



## Comprehension Passage Pack for Grade 3

This resource contains the full text of reading comprehension passages in Levels 13 through 15 of Lexia® Core5® Reading. It supports teachers in further scaffolding comprehension instruction and activities for students.

The comprehension passages in Lexia Core5 Reading have been analyzed using a number of tools to determine complexity, including Lexile® measures. Based on this analysis, the comprehension passages are appropriately complex for students reading at the grade-level of skills in each program level. For example, the comprehension passages in Levels 13–15 (Grade 3 skills) typically fall within the range of Lexile measures deemed appropriate for on-level Grade 3 readers. (Texts with non-standard punctuation, such as poems and plays, are not measured.)

The *Content Area Connection* column in the table of contents can be used as a guide to determine the general topic of each passage. It does not indicate alignment to any specific content area standards.

Keywords in the passages are indicated in bold and defined in a glossary located at the end of the pack. The words are the same as those found in the online passages. While most terms are included to support word meaning, some terms are included because pronunciation may be challenging.

## Reading Comprehension Passages: Levels 13-15

Passage Title	Genre	Content Area Connection	Lexile Measure	Page
<b>Core5 Level 13</b>				
The Great Idea	Narrative Text	Social-Emotional Learning	510L	4
The Fishing Trip	Narrative Text	Social-Emotional Learning	510L	5
A Sweet Invention	Informational Text	Social-Emotional Learning	580L	6
The Unbelievable Bamboo	Informational Text	Life Science	700L	7
Let's Take a Vote	Narrative Text	Life Science	500L	8
Earth's Neighbor	Informational Text	Earth & Space Science	570L	9
A Snail Story	Fable	English Language Arts	510L	10
The Ant and the Dove	Fable	English Language Arts	500L	11
The Donkey and the Salt	Fable	English Language Arts	580L	12
What Happened to the Giant Kangaroo?	Informational Text	Life Science	690L	13
The Clownfish's Poisonous Home	Informational Text	Life Science	620L	14
The Tricky Death Cap	Informational Text	Life Science	560L	15
Play a Party Game	Informational Text	Social Studies	560L	16
Telling the Truth	Narrative Text	Social Studies	540L	17
Fair Bike Rules	Opinion/Persuasive	Social Studies	630L	18
The War Hero with Feathers	Informational Text	Social-Emotional Learning	690L	19
A Record Jump	Informational Text	Social-Emotional Learning	610L	20
A New Record!	Drama	Social-Emotional Learning	NA	21
<b>Core5 Level 14</b>				
Louis Braille	Informational Text	Social Studies	610L	23
The Invasion	Narrative Text	Social Studies	560L	25
Then and Now: Interview with My Grandmother, Sally Luff	Narrative Nonfiction	Social Studies	650L	27
Watching Clouds	Informational Text	Earth & Space Science	590L	29
Glaciers	Informational Text	Earth & Space Science	790L	30
Watery Forest	Informational Text	Earth & Space Science	720L	32
High, Higher, Highest!	Narrative Text	English Language Arts	520L	34
Nikki's New Shoes	Narrative Text	English Language Arts	500L	36

Passage Title	Genre	Content Area Connection	Lexile Measure	Page
<b>Core5 Level 14</b> continued				
Cricket's Songs	Fable	English Language Arts	530L	38
The Underground Army of Emperor Qin	Informational Text	Social Studies	790L	40
The Legend of the Chinese Empress	Legend	Social Studies	690L	42
An Ancient Invention	Informational Text	Social Studies	720L	44
Seeds on the Move	Informational Text	Life Science	550L	46
Strange, Squishy, and Smart!	Informational Text	Life Science	780L	48
Light Moths, Dark Moths	Informational Text	Life Science	790L	50
Pergrin and the Mermaid	Folktale	Social-Emotional Learning	530L	52
A Blue-Ribbon Friend	Narrative Text	Social-Emotional Learning	560L	54
Dear Advisers	Opinion/Persuasive	Social-Emotional Learning	630L	56
<b>Core5 Level 15</b>				
Iguanas: Then and Now	Informational Text	Life Science	640L	58
"Mei's First Day" by Julie Bogdon	Narrative Text	English Language Arts	620L	60
"Mei's Way with Words" by Julie Bogdon	Narrative Text	English Language Arts	580L	62
Never Late Again	Narrative Text	Physical Science	630L	64
Picturing the Past	Narrative Text	Social Studies	790L	66
Glossary				68

LEVEL 13, UNIT 1  
NARRATIVE TEXT

# The Great Idea

"Let's write a story about taking a trip," Miss Wing said to the class. "Who has visited an **interesting** place?"

Liz had not been on any trips, so she did not raise her hand.

"I visited a farm," said Reed.

"I went on rides at a theme park," added Jane.

Carl talked about sailing on the sea. Rose had camped in the woods.

Everyone but Liz had **gone** to an interesting place.

Miss Wing asked Liz, "Where have you visited?"

An **idea** popped into Liz's head and she blurted out, "I went to the moon!" Then she added, "Well, in a dream that I had."

The class chose the idea they liked best. Their story was called, "Our Trip to the Moon."

LEVEL 13, UNIT 2  
NARRATIVE TEXT

# The Fishing Trip

Mike looked out at the rain and **frowned**. He had planned to go fishing with Gramps today, but it was raining too hard.

With a sigh, he sat on his bed and said to himself, "I wish this bed was a boat in a lake. Then I could fish from it." Suddenly, he got an **idea**.

He found a string, a stick, and a magnet. He tied one end of the string to the stick and the other end to the magnet. Then he dropped paper clips on the floor. From his bed, Mike held the stick and tried to pick up the clips with the magnet. He was pretending to fish.

Gramps came by. "What a **clever** fishing rod!" Gramps said. "I'll make one, too, and we can see who gets more fish."

LEVEL 13, UNIT 3  
INFORMATIONAL TEXT

# A Sweet Invention



What is an **invention**? It is something that is made for the very first time. Every invention—from airplanes to zippers—has a story behind it. Here is the story behind the invention of a popular treat.

In 1930, Ruth Wakefield and her husband opened the **Toll House Inn** in the state of **Massachusetts**. Ruth made the food for the **guests**. Because she was an expert baker, many people came to the inn for her **delicious** desserts.

Ruth used baker's chocolate to make butter cookies. Baker's chocolate melts when heated. But one day, as she was mixing up the **batter**, she saw that she had no baker's chocolate. She decided to use a chocolate candy bar instead. She chopped the bar into small pieces and added it to the batter she was mixing. She expected the little pieces to melt when she baked the cookies. But the pieces didn't melt. The cookies came out of the oven with bits of soft, creamy chocolate in them. They were delicious!

Ruth Wakefield invented the world's very first chocolate chip cookie.

LEVEL 13, UNIT 4  
INFORMATIONAL TEXT

## The Unbelievable **BAMBOO**

If you **strolled** through a bamboo forest, you'd think you were surrounded by tall trees. You'd see **delicate** green leaves sprouting overhead. You might think the straight tree trunks were odd, **especially** if you knocked on one. It would be hollow. As plant experts know, trees are not hollow, but grasses are.

Now here's the amazing part: Bamboo isn't a tree. Could a plant this tall be a grass? In fact, that is exactly what bamboo is. It's a grass—a **gigantic** grass! A full-grown bamboo plant may grow 130 feet (40 meters) high. That's taller than most 12-story buildings.

Bamboo is unusual in other ways. It is the fastest-growing grass in the world. Many grow a foot (30.33 centimeters) in a single day. Some actually grow 3 or 4 feet (91-121 centimeters) in 24 hours. You wouldn't think something that grows so fast could be strong, but woody bamboo stems are incredibly strong. Bamboo has a **tensile** strength similar to steel. This means it is about as easy to tear apart bamboo as it is to tear apart steel. Bamboo also holds up under **pressure** better than **concrete**.

This amazing plant has over a thousand uses. Bamboo is used to build things from fences to floors, lamps to ladders, boats to bikes to bridges! It can be used to make fabric as soft as cotton. It's even good to eat!



LEVEL 13, UNIT 5  
NARRATIVE TEXT

# Let's Take a Vote

"Let's see what pet we like most," said Miss Cray. "Who likes cats best?"

Nine kids raised their hands and Sue did, too. Miss Cray wrote *CATS 10* on the board.

"Who votes for dogs?" asked Miss Cray.

Ten kids raised their hands and Sue did, too. Miss Cray wrote *DOGS 11*.

Three kids voted for fish and Sue did, too. *FISH 4* wrote Miss Cray. Then Sue and two kids voted for birds. Miss Cray wrote *BIRDS 3* on the board.

Miss Cray looked at the numbers on the board and frowned. "I count three, but  $10 + 11 + 4 + 3$  is 28, and there are 25 children in our class."

"Sue voted every time for every pet!" announced Gil in a loud voice.

"You must select one pet and vote just once," Miss Cray informed Sue.

