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Introduction

The *Nonfiction and Fiction Comprehension Connections* series is a set of six kits of comprehension cards and lessons suitable for students from grades 2 through 8. The boxed sets provide supplementary materials to support and enhance existing reading programs. The range of levels within a box provides flexibility within the classroom and allows teachers to accommodate students' individual reading comprehension needs.

The reading cards feature both fiction and nonfiction texts, incorporating a wide variety of topics and themes. In addition, all of the reading cards are Lexile and Guided Reading leveled, and the *Teacher Resource* book activities are correlated to Common Core State Standards. Students experience fiction and nonfiction reading using a wide range of genres and subject areas, and analyze text more closely as they respond to text-dependent questions. The *Teacher Resource* book provides additional activities to strengthen students' ability to use specific strategies to build comprehension.

The questions that accompany each card incorporate three levels of comprehension (Literal, Inferential, Applied) in a multiple-choice format. They also assess 12 comprehension skills. Separate answer cards allow the students to work and progress at their own rate while keeping a record for their own and teacher reference. The variety of materials included in the *Teacher Resource* book will assist with easy implementation and maintenance of the program.



Included on the inside back cover of this book is a CD containing reproducible PDF-formatted files for all of the reading cards, all student activity pages, and the Common Core State Standards for grades 2, 3, 4, and 5. These standards can also be accessed online. Visit www.bluestareducation.com for information regarding the standards. The reading card and student activity PDF files are ideal for group instruction using interactive whiteboards.



What's Included in *Comprehension Connections*?

- 210 full-color reading cards (3 copies of 70 different titles) per kit with related comprehension questions
- 144-page *Teacher Resource* book that includes complete instructions on how to use the kit components and comprehensive, guided unit lessons that introduce students to 12 comprehension skills for reinforcing reading strategies
- 70 answer cards for student self-evaluation and teacher assessment
- CD of all reading cards and *Teacher Resource* book student activities

How This Program Meets Today's Needs

Moving Toward Close Reading

The Partnership of Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers (PARCC) defines close reading as “uncovering layers of meaning that lead to deep comprehension.” The reading cards and questions, as well as the comprehension strategies units provided in this program, help students meet this need.

Among the ideas that support PARCC and move students toward deeper understanding of text are the following: analyzing meaning; paying more attention to the text, main ideas, and supporting details; discovering the meanings of specific words and sentences as they relate to the content; generating ideas about the text, and reflecting more on the contents and the intent of the reading. The reading cards and questions, as well as the comprehension strategies units provided in this program, help students meet these demands.

Using Short Texts

With today's emphasis on reading more demanding text and the inclusion of close reading to improve comprehension, it has been suggested that approaching close reading by using short texts can be helpful—especially when dealing with a wide range of reading levels among students. By using short texts and targeting a specific set of reading strategies, students are more able to acquire the tools they need to practice close reading. The reading cards provided in *Nonfiction and Fiction Comprehension Connections* provide short texts using a wide variety of themes and topics.

Reading a Variety of Genres

The Common Core State Standards emphasize the use of a variety of genres, as well as both informational and literary reading content. The standards also encourage the use of traditional literature, such as folktales, myths, legends, and fables. They suggest introducing students to short stories, poetry, plays, biographies, personal narratives, and articles as a way of approaching close reading. In order to meet this need, a variety of genres have been included in the *Nonfiction and Fiction Comprehension Connections* kits. Among them are the following categories:

- | | | |
|------------------------|---------------|--------------------|
| -narratives | -biographies | -procedure |
| -poems | -fables | -adventure stories |
| -discussions | -recounts | -folktales |
| -science fiction texts | -reviews | -expositions |
| -myths | -fairy tales | -humorous stories |
| -informational charts | -reports | -descriptions |
| -mysteries | -explanations | |
| -legends | -fantasy | |

How to Use the Cards and Resource Book

Using Comprehension Strategies With the Cards

A total of 12 comprehension strategies are addressed in each of the kits. By introducing students to these strategies and providing practice using them, students learn to apply the strategies as they work through the reading cards. The lessons for all 12 strategies are included in this book (see pages 35–144). Teachers can choose a plan for including these practice lessons in a way that best suits the needs of their students.

