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## Different Kinds of Stories



## Getting the Idea

There are different kinds of stories. Some stories were told long ago and were passed from generation to generation. These stories were originally spoken out loud and not written or read.

A **myth** is a story about the distant past that is used to explain why the universe works the way it does. People with unusual powers often appear in myths. Myths are stories that were told before science was able to explain why things in nature happen. Myths show people and events as symbols of other things. People do not claim that a myth is a true story.

A **legend** is a story set in a real historic time. Legends are told as if they really happened and as if the characters really lived. Some legends are based on real people who have been made more than human over time.

A **folktale** is a story that is passed down from one person to another over time. Magical events sometimes happen in folktales. They may also explain how something was made.

A **fairy tale** often includes magic. It also usually sets good characters against evil ones. The characters often include kings, queens, princes, and princesses. Fairy tales often start with "Once upon a time," and they often end with "They lived happily ever after."

A **fable** is a story that often has animals as characters and teaches a lesson.

Most stories have meanings beyond their settings, characters, and plots. Their morals or lessons are called themes. A **theme** is a story's message. It can be a lesson about life. It can also be a lesson about how people behave. The theme holds the story's elements together. It is the focus of the whole story. It is usually easy to find the theme in a fable, myth, or folktale. They are meant to teach lessons and morals.

Common themes include the following:

- Do the right thing.
- Be true to your friends.
- Overcome your fears.
- Get along with others.
- Family is more important than money.
- Giving is more important than receiving.

Sometimes the theme is not clearly stated. The reader has to find the theme by thinking about events and clues in the story. It may appear only as an idea that repeats throughout the story. For example, the theme might focus on the importance of courage or the value of friendship.

When you read stories, think about the theme, or greater meaning of the story, and what the author is trying to say. A story about a kitten that is afraid of water might have a theme about fears. A story may also have more than one theme.



## Lesson Practice

Use the Reading Guide to help you understand the passage.

### Reading Guide

When and where does the story take place?

What does the railroad stand for in the story?

In this story, are there animals that act like people?

Does the story teach a lesson?

## John Henry

In the mid-1800s, Americans were moving west and exploring the land. The first railroad was being built across the country. It would make travel easier. It meant that goods could be moved across the country. Thousands of miles of steel tracks were being laid by hand to make the railroad. Some of the strongest men in the country worked day after day to lay the track.

The strongest steelworker of all was a man named John Henry. Some say John was the strongest man alive. He always carried his hammer over his shoulder. He blasted through mountains of rock. He worked from sunrise to sunset.

One day, John's boss told the workers that a new machine would replace them all. The machine could do the work of fifty men.

John Henry said that no machine could replace a person. He challenged the machine to a contest. Whoever or whatever could lay more tracks in a day would win. John worked harder than he had ever worked in his life. He pounded with his hammer hour after hour. He swung it behind his head and drove rods of steel into the hard earth. He kept up with the machine. People cheered him on.

In the final moments of the race, John Henry fell to the ground. He could not win the race. That day, John Henry died with the hammer still in his hands.

Answer the following questions.

1. This story is an example of
  - A. a myth.
  - B. a legend.
  - C. a fairy tale.
  - D. a fable.
2. Which of the following is a detail in the story that helps you figure out what kind of story it is?
  - A. the talking animals
  - B. the happy ending
  - C. the time and place of the story
  - D. the way it explains nature
3. What does John Henry stand for in the story?
  - A. machines
  - B. nature
  - C. railroads
  - D. hard-working people
4. What does the machine stand for in the story?
  - A. horses
  - B. people
  - C. the future
  - D. the past

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5. What is one theme found in the story?

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## Lesson Practice

Use the Reading Guide to help you understand the passage.

### Reading Guide

How does the title help the reader know the kind of story?

What is the story trying to explain?

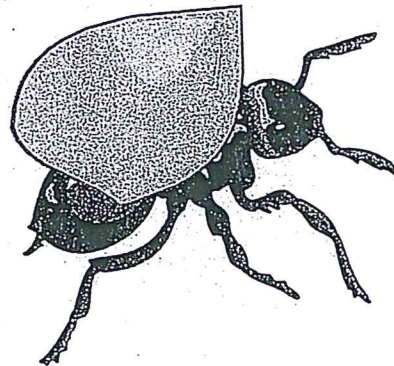
Does the story teach a lesson?

## How Corn Came to Mexico

Long ago, the great Feathered Serpent looked down on Mexico at the humans he had created. They were hungry and did not have enough food to keep them alive. The Feathered Serpent decided to change into a human and go to Earth to help them. He did not know what humans ate. He offered the people rocks and grass but nothing helped.

Then the Feathered Serpent came across ants carrying kernels of corn. The ants worked hard for every kernel of corn they had. The Feathered Serpent promised there would be enough corn for all the ants if they agreed to share what they had with the humans. The ants showed him a giant mountain of corn they had collected.

The Feathered Serpent knew it would be too difficult to move each kernel to the people. Instead, he showed the people how to plant and harvest corn. And forever after, there was enough to feed all the people—and ants—in Mexico.



Answer the following questions.

6. This story is an example of
- A. a myth.
  - B. a folktale.
  - C. a fairy tale.
  - D. a fable.
7. What clue helps you figure out the kind of story?
- A. the setting
  - B. the happy ending
  - C. the lesson it teaches
  - D. the way it explains natural events
8. How does the Feathered Serpent feel about humans?
- A. He likes ants more than humans.
  - B. He wants to help them.
  - C. He wants to trick them.
  - D. He likes giving them rocks.
9. Which of the following could be a theme in the story?
- A. Slow and steady wins the race.
  - B. Look before you leap.
  - C. Cook corn before you eat it.
  - D. Sharing can lead to good things.
10. How do the ants help you understand the theme?

