

COMPREHENSION SKILLS SERIES

A B D E G

Drawing a Conclusion

H J K L M

Making an Inference

N O P Q R

Recognizing Tone

S T U V W

X Y Z F I

Comprehension Skills Series

Drawing a Conclusion

...when reading

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Each Comprehension Skills Booklet is divided into four parts.

Part One clearly defines, explains, and illustrates the specific skill discussed.

Part Two offers an interesting and informative lesson presented in clear, readable language, using illustrations from the student's own experience. A simple preview technique is used regularly throughout Parts One and Two; it requires the student to anticipate and respond.

Part Three consists of a sample exercise with four questions. An explanation supporting the correct answers is given as well as reasons explaining where wrong answers are faulty. The sample exercise is designed to prepare the student for the work required in the following section.

Part Four contains 30 practice exercises with questions. Edward Fry's formula for estimating readability was used to grade the exercises. The passages begin at grade 6 and advance gradually to grade 12. The student is advised to complete the 30 practice exercises thoughtfully and carefully. He is also urged to consult his instructor if extra help is needed before proceeding to Part Four.

An optional tape cassette is available for each Comprehension Skills Booklet. The tapes add an audio dimension to the series and are especially helpful to students who need assistance in comprehending written material. The cassettes help by enlisting the student's listening comprehension ability. All of the instructional matter and exercise paragraphs are recorded on the tape, permitting the student to listen as he reads along.

The Comprehension Skills Booklets and optional Cassettes offer a practical and solid program of reading comprehension instruction.

PART ONE

DRAWING A CONCLUSION

Preview Quiz 1



As a preview to what will be discussed in Part One, try to answer this question:

Today is Sunday; therefore, tomorrow will be Monday. Is this reasoning a conclusion, an inference, or a judgment?

- ☐ a. A conclusion
- ☐ b. An inference
- ☐ c. A judgment

Begin reading Part One to discover how conclusions are different from other types of decisions.

How often have you seen someone raise his arms in discouragement and say, "Decisions, decisions, decisions!" It is a rare day that a person can simply sit back, relax and leave all decision-making to someone else. Sooner or later, everyone has problems which have to be solved. Decisions must be made and the right decision is made when the facts are known and understood and when time is taken to think carefully about them.

The same thing holds true when it comes to reading. A person must understand what the author is saying; he must think about what he has read and draw the conclusion supported by the facts and intended by the author.

Drawing a conclusion means arriving at the only decision justified by the stated evidence. A person can draw an accurate conclusion from a statement, a paragraph or a longer piece of writing only if he is a careful and thoughtful reader.

Read the following examples. In each example a conclusion is drawn. Before you read the comments following each example, examine the facts carefully and decide if the conclusion is right or wrong.

Example 1:

It is a fact that Monday always follows Sunday. Now, since today is Sunday, tomorrow must be Monday.

Comment: The conclusion, "...tomorrow must be Monday," is right. The stated facts are accurate and the conclusion is the only one that can be drawn.

Example 2:

If you cannot stay out on school nights and there is school tomorrow, you cannot stay out tonight.

Comment: The conclusion, "...you cannot stay out to-night," is right. It is the only conclusion that can be drawn from the stated facts.

Example 3:

Whenever it rains, the ground gets wet. Since the ground is wet, I can conclude that it is raining.

Comment: The conclusion, "...it is raining," is wrong. After thinking about the stated facts, you can conclude that the ground could be wet for other reasons.

Example 4:

Hard work is always rewarded, but Bob has not received sufficient reward for his work. We can conclude that Bob does not work hard enough.

Preview Quiz 2



As a preview to what will be discussed next, try to answer this question:

How do you evaluate the conclusion reached about Bob in Example 4, above?

- ☐ a. It is correct.
- ☐ b. It is wrong.
- ☐ c. It cannot be evaluated.

Continue reading to discover the correct answer.

Comment: The conclusion, "...Bob does not work hard enough," is wrong. You have learned through personal experience that hard work is *not* always rewarded. It is therefore wrong to conclude that Bob does not work hard enough. There could be other reasons why Bob has not been rewarded.

It is clear from what you have read so far that an accurate conclusion cannot be drawn unless all the facts are understood and carefully evaluated. Understanding and evaluating facts depends upon *critical reading*. In Part Two you will learn about critical reading.

PART TWO

CRITICAL READING

Preview Quiz 3



As a preview to what will be discussed in Part Two, try to answer this question:

The word “critical” will be discussed on the next page. How will it be used?

- ☐ a. To refer to people who judge others harshly
- ☐ b. To refer to essential decisions and important situations
- ☐ c. To refer to the kind of reading necessary to draw correct conclusions

Begin reading Part Two to learn what “critical” means as used in this booklet.

The word "critical" can mean different things. A critical person, for example, has a tendency to find fault with people and things and to judge them harshly. A critical situation suggests danger and uncertainty; a critical decision is an important decision. "Critical," as it is used in "critical reading," refers to a person's ability to (1) identify and understand the facts in a reading situation and (2) evaluate or analyze these facts accurately.

In Part Two, we will see how a person's ability to draw an accurate conclusion depends on his ability to read critically.

The techniques required for critical reading are: (1) identifying ideas, and (2) evaluating these ideas. When drawing a conclusion, evaluation is most important. Evaluation of the writer's ideas makes it possible for you to decide if you agree or disagree with him and enables you to draw intelligent conclusions.

Evaluating Main Ideas

Careful evaluation enables you to decide if the main idea in a paragraph is developed satisfactorily.

Read the following example. You will notice that the main idea is stated in the first sentence. Evaluate the ideas in the example and decide if the main idea has been developed satisfactorily.

Many of the smaller species of birds fly south for the winter. Since the sparrow is small, it must fly south for the winter.

If you are not satisfied with the way the main idea is developed, you are right. Obviously, the sparrow is a small bird, but that does not necessarily mean that it must winter in the south.

By evaluating the ideas critically, we see that the thinking in the example is faulty, and that the conclusion, "...it must fly south for the winter," is not acceptable.

Here is the same example, but with one exception. The word “must” was changed to read “might.” Notice what happens.

Many of the smaller species of birds fly south for the winter. Since the sparrow is small, it *might* fly south for the winter.

The conclusion, “...it *might* fly south for the winter,” is acceptable and is the *only* conclusion supported by the facts.

Evaluating Supporting Details

Careful evaluation enables you to decide if the supporting details in a paragraph are inappropriate, unnecessary or inaccurate.

Preview Quiz 4



As a preview to what will be discussed next, try to answer this question:

How do inappropriate supporting details affect the reader who must draw a conclusion?

- ☐ a. They make his conclusion easier to reach.
- ☐ b. They make his conclusion more difficult to reach.
- ☐ c. They make a correct conclusion impossible to reach.

Continue reading to discover how the critical reader must be aware of inappropriate supporting details.