Below, and on pages 18–19, is a Scope and Sequence Chart that connects each reading card to the specific comprehension strategies upon which the card focuses. The chart includes the card number and color, the genre, the card title, and columns for each of the 12 strategies presented in this book.

For teaching purposes, the Scope and Sequence Chart is ideal for noting which cards address a specific strategy. For example, if students are having difficulty with a particular strategy, the teacher can reinforce it using the lesson pages for that strategy. It is also possible to choose one or more cards from the chart that address the strategy and use them as examples in a whole-class lesson. (An easy way to accomplish this is to use the cards from the PDF files on a whiteboard. For smaller groups, choose copies from the kit or reproduce and distribute copies from the CD.)

SCOPE AND SEQUENCE CHART— Cards and Strategies Correlations

Card Color and Number	Genre	Title	Understanding Words	Finding Information	Identifying the Main Idea	Sequencing	Finding Similarities and Differences	Predicting	Drawing Conclusions	Summarizing	Inferring	Cause and Effect	Fact or Opinion	Point of View and Purpose	Pronoun/Noun Agreement
Red – 1	Recount	Nugget and Clucky	✓	✓							✓			✓	✓
Red – 2	Fantasy	Merrick, the Mud Monster	✓	✓								✓			✓
Red – 3	Description	Sssss	✓	✓			✓			✓					✓
Red – 4	Fairy tale	Eeek! Dragon!		✓		✓		✓		✓					✓
Red – 5	Folktale	Why the Zebra Has Stripes	✓	✓	✓	✓					✓				✓
Red – 6	Fantasy	Birthday Wish	✓	✓		✓						✓		✓	✓
Red – 7	Report	Batty Bats	✓	✓	✓									✓	✓
Red – 8	Mystery	The Mystery of the Missing Objects	✓	✓	✓		✓				✓				✓
Red – 9	Recount	Go Blue!	✓	✓				✓		✓				✓	✓
Red – 10	Horror	The Monster Under My Bed	✓		✓	✓						✓		✓	✓

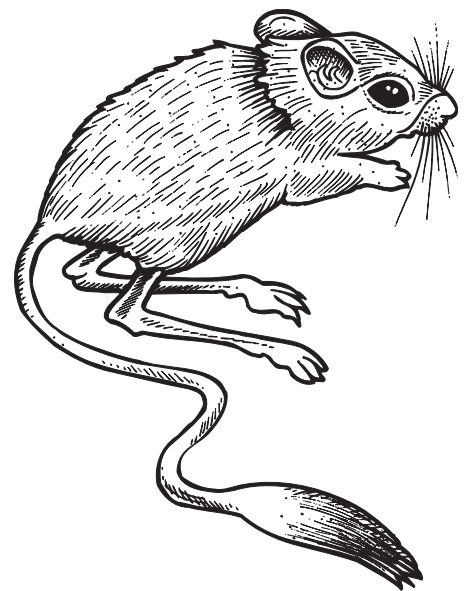
Name _____

When we read, we often decide what we think might be true based on information in the text. This is called *making inferences*.

Activity: Read the passage below and complete pages 110–112.

Jumping Jerboa

1. Jerboas are small rodents with long tails.
2. Jerboas look a bit like mice or tiny kangaroos. They have a long, tufted tail and short front legs. Jerboas use their tail for balance and to help them sit. They usually have large eyes and ears so they can see and hear other animals coming. Some jerboas have five toes on their back legs and some have three. Jerboas usually have long, soft, brown fur.
3. Jerboas move by using their long back legs to jump great distances—sometimes as far as 10 feet in one jump! They do this to escape animals that try to catch and eat them. It also helps them to travel long distances quickly.
4. Jerboas live in deserts and dry areas of Africa and Asia. They are nocturnal animals and find shelter in dens or burrows during the day. Jerboas build both temporary and permanent burrows. Permanent burrows are sealed and camouflaged with many entrances. They have a nesting room and food storage rooms.
5. Jerboas like to eat plants, seeds, or insects they can find in the desert. They do not need to drink water as they get all the moisture they need from the food they eat.
6. Female jerboas usually give birth twice a year. Each litter can have anywhere from two to six baby jerboas.
7. Jerboas are very interesting animals.



Name _____

Follow the steps below to learn how to determine what is most likely to be true.

