

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)
Reading Standards for Literature		
Key Ideas and Details	5.RL.1–5.RL.3	22, 23, 44, 45, 47–49, 52, 53, 66, 67, 76–99, 104, 105, 108, 109, 112, 113
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Read the passage. Then, answer the questions.

Creepy Robots

NASA Space Telerobotics Program has a “Cool Robot” site on the Internet. Some of the robots they have featured really are cool, including the one that may take over your chores and the one that teaches itself to walk. Some are creepy, such as one that is described as “humaniform”—the one that performs surgery on hips—and the six-legged walking robot. The creepiest robots of all may be the “Army-Ant” Cooperative Lifting Robots.

An “Army-Ant” robot is the size of a toaster oven and will sense a load that needs to be lifted. It will scoot under the load and lift it onto its back. Meanwhile, it will be sending out “help” signals to other identical robots. They will swarm the load, also crawling underneath and lifting it. Working cooperatively, these robots will transport the load, lower it, and scoot out from underneath. With the load transported, they will go about their business, searching for another load or cruising around exploring.

Is that creepy or what? That isn’t all. These robots will have heads mounted on little masts that will be able to turn 360 degrees. The scariest part of all about these robots is that experts expect to see something called “emergent group behavior.” They point to the behavior of social insects such as ants. Behaviorists mention that ants and bees seem to have a group intelligence that advances beyond that of the individual animals.

Ok, so we know what this means. It doesn’t mean that these colonies of “Army-Ant” robots are going to get together, decide on a scheme to take over the world, and then come after us humans. It just means that they will work together and that an individual robot might be sacrificed now and then for the good of the group, just as an individual ant might be sacrificed for the good of the colony. Still, the whole idea is creepy, isn’t it?

Creepy. And maybe just a little cool too!

1. What is the main idea of paragraph 2?

2. What is the main idea of paragraph 3?

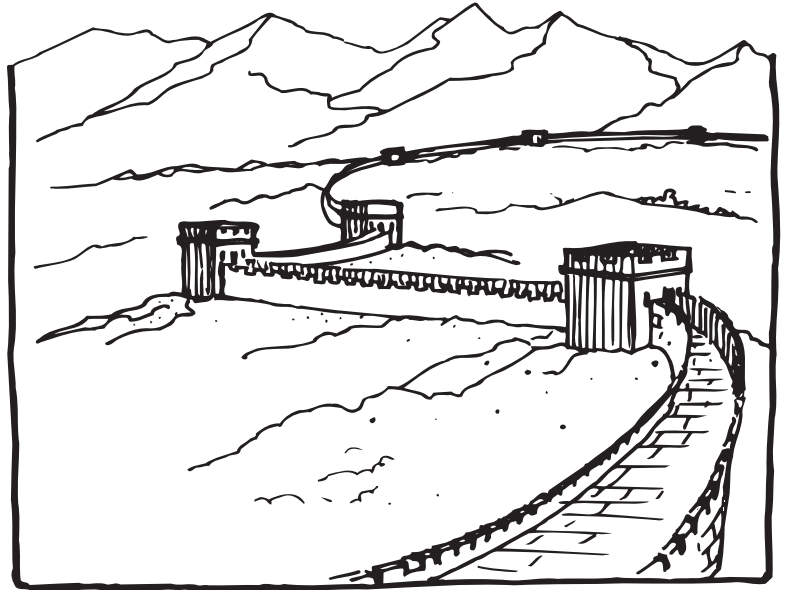
3. Underline at least three details that support the idea that robots can be creepy.

Read the passage. Then, complete the activities on page 7.

The Great Wall of China

The Great Wall of China is the longest structure ever built. Constructed entirely by hand, the Great Wall winds 13,170 miles (21,195 km) along the mountains across northern China. This massive wall is even visible from space.

During 400 BC, small stretches of the wall were built to protect the country from invaders. During the Ch'in Dynasty from 221–206 BC, these first walls were connected together in a new and much longer wall. Work on the wall continued through the Han, Sui, and Ming dynasties. It has been estimated that almost a million laborers worked on the Great Wall over a period of many years.



Special sections of loops and sidewalls add 1,800 more miles (2,897 km) to the length of the wall. These sidewalls were added as an extra defense against invaders. The wall is approximately 25 feet (7.6 m) high and over 15 feet (4.6 m) wide at the top. The core of the wall was made with heavily packed earth. The outer wall was finished with hand-cut stones. For every mile of wall built, over 422,400 cubic feet (11,961 cm) of material was needed.

To further reinforce the wall, watchtowers were built every 100 to 200 yards (91.4–182.9 m). The 40-foot-(12.2 m) high towers were stocked with food, water, and supplies for the defenders who were on guard at the wall.

Although the Great Wall was built to protect China from invaders, it was only successful with minor attacks. In the 1200s, a Mongol leader from the north named Genghis Khan led his army across the wall and conquered most of China.

Over the centuries, much of the Great Wall deteriorated. Today, three main sections of the wall have been rebuilt. One section is near the city of Beijing. Another is in the province of Kansu in north-central China. The third restored section is along the country's east coast.

The Great Wall no longer exists for defense. Through the years, it has been incorporated into Chinese culture and myth. The most famous story tells of Meng Jiangnu, whose husband was killed in the construction of the wall. It is said that her tears caused a section of the wall to collapse.

Use the passage on page 6 to complete the activities.

Circle the correct answer.

1. Choose the title that best reflects the main idea of this passage.
 - A. China's Wondrous Wall
 - B. The Invaders of China
 - C. China's Great Defense
 - D. Watchtowers on the Wall
2. Which of the following tells why the Great Wall of China was built?
 - A. to protect from invaders
 - B. for quicker travel
 - C. to honor the great dynasties
 - D. to boost tourism
3. Three sections of the wall have been rebuilt. They are:
 - A. Han, Sui, and Ming.
 - B. near Beijing, in the province of Kansu, and along the east coast.
 - C. in northern China, near Beijing, and along the watchtowers.
 - D. Ming, in the province of Kansu, and near Beijing.
- Fill in the answer that correctly completes each sentence.
 4. The Great Wall of China is _____ miles long.
 5. It has special loops and sidewalls, which add _____ more miles to its length.
 6. It is approximately _____ feet high and over _____ feet wide at the top.
 7. It has an outer wall made of hand-cut _____.
 8. Watchtowers were built every _____ to _____ yards.
 9. They are about _____ feet high.
 10. They were stocked with _____, _____, and _____.
 11. On another sheet of paper, write a paragraph explaining why you think the Great Wall was not successful in protecting China against invaders.

Read the passage. Then, answer the questions on page 9.

Hunting the Causes of Lightning

The plane bucks, metal groaning. Up front, the pilot and copilot frown, studying the instrument panel. In the back, researchers study other instruments, but the researchers are smiling. They are hunting down storms that might produce lightning, and they have just found one.

More than 200 years after Benjamin Franklin flew a kite into a lightning storm, scientists are still not certain what causes lightning. Studies conducted on spring nights over the skies of the Great Plains states may help them find the causes. On spring nights, cool air combines with warmer air, causing the storms that produce lightning.

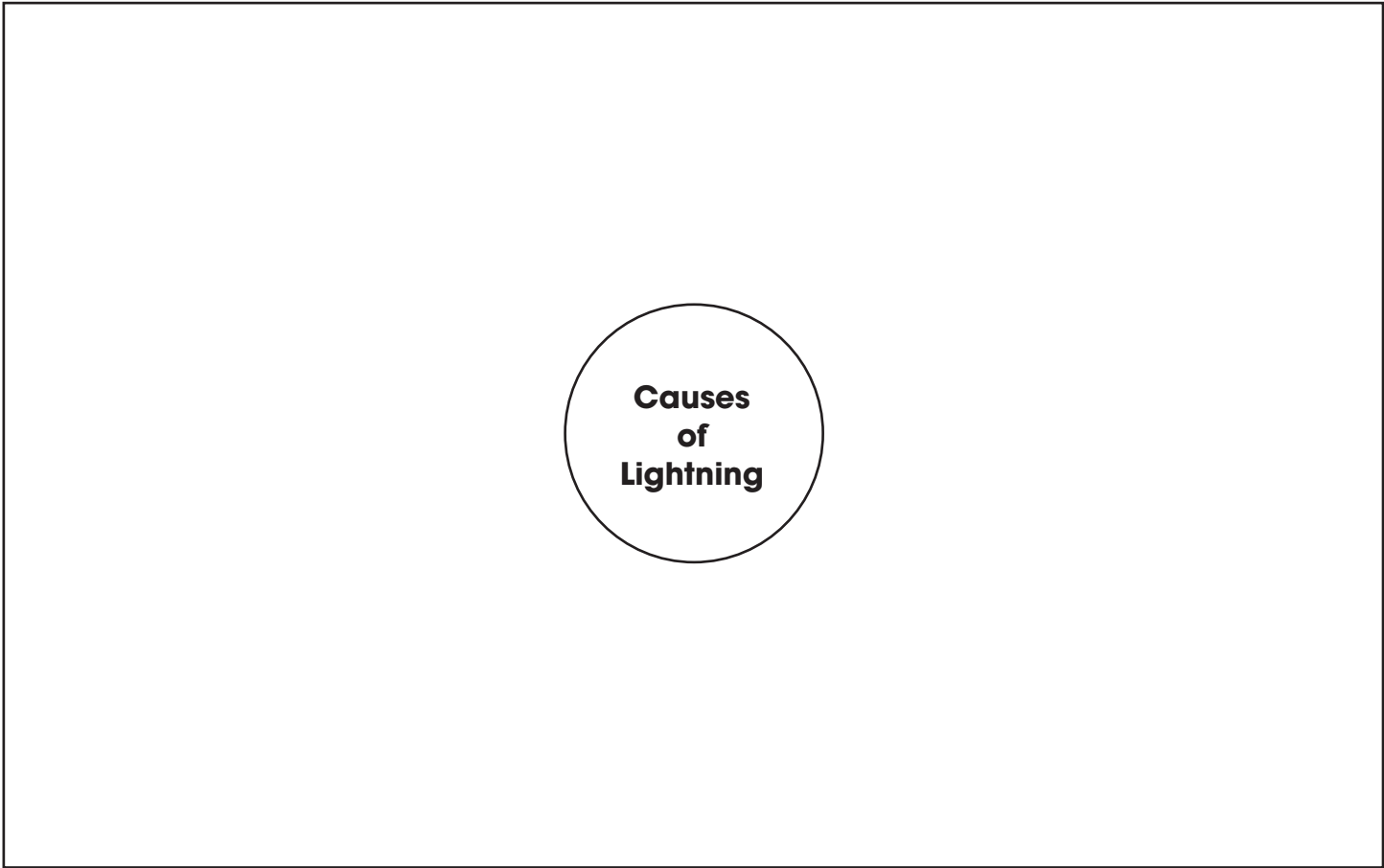
One theory says that a bigger bit of ice slams into a smaller bit, leaving behind a positive or negative charge. The larger the bit of ice and the faster it is going, the bigger the charge it leaves behind. When enough of these charges collect, lightning occurs. Scientists measure the size of the particles, their speed, wind speed, temperature, and air pressure, looking for the right combination that tends to produce lightning. Making these measurements requires that pilots fly alongside the storms. Sometimes the storm moves in an unpredictable pattern, so pilots find themselves flying into the storm rather than avoiding it.

Why is it important to know what causes lightning? Lightning causes fires and electrical damage, especially positively charged lightning such as that noted in the spring of 1998. Lightning is the number one storm-related killer in the United States. Statistics compiled by the National Weather Service indicate that each year more people are killed by lightning than by tornadoes and hurricanes combined. The first step in preventing those deaths is to understand what produces lightning.



Use the passage on page 8 to answer the questions.

1. Use information from the text to complete the concept map.



2. Some scientists are studying ice particles in storms to determine whether they could cause lightning. They measure their size, their speed, and the wind speed. What else do they measure?

3. Name two reasons why it is important to study the causes of lightning.

Read the passage. Then, complete the activities on page 11.

Jackie Robinson

The first African-American man to play modern American major league baseball was born in 1919, to a family of sharecroppers. Jackie's mother cleaned houses to support her children. Wanting to earn money to help his mother, Jackie delivered papers, cut lawns, and ran errands.

As a young boy, Jackie joined the neighborhood Pepper Street gang and started stealing and throwing dirt at cars. A neighbor told Jackie that he would hurt his mother if she knew he was getting into trouble. The neighbor also told him that he would be showing more bravery if he didn't do what the gang wanted him to do. Jackie listened. It was then that he decided to become active in sports.

As Jackie grew older, he played all sorts of games and sports. In high school and college, Jackie earned letters in track and field, basketball, football, and baseball.

Jackie quit college to help support his mother financially. In 1942, Jackie was drafted into the army. Jackie Robinson faced much prejudice in the army. As an officer, he was asked to join the army football team. Other teams objected to playing on Jackie's team, so he turned to the army baseball team. But he was still rejected because of his race.

After leaving the army in 1945, Jackie played shortstop for the Kansas City Monarchs, a team in the Negro League. Professional baseball was still segregated. It was at this time that the president of the Brooklyn Dodgers, Branch Rickey, recognized Jackie's talent in baseball.

Branch Rickey was determined to make Jackie Robinson the first African-American player in major league baseball. Jackie started playing with the Dodgers' farm club. Rickey advised Jackie not to fight back when people were unkind to him.

In 1947, Jackie started playing professional baseball for the Brooklyn Dodgers. At first, his teammates didn't like playing with him. However, when other teams screamed at Jackie, his teammates came to his defense. Because of his great performance at second base and his outstanding batting average, he was selected as Rookie of the Year. In 1949, he was named the Most Valuable Player in the National League. One of his greatest thrills was when he helped the Dodgers win the 1955 World Series.

Jackie Robinson paved the hard path for African-American men to play in the major leagues. In 1962, he was inducted into baseball's Hall of Fame. Ten years later, in Stamford, Connecticut, Jackie Robinson died at the age of 53.



Use the passage on page 10 to complete the activities.

1. Inside the baseballs, list three "strikes" that Jackie Robinson had against him as he grew up.



2. Describe how Jackie Robinson overcame each "strike" he faced.

Strike 1 _____

Strike 2 _____

Strike 3 _____

3. List some of the difficulties young people may face today.

4. What advice do you think Jackie Robinson would give to someone who faced any of the difficulties you listed above?

5. Complete the time line of the main events in Jackie Robinson's life.



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

The Florida Key Deer

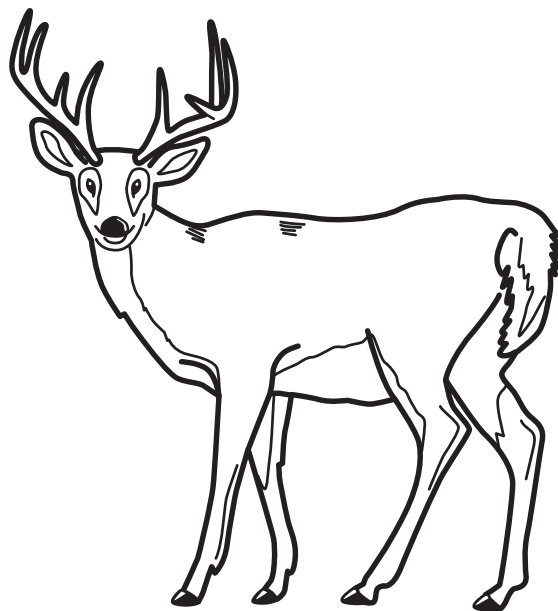
If you have ever been in the eastern United States or southeastern Canada, you have probably seen white-tailed deer. They roam in large herds in forests and grassy countrysides. In some places, there are so many that they anger farmers by eating crops and gardens. But their tiny cousins, the Florida Key deer, have not been so lucky. Sixty years ago, there were almost none of these deer left at all.

The Florida Key deer appear to be ordinary white-tailed deer except for their size. Most white-tailed deer weigh 400 pounds (181 kg) and are more than three feet (1 m) tall. However, the biggest Key deer weigh much less and are only half as tall. These little deer live in pine forests and swamps on the islands south of Florida. These islands are called the Florida Keys, and the deer are named for them.

Over one century ago, hundreds of Florida Key deer lived in the forests on the Keys until hunters discovered them. Groups of hunters would go into the forests and make noise to frighten the deer into the water. Other hunters in boats would kill them. By 1947, fewer than 40 little deer remained.

Some of the people living on the Keys began to worry about the deer so they bought some land and used it as a shelter to protect the very last of the deer. Two years later, the United States government purchased land in the Keys and formed the National Key Deer Refuge. The deer then had eleven square miles (28.5 square km) of forest where they could live safely.

Luckily, the deer were saved in time. Once they had lived on only five small islands in the Keys but by 1965 they had spread to eighteen islands. More than 800 Florida Key deer are alive today.



Use the passage on page 12 to answer the questions.

1. Who gets angry at the white-tailed deer?

2. Where are white-tailed deer found?

3. Where are Key deer found?

4. When did lots of Key deer live in the forests on the Keys?

5. Why were less than 40 deer left by 1947?

6. What is the main idea of the second paragraph?

7. What is the main idea of the fourth paragraph?

8. What would be another good title for this passage?

9. Why do you think it is important to be aware of endangered species?