"But my family has a pet cat, a pet dog, a pet fish, and a pet bird," explained Sue with a shrug. "How can I choose just one?"



LEVEL 13, UNIT 6  
INFORMATIONAL TEXT

# Earth's Neighbor

As night comes, a light sparkles in the western sky. The shining object looks bigger and brighter than any night star. People call it the evening star. The same object can **appear** in the east at dawn. Then it is called the morning star. This body in space is not a star at all. It is the planet **Venus**.

Planets do not give off their own light, as stars do. Venus looks bright because the Sun's light bounces off it and reaches planet Earth.

Venus is Earth's closest planet neighbor. It is the second planet from the Sun, and Earth is the third. Space scientists have sent **spacecraft** to Venus, but astronauts cannot go there. Venus is extremely hot. The **temperature** on its surface is higher than 450 degrees **Celsius**, or 840 degrees **Fahrenheit**. Thick, heavy, hot clouds cover the planet. They are made of deadly gases.

Venus may not be the kind of place to enjoy up close. But seen from Earth, Venus can really **dazzle**.

LEVEL 13, UNIT 7  
FABLE

# A Snail Story

These days, snails are very slow, and as they crawl along, they leave a trail of slime. Once upon a time, snails were FAST. They could outrun all the other animals.

The other animals didn't like it, and here's why:

Let's say Goat was walking along. ZIP! Snail raced by, too fast to see. WHOOSH! It left a slime trail. WHOOPS! Goat slipped on the slime and fell. "Can you please slow down?" Goat asked.

Again and again, animals slipped and fell after Snail zipped by. Every time this happened, the animals begged Snail to slow down. Finally, the animals went to see the King and Queen. "It's bad for Snail to be so fast," they said. "Because we don't see her or her slime and then we fall."

The King and Queen spoke to Snail. "You have shown that you do not care about anyone but yourself. Now you must live alone. Leave us with nothing but what you can carry on your back."

Snail packed everything she owned into the shell on her back. It was so heavy that she could only crawl along slowly. That is why snails are still so slow today.

LEVEL 13, UNIT 8  
FABLE

# The Ant and the Dove

One day, a **dove** saw an ant fall into a **brook**. The ant tried to get out, but she couldn't swim. The dove felt sorry for the ant, so he grabbed a leaf and dropped it into the water. The ant **hailed** herself onto the leaf, and then she floated to shore. The dove smiled as he flew off.

The next day, the ant saw the same dove sleeping in a tree. She also saw a man with a large stone that he wanted to throw at the dove.

The ant bit the man on the heel. He yelled and dropped the stone. The noise woke up the dove, who flew away.

The ant felt good because she had helped someone who had helped her.

LEVEL 13, UNIT 9  
FABLE

# The Donkey and the Salt:

## *A Fable*

Long ago, a **merchant bought** big sacks of salt at the market. He loaded the sacks onto his donkey's back, and the two set off for home.

They came to a stream and began to **wade** across it. The heavy **burden** caused the donkey to lose his balance. He slipped and fell into the water. When the donkey stood up again, his load was much lighter. Most of the salt had **dissolved** in the water.

The merchant returned to the market and bought salt again. Once again, he loaded the sacks onto the donkey's back. When they came to the stream again, the donkey remembered how to lighten his burden. He purposely fell into the water. The salt disappeared, and the donkey rose to his feet without the weight of his load.

The merchant watched with a knowing look. Then he led the donkey back to the market. This time, the merchant did not buy salt. He bought a load of sponges. When the donkey came to the stream, he quickly lay down. The sponges filled with water. Back on his feet, the donkey was surprised to find that his load was much heavier than before.



LEVEL 13, UNIT 10  
INFORMATIONAL TEXT

# What Happened to the Giant Kangaroo?

Australia was once home to a kangaroo that could reach over 8 feet (2.5 meters). This **giant** had **hoof-like** toes with claws. As it roamed the forests, it easily reached up into trees and grabbed leaves to eat.

Giant kangaroos died off over 40,000 years ago. Why? Little **evidence** has been found. But **scientists** have offered two **theories** about what killed off the giant kangaroos:

- *Climate change made them **extinct**.* Fossil evidence shows that giant kangaroos struggled through bad droughts. These long periods of time without rain killed off the plants that the kangaroos ate. In between **droughts**, there were huge floods. Flooding destroyed more of the plants and killed off kangaroos weakened by drought.
- *Humans made them extinct.* Fossil evidence also shows that the first humans arrived in Australia about 43,000 years ago. They cleared away forests to plant **crops**. So giant kangaroos had less and less to eat. Meanwhile, humans hunted and killed them. Before long, giant kangaroos were wiped out.

In 2010, an Australian scientist named Gavin Prideaux wrote a paper. He argued that both theories could be true: The droughts killed off many kangaroos. Those left were soon killed off by humans.

Scientists continue to search for evidence. Maybe they'll finally solve the mystery!

LEVEL 13, UNIT 11  
INFORMATIONAL TEXT

# The Clownfish's Poisonous Home

The clownfish is a cheerful-looking little fish. Most are bright orange with three up-and-down white stripes outlined in black. These fish have a strange home. They prefer living among the long arms, called **tentacles**, of certain sea **anemones**. These tentacles have sharp tips filled with poison. Anemones use their tentacles to protect themselves and catch **prey** to eat. Their sting is strong enough to kill small fish.

Clownfish are small fish. Yet they stay safe among the anemone's tentacles. They don't seem to get stung. **Scientists** think this is because a clownfish's scales are covered with a thin layer of slime. This slime seems to keep the anemone from stinging.

Living together works out well for both animals. The clownfish eats the anemone's leftovers. It gets fed while keeping the anemone clean. The anemone protects the clownfish. Clownfish are poor swimmers and would be easy prey out on their own. They constantly move around, **skirting** and staying away from the anemone's tentacles. Clownfish also protect the anemone. They dart out and chase away butterfly fish and other fish that like to nibble on and eat the tentacles.

The clownfish and the anemone are not exactly friends. But they do help each other out!

LEVEL 13, UNIT 12  
INFORMATIONAL TEXT

## THE TRICKY Death Cap

Mushrooms sold in supermarkets are good for you. Many wild mushrooms, though, are **poisonous**. One is really **dangerous**. Scientists call it **Amanita phalloides** (a-muh-NIE-tuh fuh-LOY-deez), but it's known as the Death Cap. People die every year from eating poisonous mushrooms. Ninety percent of them ate Death Caps.

The Death Cap grows all over the world, but mostly in **Europe** and the United States. This mushroom is tricky in two ways:

1. *The Death Cap doesn't look deadly.* It **resembles** a lot of harmless types of mushrooms. It doesn't smell bad. (Some people think it smells like roses.) It tastes good. You wouldn't spit it out.
2. *You probably won't know you ate a deadly mushroom.* It takes from 6 to 24 hours to get sick. Then your stomach feels terrible, and you throw up. After a while, you feel better. Inside, though, the mushroom is hurting you.

There is no cure for the poisonous Death Cap. But if you get medical help sooner rather than later, you have a pretty good chance of surviving. Here's the best plan: NEVER eat a wild mushroom!



LEVEL 13, UNIT 13  
INFORMATIONAL TEXT

# Play a *Party Game*

You and your friends can have fun playing the party game Camouflage. Something that is **camouflaged** is hard to see because it blends in with its background. In the game of Camouflage, players try to find things that are hidden in plain sight.

First, gather about ten small **objects** to hide in a room. Examples include: marbles, pencils, crayons, a piece of tape, and paper clips, to name a few.

Next, list the names of the objects on a sheet of paper. Make copies of the list to give to the players.

After that, place each object in a spot where it is camouflaged. Use its color or shape to choose a good spot. Do not put it behind or under anything.

Then give a list to each player, and explain the rules. Say, "**Roam** around the room, looking for objects on the list as you walk. Do not touch anything. If you find an object, come to me and whisper where you found it. I'll check off that name on your list."

The first player to find all the objects is the winner.



LEVEL 13, UNIT 14  
NARRATIVE TEXT

## Telling The Truth

"No, I didn't take the cookie," Jayden told his mother. He wore a smile that he hoped looked innocent.

"Then why are there chocolate crumbs on your face?" Mama asked. "'Have you lied to me?"

"Oops," said Jayden, wiping his mouth with his sleeve. He had been caught! "I knew I wasn't supposed to have a cookie before dinner," he said. "Sorry I **broke the rule** about that."

"In fact, you broke two rules," said Mama. "You ate a cookie when you weren't supposed to, but you also lied about it. Lying is **against the rules**, and lying is worse than taking a cookie. Promise me that you'll never lie again."

Jayden felt **ashamed**, so he said **sincerely**, "I promise never to lie again and always tell the truth."

That evening, Auntie Brandi came by to visit. She was wearing a new hat. "The salesperson said this hat is the latest fashion," Auntie Brandi told Jayden's Mama. "Do you like it?"