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## Lesson Practice

Use the Reading Guide to help you understand the passage.

### Reading Guide

How does the author arrange the information in the passage?

Does the author use just one pattern?

Do you see any clue words that tell you the way the text is organized?

## Travel Long Ago and Today

During the past hundred years, travel has changed a lot. Back in the early 1900s many people traveled by horse or by foot. Today most Americans use a car to get where they want to go. Today it is common for a family to travel over a hundred miles for a weekend trip. A hundred years ago, people took trains to go on long trips.

Cars were around a hundred years ago. However, cars were a luxury that very few people could afford. Even if a family could afford a car, they were not very reliable. There were also very few roads to drive on.

Then cars slowly became more and more popular. Next, they became safer, more reliable, and cheaper to make. Finally, more roads were built to connect the country, and fewer people rode on trains.

Travel by airplane also became a popular way to get from one place to another. Today you can travel by airplane from New Orleans to New York in about three hours. One hundred years ago, this was not possible. The trip would take days by train. Today people can easily travel all around the world on an airplane.

Transportation is still changing today. Now many families own more than one car. People are concerned with traffic and pollution that result from too many cars. Buses and subways can cut down on pollution and city traffic. If more people rode in buses or trains, there would be less pollution in the air.

**Answer the following questions.**

1. MOST of this passage uses which organizational pattern?
  - A. sequence
  - B. cause and effect
  - C. alphabetical order
  - D. compare and contrast
2. If the author wanted to talk about how transportation affects the environment, which organizational pattern would he use?
  - A. sequence
  - B. cause and effect
  - C. alphabetical order
  - D. compare and contrast
3. If the author wanted to only talk about the history of cars, the BEST organizational pattern to use would be
  - A. sequence.
  - B. cause and effect.
  - C. alphabetical order.
  - D. compare and contrast.
4. Which clue words are used in paragraph 3?
  - A. then, next, finally
  - B. however, even if, also
  - C. first, second, last
  - D. for example, such as, for instance
5. How is travel today different from travel long ago?

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Use the Reading Guide to help you understand the passage.

### Reading Guide

What clue about the organization can you find in the first sentence?

Can you find important events in the passage?

What happened after the first Little League World Series was held?

## The History of Little League Baseball

*by Tom Fitzpatrick*

In 1939, Carl Stotz had an exciting idea. He was watching his nephews play baseball. Back then, children could only play in backyards and in the street. Stotz wanted his nephews to be part of a real team, with real uniforms and a real ballpark. So, Stotz got the idea to organize a children's baseball league. After much searching, Stotz found three businesses that were willing to give him the money to get started. With that, Little League Baseball was born.

Over the next few years, more teams formed in other towns. In 1947, the first Little League World Series was held. Soon, kids were playing on Little League teams throughout the country. People also began to form Little League teams in other countries, including Panama, Cuba, Canada, and Puerto Rico. In 1957, a Mexican team became the first team from outside the United States to win the Little League World Series.

Little League's popularity continued to spread. In 1963, national television aired the Little League World Series for the first time. More and more children wanted to join Little League, so the organization added other kinds of teams. Farm teams train younger players. Older players can compete in junior and senior leagues. In 1974, Little League also started a girls' softball league.

Eventually, Carl Stotz's Little League became the largest youth-sports group in the country. Today, children from around the world take part in Little League each year.

Answer the following questions.

6. Which kind of text organization does the author use in the passage?
- A. alphabetical order
  - B. cause and effect
  - C. compare and contrast
  - D. sequence
7. Which of the following phrases from paragraph 1 does NOT help identify the text organization?
- A. In 1939
  - B. Back then
  - C. After much searching
  - D. With that
8. In paragraph 3, what other kind of text organization do you notice?
- A. alphabetical order
  - B. cause and effect
  - C. compare and contrast
  - D. sequence
9. What problem does the author identify in paragraph 3?
- A. More children wanted to play Little League.
  - B. There were too many Little League teams.
  - C. Too many younger kids wanted to play Little League.
  - D. Too many children had to work on farms.
10. Explain which other kind of text organization the author could use to describe how Little League Baseball affected children's lives.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

# Marker Mania

Choose a color for each part of speech below:

<b>Nouns</b> a person, place, or thing	<b>Verbs</b> action words	<b>Adjectives</b> describing words for nouns	<b>Pronouns</b> take the place of nouns

Underline parts of speech with the colors you chose:

1. What just flew through the air?
2. Jared washed his dirty hands.
3. She cooked tasty noodles.
4. My new computer just broke.
5. He painted our house.
6. Melinda sells phones at her store.
7. Stinky socks fell out of the basket.
8. He sliced a juicy peach.
9. We crossed a wooden bridge.
10. Who forgot a pencil?

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

# Marker Mania

Choose a color for each part of speech below:

<b>Nouns</b> a person, place, or thing	<b>Verbs</b> action words	<b>Adjectives</b> describing words for nouns	<b>Pronouns</b> take the place of nouns	<b>Adverbs</b> describing words for verbs

Underline parts of speech with the colors you chose:

1. I live near a busy street.
2. Tomorrow we will camp in the mountains.
3. Sadie slowly walked to her messy desk.
4. We saw an amazing sunset.
5. The boys packed quickly for vacation.
6. Yesterday Gina decorated her new house.
7. Cameron kicked the winning goal.
8. They wore their best clothes.
9. The hunter waited silently.
10. Can we use the hula hoops tomorrow?

Use the Reading Guide to help you understand the passage.

## