Table of Contents

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 3, 4, 5, and 6. 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.

Blue Star EDUCATION

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

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	

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
Black – 1	Fairy tale	The Princess and the Pea	✔	✔	✔		✔				✔	✔		✔	✔
Black – 2	Recount	Fire! Fire!	✔	✔				✔	✔		✔				✔
Black – 3	Folktale	Why Is the Sky So High?	✔	✔		✔					✔	✔		✔	
Black – 4	Explanation	Hiccup! Hiccup! Hiccup!	✔	✔	✔					✔			✔		✔
Black – 5	Exposition	Down With Electronic Games!	✔		✔				✔	✔	✔				✔
Black – 6	Report	Fishy Senses	✔	✔	✔						✔				✔
Black – 7	Description	Living With the Dinosaurs	✔	✔	✔								✔		✔
Black – 8	Procedure	Wriggling Raisins Trick	✔	✔	✔	✔					✔				✔
Black – 9	Report	Sun Bears	✔	✔					✔		✔				✔
Black – 10	Description	IT'S NOT FOR SALE!	✔	✔	✔		✔								✔

Name _____

When you draw conclusions, you are making a decision or judgment after considering all the information. We draw conclusions about what we read by finding facts and details in the text, taking it all into consideration, and then making judgments about it.

Activity: Read the passage below and complete pages 98–100.

Guide Dogs

1.   Do you know how a dog is chosen and trained to be a guide dog?

2.   A guide dog is trained to help blind or visually impaired people get around at home and in public. It is allowed to go with its owner into shops, restaurants, hotels, buses, trains, planes—in fact, anywhere its owner wants to go.

3.   Labrador retrievers are most commonly used as guide dogs. Other breeds include golden retrievers and German shepherds. Many of these breeds have the qualities needed to be a guide dog. These include intelligence, obedience, friendliness, willingness to learn, ability to concentrate for a long time, calmness, and a good memory.

4.   When a puppy that is thought to be suitable to be trained as a guide dog is ready to leave its mother, it is given to a volunteer puppy raiser. This person, or family, will have been carefully chosen by a guide dog school. The puppy raiser will keep the dog and teach it the basics of being a guide dog before it is ready to be properly trained.

5.   Puppy raisers teach the dog how to sit, lie down, stay, and walk correctly on a leash. They train the puppy using lots of praise and never give food rewards. This is so it can work around food and not be distracted from its job. They make sure the puppy is given all kinds of experiences. These include feeling comfortable in noisy, crowded places; hearing sudden, loud noises; being in bad weather outdoors; being near traffic; going around objects; and not being distracted by other animals.

6.   At about 18 months, a suitable dog leaves the puppy raiser and learns more difficult skills from a special trainer for three or four months. It learns to walk just ahead and to the left of the trainer and how to stop at curbs, cross the road, handle itself safely around traffic, stop at stairs, go around objects, spot possible dangers, and most of all, not to be distracted. It is important that people in the street do not come up and pet a guide dog in its working harness.

7.   Finally, it is ready to learn to work with its new visually impaired master. This takes about a month. A guide dog seems to have a hard job, but it loves its work and only wants love and affection as a reward.
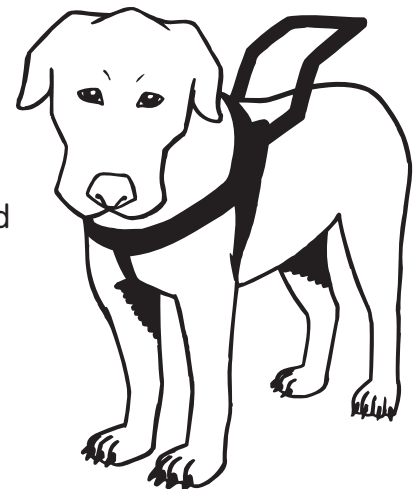
Name _____

Follow the steps below to learn how to draw conclusions.

- Conclusions are decisions you make after careful consideration of facts and details in the text.
- Find out what 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 answers before choosing one.

1. Why are some dogs trained to be guide dogs?
   (a) Guide dogs make good pets.
   (b) Guide dogs can go on trains.
   (c) Guide dogs love their work.
   (d) Guide dogs help blind or visually impaired people.

2. Choose the best answer. Think about each choice carefully.
   (a) Guide dogs might make good pets, but it doesn't explain why they are trained. This is not the right answer.
   (b) The text says guide dogs are allowed on trains, but it doesn't explain why they are trained. This is not the right answer.
   (c) The text says guide dogs love their work, but it doesn't explain why they are trained. This is not the right answer.
   (d) The text says a guide dog is trained for this reason. This is the right answer.

1. Why does a puppy raiser need to be carefully chosen?
   (a) Puppy raisers are paid a lot of money.
   (b) Puppy raisers need to be people who like dogs.
   (c) Puppy raisers need to be the kind of people who will teach a young dog important things.
   (d) Puppy raisers give the puppy different experiences.

2. Choose the best answer. Think about each choice carefully.
   (a) The text says puppy raisers are volunteers, which means they do their job for free. This is not the right answer.
   (b) Puppy raisers would have to like dogs, but this does not explain why they are carefully chosen. This is not the right answer.
   (c) The text says that puppy raisers keep the dog and teach it the basics of being a good guide dog. It is very important that they do this. This seems to be the best answer so far. Remember, you must check all the answers.
   (d) The text says that puppy raisers give the puppy all kinds of experiences, but it doesn't explain why they are carefully chosen. This is not the right answer.

Name _____

Use the strategies you learned to practice drawing conclusions. Use the clues in the "Think!" boxes to help you.

1. You can conclude that guide dogs would be allowed in taxis because:

(a)   the text says they are allowed on trains.

(b)   they like riding in taxis.

(c)   the text says a guide dog can go anywhere its owner wants to go.

(d)   they are properly trained and would behave in a taxi.

> **Think!**
> You will need to read paragraph 2 to find the answer.

2. Which word would **not** describe a guide dog?

(a)   nervous

(b)   intelligent

(c)   obedient

(d)   patient

> **Think!**
> You will need to read paragraph 3 and think about what each word means in the last sentence to find the answer.

3. Which tells you that you would most likely see a Labrador retriever as someone's guide dog?

(a)   People like Labrador retrievers.

(b)   They are friendly and intelligent.

(c)   Labrador retrievers like stopping at curbs.

(d)   They are the most commonly used guide dog.

> **Think!**
> Read paragraph 3 to find the answer.

4. You can conclude that a guide dog would not be frightened if it heard thunder because . . .

_____

_____

_____

_____

> **Think!**
> You will need to read paragraph 5 and think about all the things a guide dog must get used to.

Name _____

Use the strategies you have been practicing to help you draw conclusions.

1. If a dog is chosen to go to a special trainer to learn more and become a guide dog, you could conclude that:
   (a) it was a friendly dog.
   (b) it wasn't easily distracted by noise, crowds, or other animals.
   (c) the puppy raiser loved it.
   (d) the puppy raiser had trouble training it.

2. What can you conclude to be the reason a guide dog is not given food as a training reward?
   (a) Guide dogs prefer to find their own food.
   (b) Guide dogs only like praise as a reward.
   (c) Food is too expensive to give as a reward.
   (d) If food is given as a reward, the guide dog might forget about the job.
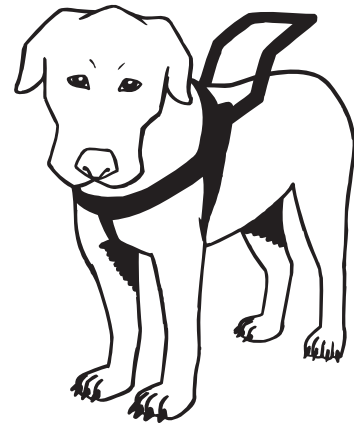
3. About how long does a guide dog take to be fully trained?
   (a) two years
   (b) one year
   (c) eighteen months
   (d) four months

4. Explain how you chose your answer to question 3.

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

Name _____

Activity: Read the letter below and complete page 102.

Ban Cats!

Dear Mr. Mayor,

1.   Many people are concerned about cats roaming around outside, especially at night. I think that cats should be banned from being outside and kept inside at night.

2.   It's bad enough that cats are free to roam around freely during the day. They simply jump up and over the fence and begin to poke their noses into someone else's backyard without even being invited. People don't do that, and dogs have to be kept in their own backyard. Why should cats be able to do this?

3.   The problem is worse at night. During the day, you can usually see what a cat is up to and shoo it away. At night, it is dark and you are in bed, hopefully asleep. A cat can come into your yard and dig to do its "business" in your garden. Then, you get up in the morning and have to clean it up.

4.   Cats save their fighting with other cats until night—or they seem to. You can be sound asleep having a pleasant dream, when it is interrupted by a terrible wailing noise followed by high-pitched screeches. It's the neighborhood cats that are allowed out at night having a meeting to see who can wake up the most neighbors! They choose other people's roofs and walls to do this on—not their own! And it goes on ALL night.

5.   When it begins to get light, cats that are out at night are able to do something that really upsets me—stalk innocent birds! You wake up to hear birds making their morning singsong in the trees, and cats are creeping up on them to catch them. Although some owners put bells on their cats, they don't always warn a bird the cat is nearby.

6.   It really is time that cat owners are forced to keep their cats inside at night. Don't you agree?

Sincerely,
Mark

Name _____

Use the strategies you learned and practiced in *Guide Dogs* to help you practice drawing conclusions.

Remember:

- Conclusions are decisions you make about the meaning of facts and details in the text.
- Find what you are drawing conclusions about.
- Look in the text to find the facts and details. Underline them.
- Make decisions about what they mean.
- Check all answers before deciding.

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1. What do you think the writer wants to happen?

- (a) cats to be banned
- (b) cats to be kept inside at night
- (c) people to be banned from owning cats
- (d) people to be made to put bells on their cats

Think!
Read paragraph 6.

2. Explain the main reason the writer sometimes gets woken up at night.

_____

_____

_____

3. What cat behavior bothers the writer the most?

- (a) Cats fighting at night.
- (b) Cats going to the bathroom in the garden.
- (c) Cats preying on birds.
- (d) Cats not wearing bells.

4. Do you think the writer:

(a) hates cats, or

(b) just wants them banned from being outside at night?

Explain why you chose your answer.

_____

_____

Reading Passage

Name _____

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

———The Lost City of Atlantis ———

1. Long ago, there was an island called Atlantis. It was in the middle of the Atlantic Ocean.

2. Atlantis was ruled by King Atlas, the oldest son of Poseidon, god of the sea. It was a beautiful island, with mountains, lakes, forests, animals, waterfalls, rivers, and green fields. The capital city was built on top of a hill surrounded by rings of water. The rings were joined by tunnels so ships could sail through from the ocean. Many people worked on the harbor docks, loading and unloading cargo. In the very center of the hill, a huge temple was built to the god of the sea. Inside, it had a gold statue of Poseidon driving six winged horses. The temple was made from the most precious metals.

3. In the green fields not far from the city lived the farmers, who grew delicious fruits, vegetables, and some herbs and nuts for the people of Atlantis. In the mountains looking over these fields and the ocean, people lived in magnificent palaces. Atlantis also had a great army of thousands of men. The city was built behind a huge stone wall.

4. For a long time, the people of Atlantis led simple lives and were good, kind people. But gradually, they became greedier and greedier and wanted power over everything. Zeus, the god of sky and thunder, saw this and became angry. He gathered all the gods, and together they created great explosions that violently shook the island. Atlantis collapsed into the ocean and was never seen again.

5. The legend of Atlantis is one of the oldest in the world. Most people think that Atlantis never existed. Those who do believe it existed wonder what really caused its destruction. Some people still search under the sea to see if they can find the lost city.

Name _____

> **Remember:**
>
> • What is it you are drawing conclusions about?
> • Look in the text to find the facts and details. Underline them.
> • Make decisions about what they mean.
> • Check all answers before deciding.

1. You can conclude that Atlantis got its name because:
   (a) the ruler, King Atlas, liked the name.
   (b) it was named after the ocean.
   (c) Poseidon chose the name.
   (d) Zeus chose the name.

2. Why did Zeus conclude that Atlantis should be destroyed?
   (a) There wasn't enough food there.
   (b) The people were unhappy.
   (c) He was angry with the people.
   (d) He was a grumpy god.

3. Would you conclude that Atlantis was a safe place to live?

   Yes ◯   No ◯

   Explain why you chose this answer.

   _____

   _____

   _____

4. What can you tell about the diet of the people of Atlantis?

   _____

   _____

   _____

   _____

Summarizing

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 making a decision.

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1. Which sentence best summarizes what people did in Atlantis?

(a)　They lived in a beautiful place with mountains, lakes, rivers, and green fields.

(b)　They built a huge temple in the center of the hill.

(c)　They enjoyed a simple life on a very beautiful island.

(d)　They had a great time.

2. Which sentence best summarizes how Atlantis was protected?

(a)　Atlantis had a huge army to protect it.

(b)　The people of Atlantis protected their property because they were rich.

(c)　The gods Zeus and Poseidon protected Atlantis.

(d)　Atlantis had a huge wall surrounding it and a great army to protect it.

3. Write a sentence to describe Poseidon's temple. Include the most important information.

_____

_____

_____

_____

4. Write a short summary about why Atlantis was destroyed.

_____

_____

_____

_____

Name _____

Remember:

- The answers are not usually 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 possible answers before making a decision.

1. Zeus and the other gods created great explosions that violently shook the island and made it collapse and sink into the ocean. What could those explosions most likely have been?

(a) a very loud thunderstorm

(b) waves crashing

(c) a tornado

(d) a volcano erupting

2. Why do you think Poseidon's temple was built of the most precious metals that could be found?

_____

_____

_____

3. Do you think the people of Atlantis were good builders? Explain why you think this.

Yes ◯   No ◯

_____

_____

_____

4. What kind of people do you think lived in the mountains? Give a reason for your answer.

Rich ◯   Poor ◯

_____

_____

Elephant and Monkey

1. One day, an elephant was lumbering slowly through the jungle when she heard a faint cry. She looked around and saw a very small monkey up to the top of his legs in some mud. The poor animal was terrified.

2. The elephant watched the monkey struggling to get out and realized that with every move he made, he was sinking deeper into the mud. It was now up to his middle.

3. By the time the elephant got to the edge of the pool, the mud had reached the monkey's armpits. She reached over with her trunk and grabbed him. It took all of her strength to pull him out of the sticky mud.

4. Very gently the elephant carried the muddy monkey to the river so he could scrub himself clean. He thanked her and told her that one day he hoped he could do something to help her. She just looked down at the tiny monkey and laughed and laughed.

5. A few weeks later, the monkey noticed an elephant lying down beside the river. When the curious monkey went to take a closer look, he saw that it was the elephant who had rescued him. He raced up to her.

6. She had hurt her leg and couldn't get up. For days she'd been stuck there with only river water to drink, and she was weak with hunger. The monkey wanted to help, but what could a tiny monkey do?

7. He scampered up a tree and was gone in a flash. A few minutes later he was back again, followed by about twenty friends. They all ran about collecting leaves and berries, which they fed to the elephant. They fed her for days until she was strong enough to get up and walk. The moral of this fable is: *One good turn deserves another.*

Questions

1. The monkey was sinking deeper into the mud because he:

(a) stayed still.

(b) couldn't swim.

(c) kept moving.

2. The person who wrote this fable wanted to:

(a) explain how something works.

(b) teach people something.

(c) make people laugh.

3. The main idea in Paragraph 7 is:

(a) the monkeys saved the elephant.

(b) a monkey ran up a tree.

(c) the little monkey had lots of friends.

4. Which happened last?

(a) The elephant took the monkey to the river.

(b) The monkey was pulled out.

(c) The monkey thanked the elephant.

5. The word *lumbering* in Paragraph 1 means:

(a) moving heavily. (b) running. (c) leaning.

6. The animal rescue stories are similar because both animals:

(a) were the same size. (b) were hungry. (c) couldn't get away.

7. The elephant couldn't stand up so she was unable to:

(a) drink. (b) eat. (c) call for help.

8. The word *it* in Paragraph 2 is used instead of:
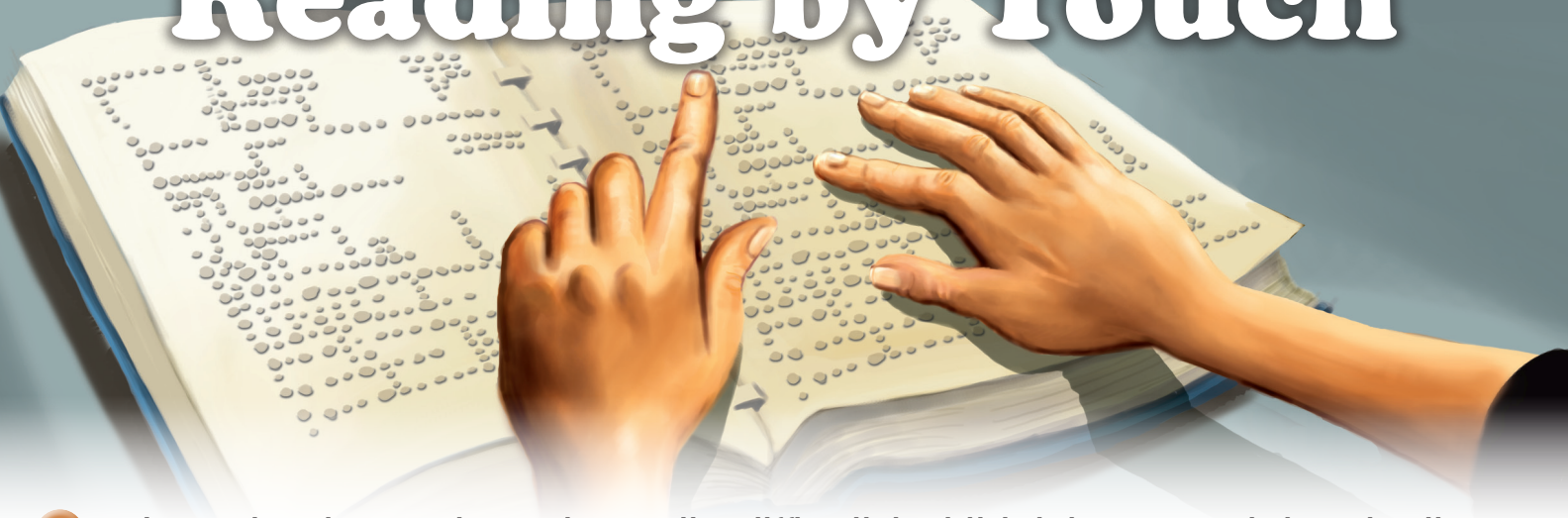
(a) the elephant.

(b) the mud.

(c) the monkey.

Something Extra

★ Draw a picture of the monkey stuck in the mud.

★ Read the fable *The Lion and the Mouse*, and talk about how the fables are similar and different.

Reading by Touch

1. Learning to read can be quite difficult, but think how much harder it would be if you couldn't see. This was the problem a French boy, Louis Braille, had almost 200 years ago.

2. When Louis was three, he wandered into his father's workshop where he accidentally stabbed himself in the eye with a sharp tool. That eye became infected, which then spread to the other eye. Poor Louis lost sight in both his eyes.

3. Louis was a very clever boy, therefore he was allowed to go to school with the other children. He sat in the classroom every day and learned a lot by just listening, but he still couldn't read or write.

4. When he was about 12, he was sent to a special school for the blind in Paris. At this school he learned how to read night-writing. It used letters made up from twelve little, raised dots. The army had developed this writing because they thought their soldiers would be able to use it to read messages in the dark. Unfortunately, it was very slow and too hard for them to learn.

5. Louis decided to improve night-writing and to make it smaller so it would be easier and quicker to read. He wanted people to be able to feel a whole letter with only one of their fingertips, so he changed all the letters and only used six dots.

6. The letter "w" wasn't used in the French alphabet, so Louis added another letter to cater to people who wanted to read English. Since then, many other changes have been made. Today it is known as braille, and it is used around the world to help people who can't see to read.

Questions

1. Louis Braille was blind because he:

(a) *was born blind.*   (b) *was sick.*   (c) *hurt his eye.*

2. Night-writing and braille are similar because:

(a) *they use 12 dots.*

(b) *you can read them in the dark.*

(c) *people can feel a whole letter with a fingertip.*

3. Which happened to Louis first?

(a) *His eyes became infected.*

(b) *He became blind.*

(c) *His eye was injured by a sharp tool.*

4. The text doesn't tell you, but you can infer that Louis probably:

(a) *wanted to share his ideas.*

(b) *didn't like reading.*

(c) *didn't want others to use braille.*

5. The word *cater* in Paragraph 6 means to:

(a) *cook.*   (b) *provide help.*   (c) *give.*

6. It is an opinion, not a fact, that Louis was:

(a) *kind.*   (b) *blind.*   (c) *French.*

7. The text, *Reading by Touch,* was written to:

(a) *give instructions.*

(b) *entertain.*

(c) *give information.*

8. The word *it* in Paragraph 1 is used instead of:

(a) *not seeing.*

(b) *learning to read.*

(c) *the boy.*

Something Extra

★ Find out how to read and write some braille letters. Use them to write short words or a message for a friend to read.