined that the arsonist was a **pyromaniac**.

- a. Analyze the word parts of the word *pyromaniac*.

- b. Write a definition of the word *pyromaniac*.



## Check Your Skills

Read the passage and answer the questions that follow.



Researchers have found a connection between heading, using the head to hit a soccer ball, and changes in the brain. The more heading people do, the more likely their thinking and memory will be affected. Doctors discovered more structural abnormalities in the brains of people who frequently used heading in soccer. Research also showed that these people are more likely to perform poorly on cognitive tests, especially tests involving memory.

Doctors are hesitant to say that heading caused the changes, however. They acknowledge a connection but won't confirm that heading is directly the cause of brain changes. To know for certain, doctors say they would need to perform a longitudinal study that observes people over a period of decades.

Soccer is the world's most popular sport, and heading is a common technique. In official games, players head the ball between six and 12 times, and often more. In this top level of play, the ball can move at velocities of 50 miles per hour or more. Doctors say it is not surprising that this might result in changes to the brain.

1. According to the text, what does *heading* mean?
  - a. To head out or leave
  - b. To use your head to hit a ball
  - c. To use your brain to think
  - d. Something that causes brain problems
  
2. What does *longitudinal* mean in this passage?
  - a. Observing over long periods of time
  - b. To move straight up and down
  - c. To move from side to side
  - d. Observing different items sequentially

3. Which word or phrase most directly shows you the definition of *longitudinal*?
- a. “for certain, they would need”
  - b. “head the ball between six and 12 times”
  - c. “observes people over a period of decades”
  - d. “especially tests involving memory”
4. What does *velocities* mean in this passage?
- a. Speeds
  - b. Travels
  - c. Organizations
  - d. Rules
5. Which word or phrase most directly shows you the definition of *velocities*?
- a. “top level of play”
  - b. “of 50 miles per hour or more”
  - c. “head the ball an average of six to 12 times”
  - d. “longitudinal study”
6. Which word is a synonym for *abnormalities*?
- a. Interesting facts
  - b. Irregularities
  - c. Regular changes
  - d. Diseased areas
7. Which word is most closely related to the word *abnormality*?
- a. Abs
  - b. Mality
  - c. Normal
  - d. It

*Remember  
the Concept*

- Read around a word for **context clues**.
- Break up a word to analyze **word parts**.