"It's lovely," said Mama.

Auntie Brandi turned to Jayden and asked him, "What do you think of my hat?"

Jayden looked at Auntie Brandi in her hat and remembered his promise. "I think it looks like someone dumped a bowl of spaghetti on your head," he said.

LEVEL 13, UNIT 15  
OPINION

# FAIR BIKE RULES

The city **council** here in Karlinsburg is going to vote on a new rule: No bicycles on sidewalks. This rule is unfair to **youngsters** in this **community**.

First of all, riding bikes in the street is too dangerous for children. Car drivers may not see a bike in time to stop. The door of a parked car may suddenly open. **Bicyclists** are injured as a result.

The sidewalk is safer than the street. Some people have **complained** about bicyclists on sidewalks. They say that speeding bikes have knocked down **pedestrians** who cannot get out of the way. But instead of **banning** bikes on sidewalks, how about making a few simple rules for safe riding?

- Slow down.
- Politely ask pedestrians if you can pass them.
- Walk the bike if the sidewalk is crowded.
- Stop at every driveway and cross street.

Sidewalk rules like these can give everyone a safe way to get around. When a Karlinsburg youngster learns to ride a bike, these rules can be part of the training. Please let council members know that they should vote for safe riding on sidewalks, not for banning bicycles.

LEVEL 13, UNIT 16  
INFORMATIONAL TEXT

# The War Hero with Feathers

World War I was fought in Europe from 1914 to 1918. Armies didn't have cell phones or other fancy equipment back then. If they needed to send an important message, they put it inside a capsule. Then they tied the little tube to a pigeon's leg. Then they released the pigeon. The bird quickly flew home to headquarters, even if it was hundreds of miles away and bombs were going off.

One pigeon flew 12 important missions. He was named Cher Ami, which means "dear friend" in French. In October 1918, 194 soldiers were trapped behind enemy lines. The men were out of supplies. So they tied a message to Cher Ami's leg and released him. The bird flew 25 miles in 25 minutes. He arrived safely home with the message.

This was amazing because Cher Ami had been shot twice and lost part of his leg! All the soldiers were saved. It was his last mission. Cher Ami was patched up and sent home. But not before he was awarded the highest French honor: the French "Croix de Guerre" ("Cross of War"). Cher Ami was one of the heroes of World War I!

LEVEL 13, UNIT 17  
INFORMATIONAL TEXT

# A Record *Jump*

Every four years, the world's best **athletes** compete at the Summer **Olympic Games**. Sometimes, athletes set new records in their events. And once in a while, an athlete does something that makes everyone **gasp** in wonder. That is what Bob Beamon did in 1968.

That year, the Olympic Games were held in Mexico City. Bob Beamon was a 22-year-old American competing in the long jump.

Beamon ran down the runway at top speed. He leaped from the take-off board set on the ground. He rose high into the air and soared over the sand pit. When he landed in the sand, he knew he had jumped farther than he had ever jumped before. Had he set a new **record**?

The scoreboard showed the distance he had jumped—8.9 meters, or 29 feet 2 1/2 inches. That would be like leaping over five bicycles lined up end to end! Beamon fell to the ground in shock. He had beaten the world's record by more than half a meter, almost two feet! None of the other athletes could even come close. Bob Beamon's amazing long jump record lasted almost 23 years.



LEVEL 13, UNIT 18  
DRAMA



### **Cast of Characters**

ANNIE, a 6-year-old girl

IAN, Annie's 11-year-old brother

OMAR, Ian's 11-year-old friend

### **Scene 1**

[One afternoon in the kitchen of IAN and ANNIE's home. ANNIE, IAN, and OMAR are sitting at a table. IAN and OMAR are **enthusiastically** reading a book together.]

IAN. Omar, look at this! This guy set a record for smashing concrete blocks with his hand!

OMAR. [Reading] 90 blocks in one minute! [Pointing to another page] What did they do?

IAN. They rowed that boat all the way across the Atlantic Ocean.

OMAR. [Reading] They broke a speed record doing it!

ANNIE. What's a record?

IAN. That's when someone does something better or longer or faster than ever before. [To OMAR] Look at this picture.

OMAR. That crowd broke a record for the world's largest snowball fight! That sounds like fun.

[ANNIE stands and exits through the kitchen door. IAN and OMAR keep turning pages and commenting. **Curtain.**]



## Scene 2

[15 minutes later. IAN and OMAR have put the book aside and are making snacks. ANNIE bursts in through the door.]

ANNIE. [*Breathlessly*] I did it, Ian! I did it! I broke a record!  
[IAN and OMAR give each other puzzled looks.] I did three **cartwheels** in a row without falling!

IAN. Uh, Annie, that's cool, but I don't think that three cartwheels can get someone in the record book. You'd probably have to do thousands of them.

ANNIE. [*Still excited*] The most I could do before was two cartwheels. Now I did three! I broke a record!

OMAR. [**Shrugging**] Well, she DID break her own record.

IAN. [*To ANNIE*] You're the champ!

[ANNIE stands tall and pumps her fists over her head.  
Curtain.]

LEVEL 14, UNIT 1  
INFORMATIONAL TEXT

# Louis Braille



**Louis Braille** was born in France in 1809. He became blind at the age of three because of an accident. At the village school, Louis learned by listening. He wished he could learn by reading.

When he was ten, Louis began living at a school in Paris. This school for blind children was the first of its kind. The students learned to read using books that had big raised letters for fingers to feel. The thick, heavy books had only a few words on a page. Reading each page took a long time.

Another way to read by touch had just been invented. Dots and dashes were punched into cardboard with a pointed tool. Fingertips could sense the bumps on the other side of the cardboard. The raised dots and dashes stood for sounds in words.

Louis and other students were **eager** to learn the new system. But soon they were disappointed. Many dots and dashes were needed for just one word, so reading was much too slow.

But Louis liked the idea of fingertips touching little bumps. He tried to think of ways to make the dot-and-dash system simpler. He began spending all his free time with a pointed tool and thick paper, punching little holes. He kept trying to make patterns that were easy to understand.



After three years of trying, Louis finally had a system that made fast reading possible. In his system, raised dots stood for letters and numbers. Each set of six dots fit under a fingertip. By **sensing** which dots were raised in a set, a reader could quickly make out the letter or number. Louis Braille invented this system when he was only fifteen years old.

This system of raised dots worked so well that it is still used today. It is called **braille**.



LEVEL 14, UNIT 2  
NARRATIVE TEXT

# THE INVASION

It was exactly sixteen minutes past noon. Time for Dr. Marvel to test his Critter-Twitter machine that he had been **experimenting** with in his basement for years. He put on the headphones and picked up the mind-microphone. His eyes sparkled with excitement as he aimed the mind-microphone at his pet cat who was sitting on the bookshelf, cleaning her fur.

The scientist turned on his machine and through the headphones, he heard a low, purring voice: "Clean my leg. Keep cleaning and keep cleaning. What else? Clean my other leg. Keep cleaning and cleaning."

"Ha! Ha! Ha!" Dr. Marvel **snickered** happily. "I've done it! My machine can read an animal's thoughts!"

He turned the mind-microphone on his dog, who was lying on the floor looking up at him. He heard a whiny voice: "Food, am I getting food? No, no. Play, are we going to play? No, no. Out, am I going out? No, no..."

Suddenly the headphones screeched, and Dr. Marvel pointed the mind-microphone at the window while he adjusted his machine.

Strange whispering noises filled his headphones. "It was such a long journey, but we're here! Our **invasion** was successful and we can take over this place!"



Dr. Marvel ripped off his headphones and looked around in terror. “Yikes, I’m getting messages from space! I’m hearing creatures from another planet, and they’re invading Earth! I must pack up my car and head for the mountains where I’ll live in my cabin. But those invaders won’t get my machine!”

He smashed his Critter-Twitter machine to pieces and then scrambled upstairs with his pets. He never noticed the long line of ants crawling in from the window. They were invading his basement.



LEVEL 14, UNIT 3  
INFORMATIONAL TEXT

## THEN AND NOW:

INTERVIEW WITH MY GRANDMOTHER, SALLY LUFF

**ADAM RUIZ:** The topic for my school assignment is how **communication** has changed since long ago. Can you tell me about **technology** when you were a child in the 1960s?

**SALLY LUFF:** I'm happy to tell you all about it.

**AR:** Thanks, Grandma. Okay, my first question is: What is a big change in communication since you were my age?

**SL:** Well, telephones have certainly changed. In my childhood, we had no wireless connections—no cellphones or smartphones. Our phones had to stay plugged into the wall. And, if you can imagine, they all had dials that you turned by poking a finger into a hole. A phone was just for talking.

**AR:** Did you have a computer at home?

**SL:** In the 1960s, only big companies had computers. Personal computers weren't invented yet.

**AR:** Did you have a television?

**SL:** Yes, we did. A big rooftop **antenna** picked up **signals** that stations were **broadcasting**. There were only six stations, and we moved a dial on the TV to change the channel. There were color TVs, but the one in our house showed pictures only in black and white. When a favorite program was broadcast, we all watched the show together.



**AR:** Would you want to go back to the days when there were no smartphones, personal computers, or online video?

**SL:** No, because now I expect **instant** communication of all kinds. But, I think that all our **digital devices** have brought less of what we're enjoying right now—talking face to face.

**AR:** Has anything not changed since you were growing up?

**SL:** When I was your age, I had the same school assignment you have! So that hasn't changed. Like you, I interviewed my grandmother. She was born in 1890, and I was surprised to learn that she grew up without electric lights or indoor plumbing. Maybe your grandchildren will interview you someday. What do you think will surprise them?"

LEVEL 14, UNIT 4  
INFORMATIONAL TEXT

## Watching Clouds

Have you ever seen clouds that look like fluffy white cotton floating in the bright blue sky? These clouds often have flat bottoms and piled-up pillowy tops. They are called **cumulus** clouds. On a warm summer day, it's pleasant to watch their changing shapes as they drift across the sky.

At times, a cumulus cloud grows very tall. Then it may turn into a towering gray-black storm cloud. Its top spreads out in a flat shape. Thunder booms, and lightning flashes from it. Heavy rain pours down.

Clouds that look like flat sheets are called stratus clouds. **Stratus** clouds that are close to the earth can bring a light, steady rain. A day of **drizzle** often means that gray stratus clouds are low in the sky.

**Cirrus** clouds are white and feathery. They are high in the sky and are usually a sign of fine weather. Some cirrus clouds are known as **mares'** tails because they have long, streaming ends.

Clouds are important. They can bounce sunlight back to space to cool the earth. They can also trap heat, warming the earth. Clouds come in different shapes and types, but all are made of water. The water takes the form of tiny drops of **liquid** or ice. When the drops grow too heavy to stay up, they fall to the earth as rain, snow, or hail. Clouds return water to the earth, where it is needed by all living things.

LEVEL 14, UNIT 5  
INFORMATIONAL TEXT

# Glaciers:

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## *Rivers of Ice*

Thousands of years ago, during the Ice Age, most of the world was covered with ice. Then, roughly 11,000 years ago, the earth began to warm. These days, you must travel to the North or South Pole or to high mountains to see what's left from the Ice Age. This is where ice fields and **glaciers** can be found.

### ***What Is a Glacier?***

Glaciers are huge masses of ice. The biggest one covers over 620,000 square miles (over 1 million square kilometers). A glacier is like an ice field except for one big difference: movement. Glaciers flow! But most move extremely slowly, less than one foot (30 centimeters) a day.

### ***How Does a Glacier Form?***

Glaciers form when more snow falls in winter than melts or dries up in summer. Snow builds up year after year, forming layers. Each new layer pushes down on the layer beneath. This pressure causes last year's snow to turn into grain-like **pellets** called firn. As more layers form, creating more pressure, the firn turns into ice. The ice finally becomes so thick and heavy, it begins to move.



### ***How Does a Glacier Move?***

The whole glacier slowly spreads out as it moves downhill. This general movement of a glacier is called *creep*. But some parts of the glacier move faster than others. The fastest moving are the top and middle layers, where ice is sliding over ice. The bottom, which rubs against the land, moves more slowly.

### ***What Does a Glacier Do?***

As a glacier moves, it changes the land. Its movement wears down the rock **surface** underneath, slowly carving out valleys. The icy bottom of the glacier also catches on cracks in rock. The heavy, moving ice rips out sections of rock and carries them along. As it continues to flow, the glacier peels back layer after rocky layer. It takes a river of ice to rip up rock!

LEVEL 14, UNIT 6  
INFORMATIONAL TEXT

# Watery Forest

Along the **seacoasts** of warm lands, remarkable trees grow. They are mangrove trees. They have the special ability to live where most trees can't. Mangrove trees survive in salty ocean water. Their roots are able to remove most of the sea salt which can be damaging to plants. Mangrove trees send down roots from their branches. The tangled roots are partly underwater and partly above water. They help to hold up the tree in the soft mud.

Mangrove forests are also called mangrove swamps. A swamp is a kind of wetland. In swamps, the most common plants are trees and shrubs. People have viewed mangrove forests and other swamps as dangerous, useless places. Swamps have mud, mosquitoes, and creatures lurking in the shadows. Around the world, mangrove swamps have been cleared: cut down for houses, shrimp farms, and vacation spots.

However, many people are trying to protect mangrove swamps. They have learned how **valuable** these wetlands are.

Mangrove forests are a **barrier** between land and sea. They protect the coastline from strong waves during storms. They also protect the ocean from **pollution**. Water with **chemicals** from farms and industries flows into the mangrove swamp. There, tree roots filter out pollutants.

The roots also trap and collect silt from the water. Silt is made of tiny bits of rock. When piled up, silt helps build and form more dry land.





Mangrove forests are centers of life. Reptiles, amphibians, birds, and mammals find food and homes here. The **network** of roots shelters baby fish and shellfish. The **endangered** American crocodile lives in the mangrove forests of Florida. The rare Bengal tiger lives in the Sundarbans (SUN-duh-bunz) of Southeast Asia. The Sundarbans is the largest mangrove forest in the world.

When people think about saving the world's forests, they often picture rainforests. Mangrove forests are not as well known. Yet they deserve attention and protection. Mangrove forests are wonderful wetlands.

LEVEL 14, UNIT 7  
NARRATIVE TEXT

# High, Higher, Highest

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"Oh, why did I let you talk me into this?" Miguel said to his cousin Luis. "You know I don't like high places."

The boys had just taken their seats in a car of the Ferris wheel at Seaside Park. "You'll like it when you get used to it," Luis answered.

The giant wheel turned and lifted their car into the air. Miguel could feel the car swinging and he squeezed his eyes shut. "I hate it, I hate it," he said.

"Just relax," Luis said. "It's not going fast."

"But...it's...going...high," said Miguel through **clenched** teeth. "I can't look."

The car rose higher, and then it swung in place. When it started up again, Miguel **swallowed** hard. "I hate it, I hate it," he said in a shaky voice. His knees **trembled** and he gripped the safety bar so tightly his hands hurt. "I'm not looking," he said.

"We're at the top," said Luis.



Miguel opened first one eye and then the other. He saw the colorful **carousel** and the racecar ride far below. All the people looked so small! The whole park spread before him as he looked down at the **boardwalk**, the sandy beach, and the crashing waves. The **ocean** stretched all the way to the sky. The car was rocking as gently as a cradle.

At last, the ride ended, and as the boys stepped out onto firm ground, Miguel said, "Let's go on it again."

LEVEL 14, UNIT 8  
NARRATIVE TEXT

# Nikki's New Shoes

Nikki had brand-new sneakers. They were bright white, and she loved looking at them. "I'm going to be so careful with these sneakers," Nikki announced to Momma. "I promise I won't get a **speck** of dirt on them."

"You can try," Momma replied. "But you'll have to be very careful."

Outside, Nikki watched where she stepped on the sidewalk. Her head was down, so she did not see the little boy with the ice cream cone. BUMP! Nikki danced back fast. A blob of strawberry ice cream landed on her shirt. But nothing had dripped on her sneakers.

Nikki walked on with care. When she came to a puddle, she stepped around it. At that moment, a girl on a bike sped through the puddle. SPLASH! Wet **splotches** of mud spread across Nikki's shorts. "I'm lucky that nothing splashed on my sneakers," Nikki said to herself.

Nikki reached her friend Kayla's house. They ate lunch together. Nikki sat with her feet tucked under her. She squirted mustard on her sleeve by mistake. Some grape juice spilled on her lap.

The girls played outside. Kayla's backyard had a grassy hill that was perfect for tumbling. Nikki took off her sneakers. As she rolled down the hill, the grass stained her socks and clothes.



When Nikki came home, Momma looked at her in surprise. Nikki's clothes had pink, brown, yellow, purple, and green stains on them. "I thought you were going to be careful," Momma said.

"I was careful," Nikki said proudly as she pointed to her feet. Her sneakers were still bright white.

LEVEL 14, UNIT 9  
FABLE

## Cricket's Songs

Long ago, **Cricket** wanted to make the most beautiful music in the world. So on warm summer nights, he would stand out in the **meadow**, clear his throat, and shriek: "I'm si-i-i-i-inging! Isn't it l-o-o-o-o-vely! I'm such a great s-i-i-i-i-inger!"

The other animals would roll over in their beds and put their hands over their ears, waiting for him to stop. It was awful to hear. But nobody wanted to hurt Cricket's feelings and tell him how terrible his singing was.

**Nightingale** tried giving him singing lessons. It didn't help.

**Lark** tried to teach him her lovely songs. It did no good.

Then one day, Cricket got a bad cold. He couldn't even speak, much less sing. The other animals were relieved not to hear his songs every night. But they were sorry he was sick. So they brought him food every day and tried to cheer him up.