- The answers are usually not in the text, but there is information to give you clues to think about. (This could be underlined.)
- Find the answer that makes the most sense and is supported by details from the text.
- Consider all answers before deciding.

Step 1: Read the question.

Why do jerboas need to have large ears and eyes?

- (a) to see the sun come up
- (b) to hear the wind
- (c) to hear and see other jerboas so they can communicate
- (d) to hear and see other animals who may want to eat them

Step 2: The question asks about ears and eyes. Find and read any information that talks about jerboas needing to see and hear. Then think!

Step 3: Choose the best answer by thinking about each choice carefully.

- (a) This answer only talks about seeing something. It would be nice to see the sun come up in the desert, but it doesn't tell why jerboas need large ears and eyes. This is not the best answer.
- (b) This answer only talks about hearing the wind. It does not talk about eyes seeing at all. This is probably not the best answer.
- (c) This answer does talk about both seeing and hearing. It may be good to communicate with other jerboas. This may be a good answer, but remember to read all of them as there may be a better answer.
- (d) This answer talks about seeing and hearing. It also talks about a way to help jerboas survive in the desert. This is probably the best answer.

Name _____

Use the strategies you learned to practice making inferences. Use the clues in the “Think!” boxes to help you.

1. What would be the best reason for why jerboas need to be able to travel long distances quickly across the desert?
 - (a) to hunt for food
 - (b) to practice jumping
 - (c) to see everything in the desert
 - (d) because they live a long way away from their family

Think!

Read paragraph 3 to find how animals survive in deserts.

2. What do jerboas most likely use their short front legs for?
 - (a) jumping
 - (b) hiding
 - (c) grabbing and holding things
 - (d) brushing their fur

Think!

Read about their back legs in paragraph 3 and what they eat in paragraph 5. Then decide!

3. How are jerboas able to jump so far with each leap?
 - (a) They have springs on their feet.
 - (b) Their long tail gives them a boost.
 - (c) They have very long back legs.
 - (d) They like jumping.

Think!

Read paragraph 3.

Name _____

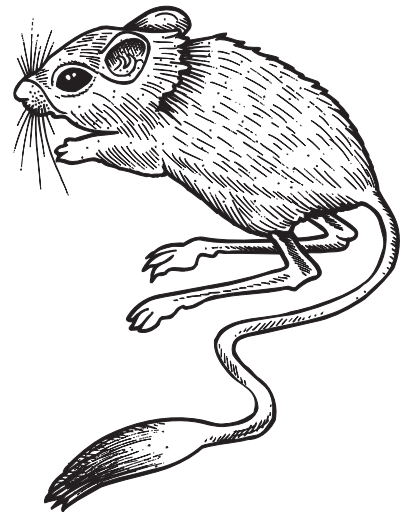
Use the strategies you have been practicing to help you make inferences.

1. Why do jerboas eat plants, seeds, and insects?
 - (a) They are the only foods available during the day.
 - (b) They are lazy animals that do not want to hunt.
 - (c) They only eat crunchy foods.
 - (d) Plants, seeds, and insects can be found in the desert.

2. How often do female jerboas need to use the nesting room?
 - (a) every day
 - (b) twice a year
 - (c) once a year
 - (d) never

3. Why don't jerboas need to live near water?
 - (a) They don't like swimming.
 - (b) They don't like water.
 - (c) They don't like wet places.
 - (d) They don't need to drink water.

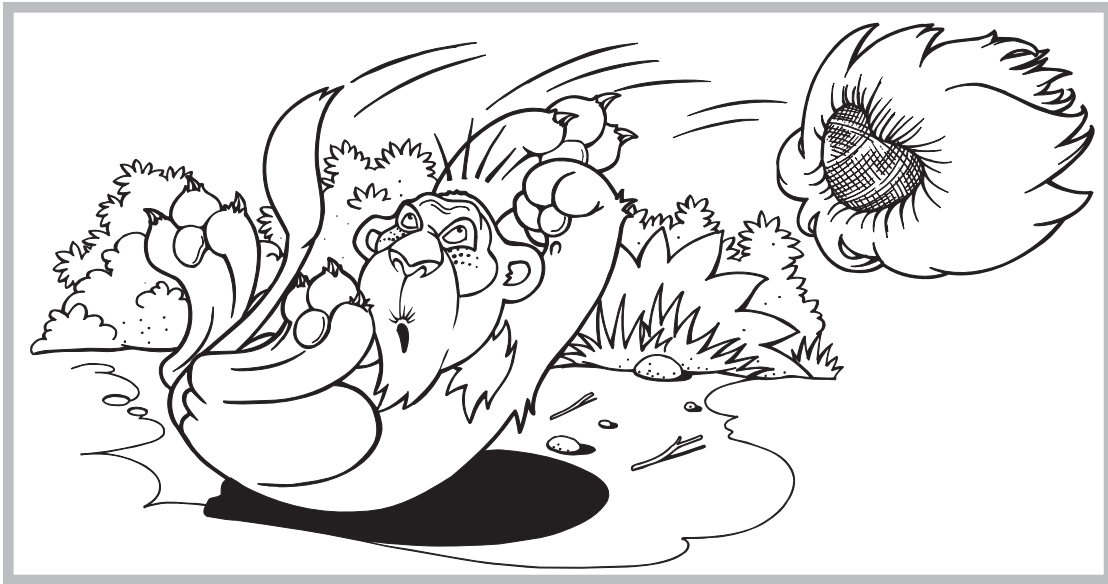
4. Jerboas consume food in the food storage rooms:
 - (a) when there isn't enough food around.
 - (b) whenever they eat.
 - (c) when it's too windy.
 - (d) when they feel tired.



Name _____

Activity: Read the story below and complete page 114.

THE LION WHO LOST HIS WIG



1. Once upon a time, an old lion lost his mane. The proud lion wore a wig to cover his bare head.
2. One windy day, the lion was walking through the jungle when he saw a pretty, young tiger coming towards him.
3. He wanted to make her think that he was a nice, friendly lion, so he smiled politely and bowed down low.
4. Just at that moment, a big gust of wind blew past and swept his wig from his head and into a nearby tree.
5. He stood there looking and feeling very silly. His bald head shined in the sunlight like a golf ball.
6. Although he knew he looked silly, the old lion looked at the tiger and smiled shyly.
7. "It isn't a surprise that someone else's hair wouldn't stay on my head. I couldn't even keep my own hair!" he laughed.
8. The moral of this story is that a strong person should be able to laugh at himself or herself.

Name _____

Use the strategies you learned and practiced in *Jumping Jerboa* to help you practice inferring.

Remember:

- The answers are usually not in the text, but there is information to give you clues to think about. (This could be underlined.)
- Find the answer that makes the most sense and is supported by details from the text.
- Consider all answers before deciding.

1. What would be the best reason why the old lion wore a wig?
 - (a) He thought he looked silly with a bald head.
 - (b) He wanted to have really long hair.
 - (c) He wanted to look young.
 - (d) He wanted a place for fleas to live.

Think!

Read how he felt when he first lost his wig in paragraph 5.

2. What did the old lion probably use to keep the wig on his head?

(a) honey	(b) glue
(c) nothing because it blew away	(d) pins
3. The old lion finally laughed at himself when he lost his wig. He joked with the tiger.

Write one or two sentences to describe what this tells about the old lion.

Name _____

Activity: Read the story below, and use pages 116–118 to show how well you can draw conclusions, summarize, and make inferences.

How Red Bird Got His Color

1. Raccoon liked to tease Wolf. Wolf would get angry and chase him through the woods.
2. One day, Wolf chased Raccoon to a river. Instead of swimming across, Raccoon hid by a nearby tree.
3. Wolf came to the river and saw Raccoon's reflection in the water. He jumped in to find him. He looked and looked until he became so tired that he nearly drowned. Finally, he climbed out and fell asleep on the riverbank. While Wolf slept, Raccoon crept down and covered Wolf's eyes with thick mud. Then, he scurried away, laughing to himself. When Wolf finally woke up, he thought he was blind.
4. He cried out, "Help! Someone, please help me! I can't see! I can't open my eyes!"
5. Soon, his cries were heard by a little bird. "I'm just a plain, little bird," he said, "but I will help if I can!"
6. "If you help," said Wolf, "I will take you to a magic rock that oozes red paint and make your feathers red."
7. Bird pecked at the dried mud until Wolf could open his eyes again.
8. "Thank you," said Wolf. "Now I will keep my promise and make your feathers red."
9. Together they went through the woods to the magic rock. Wolf pulled a branch from a tree with his jaws and chewed the end until it was soft like a paintbrush. He dipped it into the red paint and painted Bird's feathers red.
10. The happy bird flew away to show his family how beautiful his once dull feathers now looked.



Name _____

Remember:

- Decide what it is you are making conclusions about.
- Look in the text to find the facts and details. Underline them.
- Make decisions about what they mean.
- Check all the answers before deciding.

1. Which words best tell what Raccoon was like?

- (a) mean and cunning
- (b) nice and happy
- (c) caring and friendly
- (d) sad and lonely



2. Which words best tell what Wolf was like?

- (a) young and healthy
- (b) calm
- (c) clever
- (d) easily fooled

3. Which word best tells what Bird was like?

- (a) scared
- (b) cowardly
- (c) helpful
- (d) nasty

4. How do you know that Wolf was annoyed with Raccoon?

Name _____

Remember:

- Make sure you understand the question. Underline the keywords.
- Look for information in the text. Decide what is important and how it is connected.
- Leave out any information you don't need.
- Check all the answers before deciding.

1. Choose the answer that best summarizes the information given in paragraph 9.

- (a) Wolf became blind.
- (b) Raccoon liked to tease Wolf.
- (c) Wolf changed the color of Bird's feathers.
- (d) Bird loved his new feathers.



2. Paragraph 3 gives information to tell:

- (a) how Bird helped Wolf.
- (b) how Wolf helped Bird.
- (c) how Raccoon hid in the tree.
- (d) how Wolf became blind.

3. Fill in the missing words to summarize the steps Wolf took to change the color of Bird's feathers.

First, Wolf got a _____ . Then, he _____
_____. Finally, he used it to _____
_____.

Name _____

Remember:

- The answers are usually not in the text, but there is information to give you clues to think about. (This could be underlined.)
- Find the answer that makes the most sense and is supported by details from the text.
- Check all the answers before deciding.

1. Most likely, what color did Bird used to be?
(a) brightly colored (b) brown
(c) striped (d) spotty
2. Why did Raccoon most likely run away, laughing to himself?
(a) He had to get home in time for dinner.
(b) He was pleased with the trick he had played on Wolf.
(c) He was a happy animal.
(d) He thought Bird looked silly with dull feathers.
3. What part of his body would Wolf probably have used to hold the "paintbrush"?
(a) his eyes (b) his nose (c) his ears (d) his mouth
4. Write a sentence to tell why Wolf thought that Bird would like to have red feathers.

THE LOCH NESS MONSTER



- 1 Loch Ness is a big lake in Scotland. It is very deep. It has more fresh water than all of the lakes in England and Wales put together. Many people think there is a monster in Loch Ness. This monster is called the Loch Ness Monster, or “Nessie” for short.
- 2 In 1934, a doctor took a picture he said was of a monster he had seen in Loch Ness. Since then, many more people have said they have seen a monster in the lake. Some of them have photos they say are of this monster.
- 3 Many people think that these pictures are not real. They think that Nessie is a hoax. Others think that people are really seeing bubbles or waves in the water, not a monster. Some have tried to search for Nessie with boats, radar, and cameras. None of these searches have found a monster.
- 4 No one knows for sure if there is a Loch Ness monster. What do you think?

Questions

1. The word **hoax** in Paragraph 3 means:

- (a) a photo that was taken long ago.
- (b) a trick to make people think something is real.
- (c) a sea monster.

2. Loch Ness is a lake that is very:

- (a) shallow.
- (b) dark.
- (c) deep.

3. Paragraph 1 is mainly about:

- (a) the Loch Ness Monster.
- (b) pictures of the monster.
- (c) Loch Ness.

4. If there was a monster in the lake, what might it eat?

- (a) fish
- (b) hamburgers
- (c) seaweed

5. The author wrote this to:

- (a) make people believe in Nessie.
- (b) give information about a possible monster in Loch Ness.
- (c) tell readers that the Loch Ness monster is a hoax.

6. In Paragraph 3, **they** refers to:

- (a) pictures.
- (b) many people.
- (c) monsters.

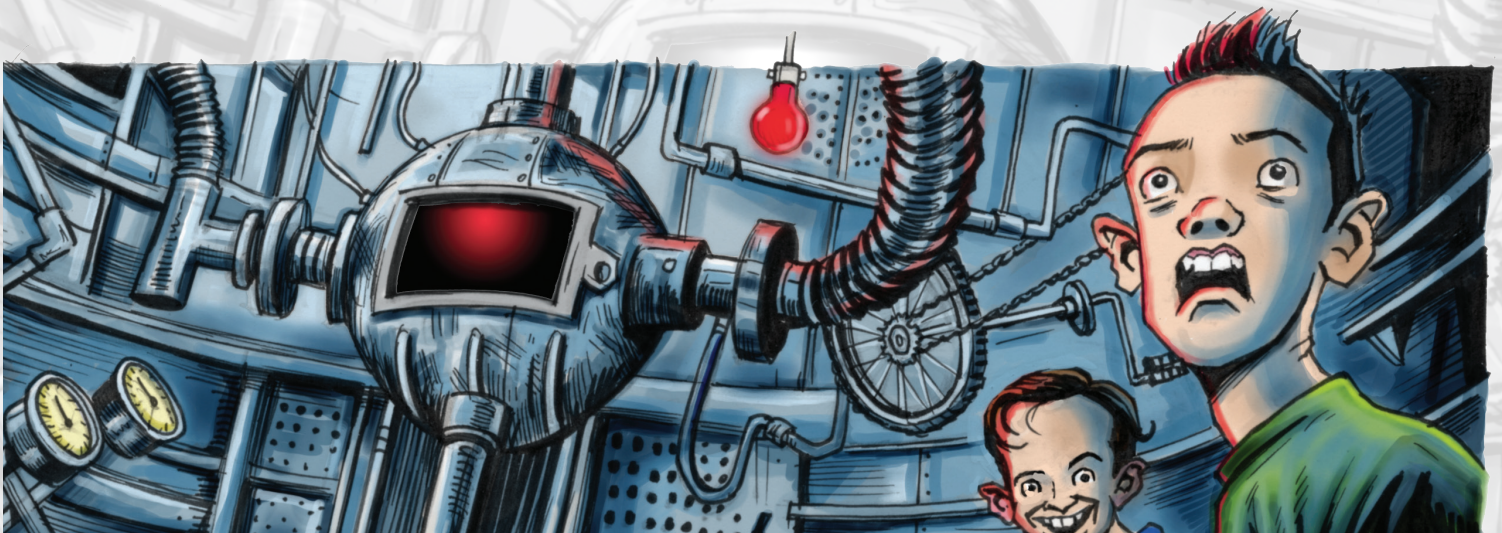


SOMETHING EXTRA

- ★ Draw what you think Nessie might look like.
- ★ Write what you would do if you saw the Loch Ness Monster.

Time Machine

- 1** My brother, Dexter, had always been a bit odd. He collected all sorts of junk. He then made things with it in Dad's shed. He never played outside or watched TV.
- 2** One day, I was on the computer when Dexter ran into the room.
- 3** "I've done it!" he shouted.
- 4** "Done what?" I asked.
- 5** "Finished my time machine! Come on!"
- 6** I followed him to the shed. Inside was a big metal thing with wires. It had a door, which was open.
- 7** "That's it?" I asked, having a closer look.
- 8** "Yes, yes, my time machine . . . it's ready to be tested!" he said.
- 9** "What do you mean, tested?" I asked. "How can it be finished if you don't even know if it works yet?"
- 10** My brother frowned and moved towards me. "Oh, I think it works . . . I just need to do one last thing!" He grabbed me and pushed me inside the machine.
- 11** "Hey!" I yelled. But it was too late. The door slammed shut. There was a loud buzzing sound and a big bump, then everything went black . . .



1. If time machines were real, they could:

- (a) take people into the past or the future.
- (b) fix clocks and watches.
- (c) be good for playing sports.

2. The time machine was made of:

- (a) wires and doors.
- (b) metal and wires.
- (c) metal and wood.

