

**THE 100+ SERIES™**

# READING COMPREHENSION

Essential Practice for Key Reading Comprehension Topics



- Teaches core reading comprehension skills
- Provides close reading practice through high-interest content
- Aligned to Common Core State Standards
- Includes 100+ reading comprehension activities

# Common Core Alignment Chart

| Common Core State Standards*                    |               | Practice Page(s)  |
|---|---------------|---|
| <b>Reading Standards for Literature</b>         |               |   |
| Key Ideas and Details                           | 8.RL.1–8.RL.3 | 20–23, 36–43, 46, 47, 56–60, 62–65, 68–77, 83–93, 106–119   |
| Craft and Structure                             | 8.RL.4–8.RL.6 | 36, 37, 62–65, 94–99, 102–111   |
| Integration of Knowledge and Ideas              | 8.RL.7–8.RL.9 | 86, 87, 112–119   |
| Range of Reading and Level of Text Complexity   | 8.RL.10       | 20–23, 36–43, 46, 47, 56–60, 62–65, 68–77, 83–99, 102–119   |
| <b>Reading Standards for Informational Text</b> |               |   |
| Key Ideas and Details                           | 8.RI.1–8.RI.3 | 5–19, 24–35, 44, 45, 48–55, 61, 66–67, 78–84, 100–101, 120, 121   |
| Craft and Structure                             | 8.RI.4–8.RI.6 | 5–19, 24–27, 50, 51, 54, 55, 61, 66, 67, 78–81, 100, 101, 120, 121  |
| Integration of Knowledge and Ideas              | 8.RI.7–8.RI.9 | 54, 55, 66, 67, 120, 121  |
| Range of Reading and Level of Text Complexity   | 8.RI.10       | 5–19, 24–35, 44, 45, 48–55, 61, 66, 67, 78–81, 100, 101, 120, 121   |
| <b>Writing Standards</b>                        |               |   |
| Text Types and Purposes                         | 8.W.1–8.W.3   | 10, 11, 24–27, 34, 35, 38, 39, 42, 43, 47–49, 52, 53, 60, 61, 76–85, 100, 101, 107, 112–119               |
| Production and Distribution of Writing          | 8.W.4–8.W.6   | 10, 11, 16, 17  |
| Research to Build and Present Knowledge         | 8.W.7–8.W.9   | 6, 7, 80, 81  |
| Range of Writing                                | 8.W.10        | 6, 7, 10, 11, 16, 17, 24–27, 34, 35, 38, 39, 42, 43, 47–49, 52, 53, 60, 61, 76–85, 100, 101, 107, 112–119 |
| <b>Language Standards</b>                       |               |   |
| Knowledge of Language                           | 8.L.3         | 32, 33, 36–39, 68, 69, 78, 79   |
| Vocabulary Acquisition and Use                  | 8.L.4–8.L.6   | 36, 37, 54, 55, 94–105  |

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Read the passage. Then, answer the questions. Cite evidence from the text to support your responses.

## Birds of a Feather

A bird spreads its wings as it stands upon the top of an anthill. Is it playing king of the mountain? Probably not. Ants secrete a substance that acts like an antibiotic. The bird may be seeking the medicinal substance to rub over its feathers to kill parasites. Birds have also been seen rubbing crushed ants through their feathers or smearing themselves with the juice from onions or limes if ants are not available.

Dale Clayton, a biologist with the University of Utah, calls this strange behavior a life-or-death activity. Feather lice can destroy a bird's insulating feathers, forcing the bird to use enormous amounts of energy just to keep warm. Without the medicinal substance a bird's weight can drop which can cause death. When some male birds are infected with mites, their tails do not grow as long as other male. Shorter tails mean fewer mates.

Have you ever seen a bird busily grooming itself? You may think this behavior is for vanity reasons, but actually this strange behavior is another life-or-death activity. Some zoologists have noted that a clean male bird is an attractive male. That may explain why a male horned guan, a Central American bird somewhat like a turkey, takes dust baths whenever he spots a female he would like to mate with.

The next time you see birds grooming, look again. You may be witnessing a life-or-death struggle.

1. What is the main idea of this passage?

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2. List three facts that support the main idea.

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Read the passage. Then, answer the questions on page 7.

## Life in Yakutia

Many people who live in colder climates look forward to spring. Even if we embrace winter with all of its seasonal pleasures—skiing, ice hockey, and skating—we look forward to the day in March when the snow starts to disappear. So imagine a place that is so cold that a temperature just above freezing is considered a warm day. Imagine living in a place where your breath actually turns to ice the moment you step outside.