After a while, Cricket got better. But something had happened. That night, he prepared to sing, standing up tall in the meadow and clearing his throat. When he tried to sing, nothing came out. He could still talk, but he couldn't sing!

The other animals were relieved, but Cricket was angry. He lay down and **furiously** kicked his back legs up and down.

*"Creak! Creak! Creak!"*



"Did I make that sound?" wondered Cricket. He rubbed his back legs together again.

*"Creak! Creak! Creak!"*

Cricket was **overjoyed**. He could still make music for the animals at night, when the weather was warm. The animals were thrilled because they liked his new "creaky" songs. They were like **lullabies** that helped them fall asleep.

And that is why, on warm summer nights, you'll hear crickets rubbing their back legs together, making lullabies for everyone to hear.

LEVEL 14, UNIT 10  
INFORMATIONAL TEXT

# The Underground Army *of Emperor Qin*

In March of 1974, some farmers were digging a well in northwest China. They accidentally found some life-sized **statues** that had been hidden for more than 2,000 years. Since then, **archaeologists** have uncovered over 400 horses and 7,000 **soldiers**. This army of statues turned out to be part of a huge underground city.

All the statues are made of a kind of baked clay known as **terracotta**. The riderless horses are life-sized and look real. So do the soldiers. Each soldier has a different-looking face with a realistic **expression**. The soldiers' hair and clothing differ, too. These soldiers and horses are all lined up around the underground city. In the center of this city is the **burial** place of the first **emperor** of China.

This emperor was not quite 13 years old when he began to rule 2,200 years ago. He was called Prince **Ying Zheng** then. At that time in Chinese history, China was made up of different states with different rulers. They were always at war with one another. As he got older, Ying Zheng used his army to defeat these other rulers. Eleven years after becoming ruler, he united all the states into one country, China. He renamed himself "First Emperor of Qin" but is often known as Emperor Qin. (Qin is pronounced *chin*. From Qin, we get the name China.)





According to Chinese **historians**, Emperor Qin brought in 700,000 workers from all over China. They toiled day and night for eleven years to create the huge underground city. The city was protected by a huge army. This showed that Emperor Qin was still powerful, even after he had died.

LEVEL 14, UNIT 11  
LEGEND

The Legend of  
**THE CHINESE EMPRESS**

Today, silk fabric is used all over the world. It is made from silkworm **cocoons**.

Silk making began in China thousands of years ago. Ancient Chinese silk was a valuable **trade** item. Wealthy, powerful people in many parts of the world desired Chinese silk fabric. The invention of silk fabric is one reason China became a powerful and rich country.

But nobody knows exactly how silk was discovered. One Chinese **legend** gives a possible answer.

Long ago, Lei-Tsu became China's first **empress**. The young empress enjoyed sitting in her garden. She often sipped tea in the shade of a large mulberry tree. One morning, Lei-Tsu heard a soft plop. Something had fallen from the tree directly into her teacup. It was a small, white cocoon.

Lei-Tsu watched the cocoon in amazement. The cocoon's shiny **strands unraveled** in the hot tea. The result was one long silk thread. The thread filled the cup and flowed onto Lei-Tsu's lap. The thread wound itself around her chair. Soon, the entire garden was covered with **shimmering** coils of strong, soft silk thread.

The empress wondered about the fine thread. What if many cocoons were unwound? Perhaps the threads could be woven into fabric. She imagined an **elegant** cloth made of this thread.



Lei-Tsu designed a machine to weave the fabric she imagined. Then, she taught the women in her court how to make the fabric, too. She showed them how to boil the cocoons, unwind the cocoon's strands, and weave the silk. She succeeded in keeping the craft of silk-making a secret for 3,000 years.

Or so the legend says.

LEVEL 14, UNIT 12  
INFORMATIONAL TEXT

## AN ANCIENT INVENTION

Two thousand years ago, a great scholar named Zhang Heng lived in China and served the emperor. He wrote books about planet Earth and space. He studied mathematics and geography. He was also an inventor.

One of Zhang Heng's inventions was a **device** to help the emperor and his whole empire. The device was made of a round, metal jar. Around the circular top were eight dragon heads. They pointed in eight directions. Each dragon held a ball in its mouth. Below the dragons were eight toads, each with an open mouth.

Zhang Heng showed his invention to the emperor's **court**. He explained how the device worked. Inside the jar, a **pendulum** connected to a set of **levers**. If the ground shook—even far away—a series of actions began:

- The pendulum swung and pushed a lever.
- The lever caused a dragon to drop its ball.
- The ball fell into the mouth of the toad below.
- The action made a loud clang.

Zhang Heng explained that the device could show in which direction an **earthquake** had just occurred. That is, the dragon that dropped its ball pointed to the earthquake.



In a vast and large land like China, people in the emperor's court wanted to know when and where earthquakes happened. That way, they could send help quickly. They wouldn't have to wait for a **messenger** to bring the news. But could Zhang Heng's dragons and toads really **detect** an earthquake?

One day, a ball dropped from a dragon's mouth. CLANG! Everyone in the emperor's court heard the loud noise even though nobody in the area had felt the earth tremble or shake. Several days later, a messenger arrived with news of an earthquake several hundred miles to the northwest. Zhang Heng's invention worked!

Zhang Heng invented the world's first seismograph. (Seismograph comes from Greek words for "shaking" and "recording.") A seismograph **magnifies** and detects ground motion. Modern seismographs help scientists **monitor** earthquakes worldwide.

LEVEL 14, UNIT 13  
INFORMATIONAL TEXT

# Seeds

## *on the Move*

A maple tree is growing by the roadside. Nobody planted it here. Nearby are yellow **dandelions**. Nobody planted them either. How did these plants get here?

Maple trees and dandelions grow from seeds. Most plants make seeds. Each seed holds a future plant. That new plant can grow only if the seed finds a spot with the right soil, sunlight, and water. To reach those spots, seeds must travel.

Many plants **rely on** the wind to carry off their seeds. Maple trees produce seeds that glide through the air on flat parts that act like wings. Some plants, like dandelions, produce seeds with light hairs **attached**. The hairs keep the seed aloft in the breeze.

Plants also rely on animals to carry seeds to new places. Some plants make seeds that have fatty parts attached. Ants bring the seeds to their nest, eat the fatty parts, and throw out the seeds. **Squirrels bury** seeds for later eating, but some seeds stay buried. Birds carry off **berries** and drop the seeds after eating the fruit.

Some plants, such as cocklebur and sticktight, make seeds that have hooks and spines. These seeds cling to fur, feathers, and clothing. The seeds take long-distance rides.

Some plants make seeds that float. Streams carry the seeds to new shores. Coconut seeds are **ocean voyagers**. They can float for years.



There are even plants with exploding seeds! It's easy to see why the plants called touch-me-nots have that name. If a ripe **seedpod** is touched, the seeds shoot out. Other plants explode their seeds, too. The record holder may be the sandbox tree. It can shoot its seeds as far as 148 feet (45 meters).

Seeds are built for travel, but only some of them will have a successful trip. These seeds will put down roots. They may grow into plants that make seeds of their own.

LEVEL 14, UNIT 14  
INFORMATIONAL TEXT

# Strange, Squishy *...and Smart!*

The octopus is unusual: It has no bones, eight arms, a huge head, and a mouth like a parrot's beak. It can change colors, squirt poison, and lift four times its own weight. And, **scientists** are learning, it seems to be smart!

Here are some behaviors that scientists know about:

- They've filmed small octopuses in the ocean carrying two halves of a coconut shell. When the octopus is in danger, it darts inside one half and pulls the other half over itself.
- Sometimes in the morning, **aquarium** workers would find fish missing from a tank. Then they'd see watery trails on the floor. They realized that octopuses were getting out of their tanks at night. They were crawling to the fish tanks, eating fish, and returning to their tanks.
- Curious octopuses are interested in toys dropped into their tanks. Scientists at the **Lorenz Institute** note that octopuses become attached to certain toys. They carry them around like a child with a stuffed animal.
- A giant Pacific octopus was being studied at the Seattle Aquarium. She was given a glass jar with food inside. She figured out how to screw off the top to get to the food all by herself.





- Octopuses have several ways to open shells to eat the shellfish inside. They smash **mussel** shells. They pry open some clam shells. They use their saw-like tongues to drill into stronger clam shells. Scientist Jennifer Mather and her team decided to trick some octopuses. The creatures were given clam shells that they usually just pried apart. But these shells were wired shut. The octopuses tried different **techniques** until they were successful.

Why is the octopus so smart? Mather has a theory. She explains that an octopus has no body protection and lives in a dangerous, ever-changing environment. It needs to be **clever** to **survive**.

LEVEL 14, UNIT 15  
INFORMATIONAL TEXT

## LIGHT MOTHS, DARK MOTHS

The white peppered moth gets its name from the black speckles that cover its white wings. These moths often rest on trees.

England is one place where peppered moths live. By the late 1800s, though, people in English cities and towns had noticed a big change in peppered moths. Most now had black wings! What caused the change?

Before the 1800s, peppered moths were hard to see against tree bark. That's because their pale wings and black spots **camouflaged** them. Camouflaged wings helped peppered moths stay hidden from predators.

During the 1800s, the **environment** in English cities and towns changed. Coal was burning in homes and factories. The air filled with powdery, black soot as a result. The black powder landed on trees, darkening the bark. White peppered moths were not camouflaged anymore. Birds and other predators found the white peppered moths against the dark, soot-covered trees.

But there were some peppered moths with an unusual **trait**. Their wings were black. This difference occurred naturally, in the **cell** parts called **genes**. Genes are passed down from parents to **offspring**. When the trees darkened, black-wing peppered moths were camouflaged! Hidden from predators, many of the black-winged peppered moths lived long



enough to produce offspring. The moths with white and speckled wings were now much easier for predators to find and eat. Therefore, fewer and fewer white peppered moths survived long enough to **reproduce**. It was not long before people were noticing that most peppered moths were black.

In the late 1900s, England **reduced** the pollution from coal soot in the air. Tree bark lightened. White peppered moths became more common than black ones, again.

Scientific studies of these moths helped show how living things change. The studies also made peppered moths famous.

LEVEL 14, UNIT 16  
FOLKTALE

# Pergrin *and the Mermaid*

In Wales, there once was a young fisherman whose name was Pergrin. One fine September morning, he was strolling on the rocks near a place called **Pen Cemmaes**. As he looked about, he noticed a flash of green between two rocks. He crept closer and **beheld** an amazing sight: Up on the rocks, a beautiful young woman was combing her long green hair. At least, part of her was a young woman. Half of her was covered with **scales** that ended in a giant fishtail.

Pergrin circled around behind the rocks, until he was between the mermaid and the sea. Then he carefully approached, hoping not to scare her. But as soon as she spotted Pergrin, her eyes widened in fear and she began to cry.

"Don't be **alarmed**," he said. "I mean you no harm."

But the mermaid would not be **reassured**. "Please let me go," she begged. "If you do, I promise you something: I will give you three shouts in the time of your greatest need."

Pergrin had no idea what she meant, but it upset him to see her **weep**. So he stood aside and let her slip back into the sea.

Time passed. One hot afternoon, Pergrin went fishing. His boat floated among many other fishing boats in the smooth and calm sea. Suddenly, beside his boat, the mermaid's head burst from the waves. She shouted to Pergrin, "Take up your net! Take up your net! Take up your net!" Then she dived back into the sea.



Pergrin instantly obeyed her and rowed to shore. The other fishermen laughed at him. The sea was peaceful, so why was he so afraid? But as soon as Pergrin was ashore, a horrible storm came out of nowhere. Eighteen fishermen drowned that day. Only Pergrin was saved.

LEVEL 14, UNIT 17  
NARRATIVE TEXT

# A Blue-Ribbon Friend



Gloria and June had been best friends for years. When they heard about a city art contest for kids, they both decided to enter. They got together to paint pictures until they had several to choose from. Then they helped each other pick the best one to send in to the contest. Gloria ended up choosing her picture of a cat sleeping in a window while June chose her picture of a waterfall.

A week later, Gloria called her friend, bubbling with excitement. "The City Art Board sent me a letter. I won, June, I won! They gave me a blue ribbon! Did they call you, too?"

"No," June said faintly and then spoke up. "That's great, Gloria. I told you it was a wonderful picture."

"Actually, you said it was a purr-fect picture of a cat," Gloria said, laughing a little. "I'm sorry you didn't win anything, June. I really liked your picture."

"Oh, well," said June. "At least we have the party to look forward to."

"What party?" asked Gloria.

"Sachi's party," June answered. "You know Sachi. She's in my class and you met her at my house."

"She didn't invite me to her party. Um, I have to go now," Gloria said quickly. "I just wanted to tell you the news. Bye!"



June felt bad because she knew how much Gloria enjoyed parties so she decided to ask Sachi if Gloria could come, too. Sachi remembered Gloria and happily agreed that she could come. June called Gloria and told her the good news.

The next morning, June found a big envelope with her name on it in the mailbox. Inside was Gloria's blue ribbon and a note: "You deserve a blue ribbon for being such a fantastic friend!"

LEVEL 14, UNIT 18  
OPINION

# DEAR ADVISERS

**25¢back\_jack:** *Hey everyone! I have a question... Last year, I went to my cousin's birthday party and gave him an expensive sweater as a gift. When he opened the box, he just frowned. He never sent me a thank-you note, and he didn't give me anything for my birthday. Now I'm invited to his birthday party again, and I don't feel like bringing a gift. Should I? –Jack*

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**i.got.th!s:** I can see why you're annoyed. There is no excuse for not showing **appreciation** for a gift. Your cousin is one rude dude! People like that are just not worth worrying about. In fact, if I were you, I wouldn't even go to his birthday party. Problem solved—if you don't go, you won't have to bring a gift.

---

**i\*am\*k8:** You should go to your cousin's birthday party, and you should definitely bring a gift. Your cousin may have bad **manners**, but you don't. Gift giving is the **custom** at a birthday celebration. Also, it just feels **satisfying** to be **generous** without thinking about what you may or may not get in return. By the way, your gift doesn't need to be expensive. It really is the thought that counts!

---





**pro\_ad\*vice:** Have you thought about talking to your cousin? Sometimes a simple misunderstanding can cause hurt feelings on both sides. Perhaps your cousin was embarrassed by such an expensive gift. Possibly he sent a thank-you note, but it got lost by the post office. Or maybe he simply forgot his manners in the excitement of the birthday party. You will never know unless you ask.

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**25¢back\_jack:** *Thanks for the tips, advisers. Now, the trouble is, I have too many choices. Which solution should I pick?*

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LEVEL 15, UNIT 1  
INFORMATIONAL TEXT

# IGUANAS: THEN AND NOW

What is an ancestor? Ancestors are relatives from long ago. We all have ancestors, and even our pets have ancestors!

Many animals alive today look **similar** to animals that no longer exist. Scientists have found remains of animals and plants that lived long ago that help explain how they used to look. These remains are usually bones and fossils, or remains of animals or plants that have set into rock over time. For example, fossils have taught us about the prehistoric lizards that lived with the dinosaurs. **Prehistoric** lizards are ancestors to today's lizards. They look similar and have many of the same features. On the other hand, most prehistoric lizards were much larger than any living lizard! They had long tails and eyelids that covered their eyes. They did not have proper ears. Instead, they just had holes where other animals have ears. They also had short legs, but this did not stop them from moving extremely fast.

Iguanas are lizards that are a lot like their ancestors. Similar to prehistoric lizards, iguanas have eyelids, small holes where ears would be, and long tails. Unlike meat-eating prehistoric lizards, most iguanas are **herbivores** that live in trees. They can be found in warm-weather areas, such as Central America. They are cold-blooded, which means that their body temperature drops when the weather turns colder.



When it gets really cold, iguanas can fall right out of the trees! This happens because the cold temperature slows their breathing and heartbeat so much that they fall asleep. Then, they can't hold onto the branches anymore. Once the sun warms them up, they wake back up and go in search of a nice warm rock or branch to sit on.

Scientists are using what they know about iguanas to learn even more about prehistoric lizards. For example, they think that ancestors of iguanas most likely had similar coloring. It's amazing that this modern lizard can teach us so much about life long ago!

LEVEL 15, UNIT 5  
NARRATIVE TEXT

by Julie Bogdon

"We talked about this," Mei's mother said as she packed a sparkly lunchbox. "I know you're nervous, but you can do this."

Mei stared at the baozi on the plate in front of her. "I don't want to be the new kid. What if no one talks to me?" She pushed the steamed bun around on her plate.

"You could always try talking to them first," her mother said, smiling as she tried to **reassure** Mei. She looked at her watch. "Hurry and eat breakfast. I'm looking at a new kid with a bus to catch."

At school, Mei **shuffled** to her desk at the back of the classroom. She sat next to a girl with two ponytails running down her back. As Mei took her seat, she noticed that she and ponytail girl had the same lunchbox. Mei remembered what her mother had said, but before she could say anything, spelling practice began.

When the bell rang for lunch, ponytail girl's hand rocketed out. The next thing she knew, Mei was shaking hands with a girl named Lisa.

"I was the newest person in class until you got here!" Lisa said cheerfully. "I don't know everything yet, but I can show you around."

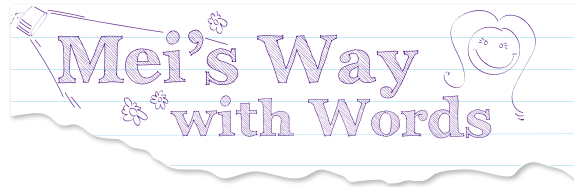


Mei was happy and excited to have Lisa as her guide. Together they walked down the hall. They looked at classroom decorations, paintings, and science projects. Lisa talked the entire time.

Just as Mei was making a note of where the bathrooms and drinking fountains were, she felt Lisa pull away and say "... and we can both try out together!

It's M-E-I, right?"

Mei looked up at a large poster that read: **AUDITIONS** FOR *SPRING SONG* NEXT WEEK. Her name was now scribbled at the top of the list. What had she gotten herself into?

LEVEL 15, UNIT 6  
NARRATIVE TEXT

by Julie Bogdon, author of "Mei's First Day"

"I know you're nervous, but you can do this. Breathe, and remember what we practiced," Lisa told her new friend Mei.

"I remember the lines now," Mei said, "but I'm afraid I'll forget them when I get up on stage. I don't think I'll ever get a part in the play."

A loud voice called from the dark theater. "For our next **audition**, we have Mei Wu!"

Mei walked to the center of the wooden stage, where she nervously introduced herself.

"I'm Mei Wu," she said in a tiny, **hesitant** voice.

The faceless judge yelled, "A little louder, please!"

"I'm Mei Wu," she repeated loudly. "I'm trying out for the part of Bernie the Bird."

There was a silent moment that seemed to last forever as the judges waited for Mei to continue.

Mei looked for Lisa out in the audience, but the **spotlight** was hot in her face.

"I'm Bernie the Bird, and in the spring, I love to play and love to sing—"



Mei's voice caught in her throat as she tried to think of what came next.

"I fly around with my wings flap-flapping, um . . . to wake the flowers from winter napping." Mei wasn't sure what came out of her mouth, but a few minutes later the audition was over.

"Mei, where did those lines come from?" one of the judges asked.

Mei was quiet before she **confessed** in a bold voice, "I just made them up."

"Well, whatever you made up was quite good," the voice said. Mei could hear the judges whispering among themselves.

Mei walked off stage, smiling proudly. Lisa met her with her mouth hanging open.

"That was amazing, Mei! I think they liked your lines better than the **original** ones!"

Mei laughed and said, "Thanks for being such a good friend. I guess I'd better find a bird costume!"

LEVEL 15, UNIT 9  
NARRATIVE TEXT

“Brrrrrrrrring!” The bell signaling the start of the day **pierced** the air, just as Shriya and her younger sister Kalini raced up the steps of Jefferson Elementary School. “Oh no!” Kalini cried, seeing the tall figure waiting at the door. “There’s Principal Hatchet.”

“Girls, this is the third day in a row that you’ve been tardy,” the principal said **sternly**. “You live just around the corner. We need to find a solution to this problem.”

“Don’t worry, Principal Hatchet, we’ll never be late again! We have a plan,” Shriya assured her. Kalini stared at her sister in confusion but remained silent.

“What’s the plan?” Kalini finally asked as the two girls hurried to their classrooms.

“I don’t know,” Shriya frowned. “But we’d better think of something!”

After school, the girls walked to the neighborhood park. Kalini pulled her older sister toward the large slide in the middle of the playground. “C’mon! I love this slide. It’s so fast-going down is like skating on ice. Then, it **launches** you up in the air at the bottom.”

“Kalini, that’s it! Now we really do have a plan,” Shriya exclaimed, hugging her. “There are just a few details we need to work out...”





The rest of the afternoon and evening was spent sketching the design, gathering materials, and building what Shriya named *Project Never Late Again*. It was long after bedtime when the girls finished, so they had no time for a test run.

“We’ll just have to hope for the best,” Shriya smiled.

The next morning, Shriya and Kalini hurried to get ready for school. They left their apartment at the usual time, but today they weren’t going to walk to school. They were going to *slide*.

The girls climbed a ladder to the top of the giant slide they had built. They used their hands to push off from the top. The push started them flying down the long, slippery track until they were launched into the air at the end, landing at the top of the school steps. Their project was a success!

Principal Hatchet was waiting at the door. She just shook her head and blinked her eyes as Shriya and Kalini walked into school—on time.

LEVEL 15, UNIT 13  
NARRATIVE TEXT

# PICTURING THE PAST

I sat quietly as Grandpa drove, watching the large green fields turn into crowded city neighborhoods. When we turned off the highway, I stared at the tall buildings. Hundreds of people lived in each one. I'd been to the city many times, but I hadn't gotten used to how many people there were.

Grandpa parked the car, and I finally asked, "Grandpa, where are we going?"

"To a museum exhibit I want you to see, Jordan. It's full of art and artifacts from an important time in history."

I was about to ask Grandpa what an artifact was when I saw that the answer was all around us. The exhibit space was filled with photographs, maps, clothing, train schedules, diaries, job postings, and more. There were also drawings, paintings, and sculptures.

One painting caught my eye, and Grandpa explained what I was looking at.

"That's people down south. They're heading to a railroad station with all their belongings," Grandpa explained told me. "Close to a hundred years ago, my father was one of those people catching a train up north. It was called the **Great Migration.**"



He **gestured** at other items in the exhibit, pointing out a diary entry about leaving friends behind and a photograph of people standing next to a car loaded with boxes and luggage. I looked at everything and thought of our drive here. I wondered if people back then were **overwhelmed** by the huge city, too.

"Thousands of Black people, like you and me, moved north," Grandpa explained. "My dad told me all about it."

"Why'd they move, Grandpa?" I asked.

"Northern cities offered them well-paying jobs and a chance at a better life," he answered. "They hoped for a new **opportunity** for their children."

"Grandpa, thanks for bringing me here today," I said as I hugged him. "It feels good to know our family was part of something so important!"

"I thought you might be proud of our family's history," he smiled. "Now, Jordan, you just need to take care of the future."