3. Who made the time machine?

- (a) the writer
- (b) the writer's dad
- (c) the writer's brother

4. What was the writer doing before he saw the time machine?

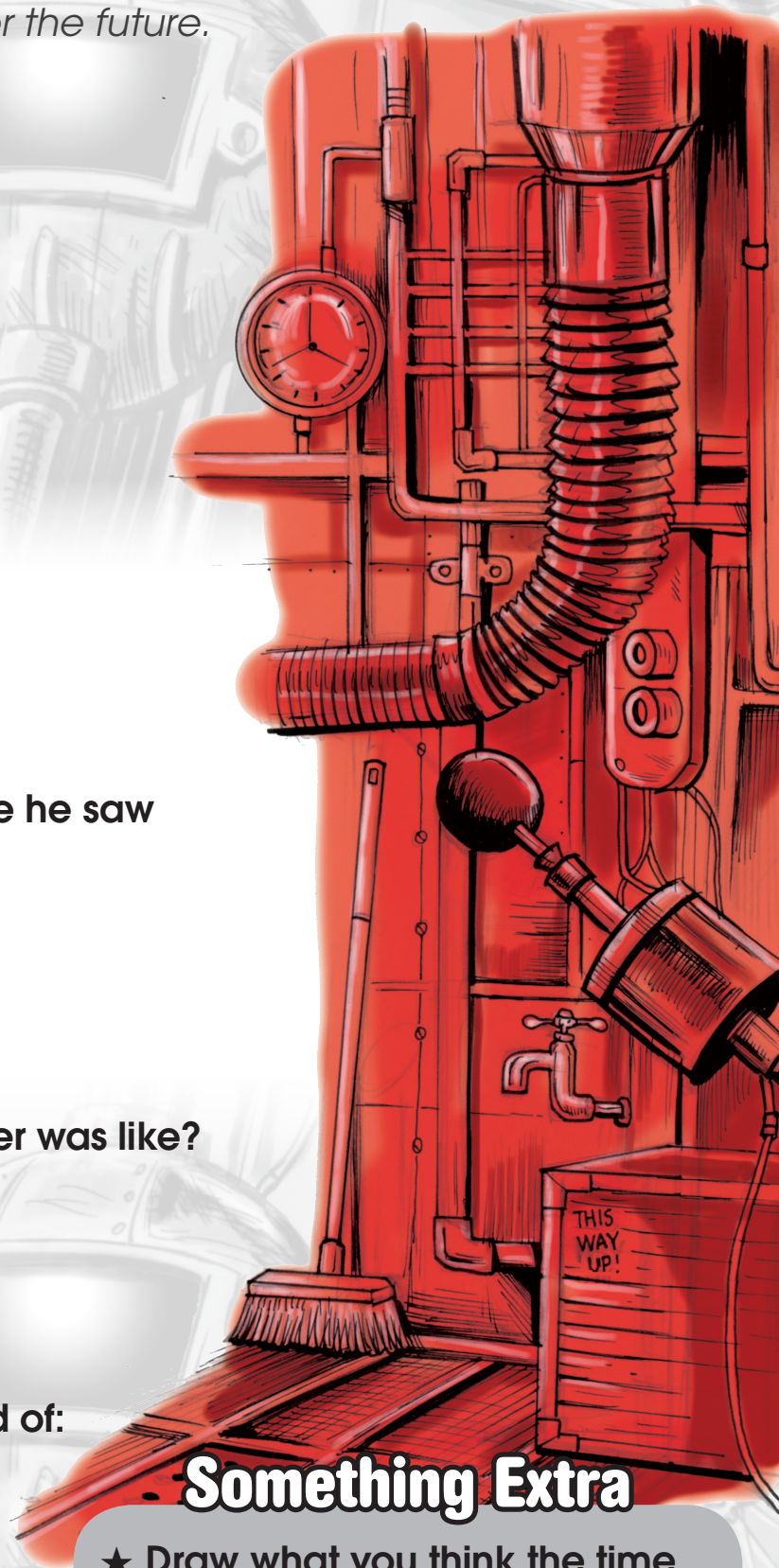
- (a) playing outside
- (b) playing on the computer
- (c) watching TV inside

5. Which words best tell what Dexter was like?

- (a) gentle and nice
- (b) clever but mean
- (c) sporty and nasty

6. In Paragraph 1, *it* is used instead of:

- (a) the junk.
- (b) the machine.
- (c) the shed.



Something Extra

- ★ Draw what you think the time machine looked like. Label it.
- ★ Continue the story and write what you think happened next.