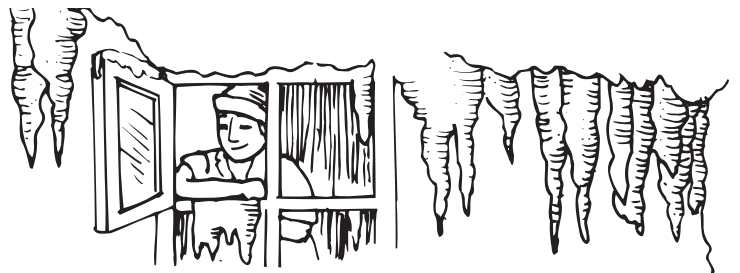
A place like this exists in a region of Russia called Yakutia. Located in the eastern part of Russia known as Siberia, it is one of the coldest areas in the world. In the town of Yakutsk, inhabitants have stated that it gets so cold that a corridor forms in the shape of a silhouette when a person walks down the street. The person's body heat actually cuts a path through the icy air, a path that others can see. After a person has passed out of sight, the corridor remains, hanging in the bright, cold air.

Some parts of Siberia receive between 30 and 50 inches (76–127 cm) of snow each year. But Yakutia has very little precipitation. You might think this is a good thing, but as a result, the region lacks the natural insulation that snow provides. The Yakutians layer the snow that does fall over their houses to form icy coatings to retain the heat. A traditional Yakutian house is a one-story, rectangular cabin with a nearly flat roof. Made of logs, it is sealed with mud, which also acts as insulation against the bitter cold.

Everything in Yakutia is built on permafrost. **Permafrost** is ground made up of ice and soil that stays frozen for most of the year. In fact, half of the landmass of Russia rests on permafrost. Permafrost causes problems because it has an active layer that freezes in the winter and thaws during the summer. The thickness of this layer ranges from 3 to 10 feet (0.9–3 m). With the ground shifting so dramatically, it makes the construction of roads, buildings, pipelines, and other structures difficult. It's even difficult to dig graves in permafrost because of the instability of the ground. The Yakutians bury their dead in above-ground structures instead.

You might think that spring and summer would give the people of Yakutia a special sense of relief, but you would be wrong. Spring spells disaster for the inhabitants of this region. When the temperatures rise, their houses sink as the permafrost gives way. Sometimes only the roofs of houses can be seen from the street. Temperatures above freezing mean chaos in Yakutia. Mud oozes everywhere and tiny rivers of melted snow flood towns and settlements.

When winter returns, stability returns with it. The sub-zero temperatures put everything back in order. Houses, roads, and the ground itself stay glued together like the pieces of a model-train village. Paths and roads become passable again. In winter, life returns to normal.



Use the passage on page 6 to answer the questions.

1. What is the main idea of this passage?
  - A. Houses sometimes disappear in Yakutia.
  - B. The people of Yakutia face special challenges because of the weather.
  - C. Yakutia is located in Siberia, in eastern Russia.
  - D. Spring is not the favorite season in Yakutia.
2. Which of these is a supporting detail from the passage?
  - A. Spring is a favorite time of year for many people because of the warmer weather.
  - B. Life returns to normal at different times of the year in different places.
  - C. The active layer of permafrost causes houses and roads in Yakutia to sink in the spring.
  - D. The towns in Yakutia are like model-train villages.
3. Which of these is not a supporting detail from the passage?
  - A. The weather in Yakutia is bitterly cold with many snowstorms.
  - B. Yakutian houses are built with logs and sealed with mud to make them warm.
  - C. It is so cold in Yakutia that a person's breath can freeze as soon as he steps outside.
  - D. People in Yakutia use the snow that does fall to layer over their homes.
4. How does the author use comparisons to make the point that the weather in Yakutia presents challenges? Look for comparison words like *you might think . . . but*.

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5. Would you like to live in Yakutia? Why or why not? Cite evidence from the text.

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Read the passage. Then, complete the graphic organizer on page 9.

## The Indigo Highway

(1) Most people don't think of turtles as fast swimmers. How, then, do slow and clumsy loggerhead turtles wind up in Nova Scotia—thousands of miles from their Caribbean home? It isn't persistence that brings these turtles north. It's the Gulf Stream, a current that originates in the water south of Florida and ends up off the Grand Banks of Newfoundland, where it joins the North Atlantic current. The loggerhead turtles, along with giant blue fin tuna, blue sharks, and swordfish, hitch rides on this current, which moves faster than the ocean water around it.

(2) The Gulf Stream is like a giant river flowing within the ocean. It is between 50 and 100 miles wide (80.5 km–161 km) and about one mile (1.6 km) deep. It moves much more water than any river on Earth—150 million cubic meters of water per second. That's 100 times the flow of all of the rivers in the world combined. It's not really possible to see the flow of this stream, but you can recognize it by its indigo, or deep blue, color. The Gulf Stream is also warmer than the northern Atlantic waters to its left and cooler than the Sargasso Sea to its right. In many ways, it acts as a barrier between these two sections of the Atlantic, deflecting the warmer water toward Europe.

(3) The Gulf Stream made its mark on history by affecting European travel to and from the New World. In 1519, Ponce de León's ship pilot, Antonio de Alaminos, discovered that sailing with the stream back to Europe saved a tremendous amount of time. This route became known as the "Highway of the Indies." Early sea captains who learned of it kept the directions a secret from competing traders. A century later, the Pilgrims had a very different experience with the Gulf Stream. It appears that they sailed against it, which is why their sea voyage took a lengthy 66 days. It may also explain how they ended up in Massachusetts instead of their original destination, Virginia. If they had crossed the Gulf Stream, it would have launched them north to New England.

(4) Benjamin Franklin showed a little more savvy when it came to understanding the ways of the Gulf Stream. While working in London just before the Revolutionary War, complaints reached him about the slowness of mail delivery from Great Britain to the colonies. He asked his cousin, a Nantucket whaling-ship captain, about this. His cousin told him that he and other whaling crews had seen British mail ships making slow progress while sailing in the Gulf Stream's current. The whaling ships, in contrast, used the stream to chase whales and make their capture possible. When the whaling ships tried to offer friendly advice to the mail ships, the British rejected the information and said they were "too wise to be counseled by simple American fishermen." Franklin continued to study the stream. Along with his cousin, he devised three amazingly accurate maps charting its course. Later, during his own voyages across the Atlantic, he followed the Gulf Stream's path by recording its warmer water temperatures with a thermometer.

(5) Oceanographers, amateur students of the sea, and others continue to take an interest in the Gulf Stream. Many features of this huge current remain a fascinating mystery. In the meantime, loggerhead turtles and other sea creatures happily take their free rides on the indigo highway of the ocean.

Use the passage on page 8 to complete the graphic organizer to analyze the organization of the passage. Cite evidence from the text to support your responses.

| Main Idea of the Article  |             |             |
|---------------------------|-------------|-------------|
| Paragraph 1: Introduction |             |             |
| Paragraph 2               | Paragraph 3 | Paragraph 4 |
| Main Idea                 | Main Idea   | Main Idea   |
|                           |             |             |
| Detail                    | Detail      | Detail      |
|                           |             |             |
| Detail                    | Detail      | Detail      |
|                           |             |             |
| Detail                    | Detail      | Detail      |
|                           |             |             |
| Detail                    | Detail      | Detail      |
|                           |             |             |
| Paragraph 5: Conclusion   |             |             |

Read the passage. Then, answer the questions on page 11.

## Dog Data

Do you consider a dog your best friend? Many people do. Even if you don't it might be interesting to learn some facts about this species that has lived with humans for thousands of years. Some scientists who study animal behavior believe that dogs could be descended from wolves. Another theory is that dogs are the animal cousins of wolves, with dogs and wolves sharing a common ancestor. For this reason, the study of wolf behavior has proven to be helpful in understanding the actions of dogs.

### Why Do Dogs Bury Bones?

A look at the behavior of wolves tells us something about how canines handle food. Single wolves and small groups of wolves can eat some of their prey in one sitting—animals ranging in size from rabbits to sheep. In fact, one adult wolf can eat the equivalent of 176 quarter-pound hamburgers in a day! That might be where the expression “wolf down one’s food” comes from. However, large prey such as cattle or caribou can be more meat than a small pack of wolves can consume. Rather than leave the surplus for vultures, the thrifty wolves bury their leftovers and dig them up the next day for another meal. Dogs follow this behavior when they bury bones. Even though a dog is fed every day, its instinct tells it to treat the bone as surplus food to be saved and savored again.

### Why Do Dogs Bark?

Let’s look to wolves again. Wolves bark to warn the members of the pack of a possible threat. A wolf’s bark prompts the adults in the pack to hide their pups and prepare for action. The bark of a wolf is terse and relatively quiet. By contrast, a dog’s bark can be noisy and prolonged. But the purpose of the barking is the same. Dogs’ barks are warnings to their human family. The dog is saying, “I notice something unusual. Pay attention!” A barking dog is not necessarily getting ready to attack. The barking is simply telling others to be alert.

### Why Does My Dog Want to Sleep in My Bed?

Almost every dog views its human owners as members of its pack. It considers the house in which it lives to be its den. Dogs, like wolves, are protective of their pack members and prefer to huddle together for security. That’s why dogs like to sleep with their owners. Sharing a bed with a dog may be against the rules in some homes, but keeping the dog in the basement or in a kennel isn’t wise either. In the wild, only outcast wolves sleep away from the pack, usually because they have been driven away. A dog that is forced to sleep in isolation will start to feel and act like an outcast. Human owners who find a way to let their dogs sleep as near to them as possible often have fewer problems with their pets.

Years of breeding and living in the world of humans have made dogs some of the best animal friends we have.



Use the passage on page 10 to answer the questions.

1. Scientists believe that dogs and wolves
  - A. have nothing in common.
  - B. could be animal cousins.
  - C. may share a common ancestor.
  - D. both B and C
2. What kind of scientific research on wolves has been a help in understanding the actions of dogs?
  - A. life expectancy
  - B. hunting habits
  - C. behavior
  - D. both A and B
3. For what reason do wolves bury leftover food?
  - A. to save it for the next day
  - B. to hide it from scavengers
  - C. to fertilize the soil
  - D. both A and B
4. The sound of a barking wolf is
  - A. quiet.
  - B. loud.
  - C. terse.
  - D. both A and C
5. How do dogs view their human owners?
  - A. as pack members
  - B. as enemies
  - C. as outcasts
  - D. both B and C
6. Why do some wolves sleep away from the pack?
  - A. they don't like the pack
  - B. they are outcasts
  - C. the den is too crowded
  - D. both B and C
7. How does the author organize the information in this article?  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
8. How does the author feel about dogs? Cite evidence from the text to support your response.  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Read the passage. Then, answer the questions on page 13.

## The Life of Mozart—Triumph or Tragedy?

Can you imagine a five-year-old **composing** and playing music on a child-sized violin? This was true of Mozart, a young genius who grew up to be one of the most creative composers of all time. Do you ever envy people you perceive as having more talent than yourself? From this introduction, you might assume that the life of this gifted child was charmed. Read on. Decide for yourself.

Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart was born in January of 1756 into a musical family. His father, Leopold was a composer and musician and his older sister Anna Maria played the piano. Leopold recognized the giftedness of his children and devoted himself to their careers. Mozart and his sister toured the royal courts of Europe, playing concerts for the nobility. Both of the Mozart children were **prodigies**, but Wolfgang was remarkable. He could listen to any piece of music once and then play it from memory. He could play the **keyboard** or the violin blindfolded. Music that Mozart wrote at the age of five was as good as works by many adult composers.

When Mozart was a young man, he fell in love with a German singer named Aloysia Weber. His parents didn't approve of this relationship and the relationship ended poorly. Later, Mozart fell in love and married Aloysia's younger sister Constanze. Although his family did not approve of this marriage, the young couple enjoyed their life together.

Mozart earned a living selling his **compositions**, giving **concerts**, and providing music lessons to the wealthy. Some of the **operas** Mozart wrote such as *The Marriage of Figaro*, *The Magic Flute*, and *Don Giovanni*, are still performed today. Mozart also wrote music for the court of the Emperor of Austria. He composed 41 **symphonies**. However, none of these ventures earned him much money, and he spent far more than he was able to earn. Mozart often waited until the last moment to work on pieces that had been **commissioned**, or paid for in advance. He wrote the **overture** to *Don Giovanni* the night before it was to be performed.

By the spring of 1791, Mozart was ill and depressed. He was deeply in debt. His health, which had never been good, was declining. A stranger asked Mozart to write a requiem, a musical piece for a funeral. Mozart agreed, but then began to fear that the requiem was being written for his own death. His fears were justified. Mozart died in December of 1791, at the age of 35.

Use the passage on page 12 to answer the questions. Cite evidence from the text to support your responses.

1. What is the main idea of this passage?

2. List three details that support the view that Mozart’s life was triumphant and three details that support the view that his life was tragic.

| Triumphant | Tragic |
|------------|--------|
|            |        |

3. Do you feel the life of Mozart was triumphant or tragic?

4. The article includes music-specific words. Define each word using context clues or a dictionary if needed.

compose: \_\_\_\_\_

prodigy: \_\_\_\_\_

keyboard: \_\_\_\_\_

concert: \_\_\_\_\_

composition: \_\_\_\_\_

opera: \_\_\_\_\_

symphony: \_\_\_\_\_

commission: \_\_\_\_\_

overture: \_\_\_\_\_