## Glossary

**against the rules** (prepositional phrase) Against the rules means not allowed.

**alarmed** (adjective) Alarmed means afraid.

**Amanita phalloides** (noun) Amanita phalloides is a kind of mushroom.

**ancestor** (noun) An ancestor is a relative from long ago.

**anemone** (noun) An anemone is a kind of sea animal with tentacles.

**antenna** (noun) An antenna is a tool that sends or receives radio or television signals.

**appear** (verb) To appear is to come into view.

**appreciation** (noun) Appreciation is the feeling of being grateful.

**aquarium** (noun) An aquarium is a tank where water plants and animals live.

**archaeologist** (noun) An archaeologist is a person who studies human history.

**ashamed** (adjective) Ashamed means feeling embarrassed or guilty.

**athlete** (noun) An athlete is a person who plays sports.

**attached** (adjective) Attached means joined to something.

**audition** (noun) An audition is a tryout for a play.

**ban** (verb) To ban something is to make it against the rules.

**barrier** (noun) A barrier is something that separates two places.

**batter** (noun) Batter is a wet mixture used in cooking.

**behold** (verb) To behold is to look at something.

**berry** (noun) A berry is a small, juicy fruit.

**bicyclist** (noun) A bicyclist is someone who rides a bike.



**boardwalk** (noun) A boardwalk is a wooden walkway.

**bought** (verb, past tense of buy) To buy is to pay money for something.

**braille** (noun) Braille is a form of writing for blind people.

**break the rule** (verb) phrase To break the rule is to do something wrong.

**broadcast** (verb) To broadcast is to send out a radio or television show.

**brook** (noun) A brook is a small stream.

**burden** (noun) A burden is a heavy load.

**burial** (noun) Burial is the act of putting something underground.

**bury** (verb) To bury is to put something underground.

**camouflaged** (adjective) Camouflaged means hidden and hard to see.

**capsule** (noun) A capsule is a container that can be sealed shut.

**carousel** (noun) A carousel is a ride at a park or fair that goes around.

**cartwheel** (noun) A cartwheel is a sideways gymnastics movement.

**cast** (noun) In plays, the cast is the group of people acting.

**cell** (noun) A cell is a tiny, basic part of all living things.

**Celsius** (noun) Celsius is a scale for measuring heat.

**chemical** (noun) A chemical is a substance that can be dangerous.

**cirrus** (adjective) Cirrus describes a cloud with thin white patches.

**clenched** (adjective) Clenched means closed tightly.

**clever** (adjective) Clever means smart.

**cocoon** (noun) A cocoon is a covering around a growing insect.

**communication** (noun) Communication is the act of sending or receiving information.



**community** (noun) A community is a group of people who have something in common and support each other.

**complained** (verb) To complain is to say you are unhappy about something.

**concrete** (noun) Concrete is a strong, hard building material.

**confess** (verb) To confess means to admit the truth.

**council** (noun) A council is a group that makes rules for a community.

**court** (noun) The court is the emperor, his family, and everyone who works for him.

**cricket** (noun) A cricket is an insect that chirps.

**Croix de Guerre** (proper noun) Croix de Guerre is French for *Cross of War*.

**crop** (noun) A crop is a group of plants that is grown for food.

**cumulus** (adjective) Cumulus describes a puffy cloud.

**curtain** (noun) In plays, curtain means the end of a scene.

**custom** (noun) A custom is a tradition.

**dandelion** (noun) A dandelion is a small, yellow flower.

**dazzle** (verb) To dazzle means to amaze.

**delicate** (adjective) Delicate means tender or fine.

**delicious** (adjective) Delicious means very tasty.

**detect** (verb) To detect is to notice or discover something.

**device** (noun) A device is a machine that does a special job.

**digital device** (noun) A digital device is a machine that uses computer technology.

**dissolve** (verb) To dissolve is to become mixed into a liquid.



**dove** (noun) A dove is a bird with short legs.

**drizzle** (noun) Drizzle is very light rain.

**drought** (noun) A drought is a long period without rain.

**eager** (adjective) Eager means very interested and hopeful.

**earthquake** (noun) An earthquake is when part of the earth's surface shakes.

**elegant** (adjective) Elegant means beautiful and graceful.

**emperor** (noun) An emperor is a powerful king or ruler.

**empress** (noun) An empress is a powerful queen or ruler.

**endangered** (adjective) When an animal or plant is endangered, it might die off completely.

**enthusiastically** (adverb) Enthusiastically means in an excited way.

**environment** (noun) The environment is the land, water, air, and living things in an area.

**especially** (adverb) Especially means in particular.

**Europe** (proper noun) Europe is the name of a continent.

**evidence** (noun) Evidence is facts or information about something.

**experiment** (verb) To experiment is to do tests to learn something.

**expression** (noun) An expression is the look on someone's face.

**extinct** (adjective) Extinct means no longer living or existing.

**Fahrenheit** (noun) Fahrenheit is a scale for measuring heat.

**force** (noun) A force is a push or a pull that causes something to move, stop, or change direction.

**frown** (verb) To frown is to show unhappiness.

**furiously** (adverb) Furiously means with great anger.



**gallery** (noun) A gallery is a room used to show works of art.

**gasp** (verb) To gasp is to breathe in suddenly when surprised.

**gene** (noun) A gene is a part of a cell that controls how living things look and grow.

**generous** (noun) Generous means giving.

**gesture** (verb) To gesture is to make a motion that shows feelings or ideas.

**giant** (adjective) Giant means very big.

**gigantic** (adjective) Gigantic means very big.

**glacier** (noun) A glacier is a large slow-moving mass of ice.

**gone** (verb, past participle of go) To go is to leave.

**Great Migration** (proper noun) The Great Migration was a move from the southern United States to the North by millions of African Americans.

**guest** (noun) A guest is a person who is visiting.

**haul** (verb) To haul is to lift and move something.

**headquarters** (noun) A headquarters is a meeting place.

**herbivore** (noun) An herbivore is an animal that only eats plants.

**hesitant** (adjective) Hesitant means slow and unsure.

**historian** (noun) A historian is a person who studies events in the past.

**hoof-like** (adjective) Hoof-like means similar to a hoof.

**idea** (noun) An idea is a plan or thought.

**inn** (noun) An inn is a place to sleep and eat when traveling.

**innocent** (adjective) To look innocent is to look like you did nothing wrong.

**instant** (adjective) Instant means quick.





**interesting** (adjective) Interesting means unusual and fascinating.

**invasion** (noun) An invasion is when someone or something takes over a place.

**invention** (noun) An invention is a new creation.

**lark** (noun) A lark is a bird that sings a fancy song.

**launch** (verb) To launch is to send up into the air.

**legend** (noun) A legend is an old story that is part fact and part fiction.

**lever** (noun) A lever is a bar that is used to move something.

**liquid** (noun) A liquid is something that flows like water.

**Louis Braille** (proper noun) Louis Braille is the name of a person.

**lullaby** (noun) A lullaby is a gentle song that helps you fall asleep.

**magnify** (verb) To magnify is to make something look or feel larger.

**manners** (noun, plural) Manners are a polite way of acting.

**mare** (noun) A mare is a female horse.

**Massachusetts** (proper noun) Massachusetts is the name of a state in the US.

**meadow** (noun) A meadow is land that has grass growing on it.

**merchant** (noun) A merchant is a person who sells things.

**messenger** (noun) A messenger is someone who brings news and messages.

**monitor** (verb) To monitor is to observe and keep track.

**moral** (noun) The moral of a story is the lesson it teaches about life.

**mussel** (noun) A mussel is a water animal with a long, hard shell.

**network** (noun) A network is a group of things that are connected.



**nightingale** (noun) A nightingale is a bird that sings a beautiful song.

**object** (noun) An object is a thing or item.

**ocean** (noun) An ocean is a sea.

**offspring** (noun) Offspring are an animal's babies.

**Olympic Games** (proper noun) The Olympic Games are worldwide athletic competitions.

**opportunity** (noun) An opportunity is a chance to make life better.

**original** (adjective) Original means first or earliest.

**overjoyed** (adjective) Overjoyed means extremely happy.

**overwhelm** (verb) To overwhelm is to have a powerful effect.

**pedestrian** (noun) A pedestrian is someone walking.

**pellet** (noun) A pellet is a small, rounded piece of something.

**Pen Cemmes** (proper noun) Pen Cemmes is the name of a place.

**pendulum** (noun) A pendulum is a hanging ball that swings back and forth.

**pierce** (verb) To pierce is to go through something forcefully.

**pigeon** (noun) A pigeon is a bird that can be trained.

**poisonous** (adjective) Poisonous means causing sickness.

**pollution** (noun) Pollution is something that makes the outdoors dirty or unsafe.

**prehistoric** (adjective) Prehistoric means from a time before events could be recorded in writing.

**pressure** (noun) Pressure is a force pushing on something.

**prey** (noun) Prey is an animal that is hunted and eaten by another.

**reassure** (verb) To reassure means to make someone feel less worried.



**record** (noun) A record is a top score.

**reduce** (verb) To reduce is to make a smaller amount of something.

**rely on** (verb) phrase To rely on is to need.

**reproduce** (verb) To reproduce is to make new life.

**resemble** (verb) To resemble is to look very similar to.

**roam** (verb) To roam is to move around.

**satisfying** (adjective) Something satisfying makes you feel pleased and happy.

**scale** (noun) A scale is a small, hard plate that covers a fish's body.

**scientist** (noun) A scientist is a person who studies science.

**seacoast** (noun) The seacoast is the land along the edge of a sea.

**seedpod** (noun) A seedpod is the part of some plants that holds their seeds.

**sense** (verb) To sense is to feel.

**series** (noun) A series is a set of books or stories written by the same author about the same characters.

**shimmering** (adjective) Shimmering means shining brightly.

**shrug** (verb) To shrug is to lift your shoulders when unsure.

**shuffle** (verb) To shuffle means to walk with dragging feet.

**signal** (noun) A signal is a message carried by light or sound.

**similar** (adjective) Similar means alike in some way.

**sincerely** (adverb) Sincerely means in an honest way.

**skirt** (verb) To skirt is to lightly touch.

**snicker** (verb) To snicker is to laugh quietly.



**soldier** (noun) A soldier is a person who serves in an army.

**spacecraft** (noun) A spacecraft is a vehicle that travels in space.

**speck** (noun) A speck is a very tiny amount.

**splotch** (noun) A splotch is a stain.

**spotlight** (noun) A spotlight is a very strong light often used to light up part of a stage.

**statue** (noun) A statue is a sculpture of a person or animal.

**sternly** (adverb) Sternly means in a serious way.

**strand** (noun) A strand is a thin piece of something, like a string or hair.

**Stratus** (adjective) Stratus describes a cloud with long, gray layers.

**stroll** (verb) To stroll is to walk slowly.

**surface** (noun) The surface is the outer layer.

**survive** (verb) To survive is to stay alive.

**swallow** (verb) To swallow is to move the throat muscles.

**technique** (noun) A technique is a way of doing a task.

**temperature** (noun) Temperature is the amount of heat in something.

**tensile** (adjective) Tensile means bendable.

**tentacle** (noun) A tentacle is a long, flexible body part for grabbing.

**terracotta** (noun) Terracotta is a red clay used to make pottery.

**theory** (noun) A theory is an idea based on facts that might explain something.

**toll** (noun) A toll is money paid to use a road.

**trade** (noun, used as adjective) Trade is buying and selling products.



**trait** (noun) A trait is something that makes a living thing different or special.

**tremble** (verb) To tremble is to shake.

**unravel** (verb) To unravel is to cause the separate threads of something to come apart.

**valuable** (adjective) Valuable means important.

**Venus** (proper noun) Venus is the name of a planet.

**voyager** (noun) A voyager is someone who travels a long way.

**wade** (verb) To wade is to walk through shallow water.

**weep** (verb) To weep is to cry.

**Ying Zheng** (proper noun) Ying Zheng is the name of a person.

**youngster** (noun) A youngster is a young person, like a child.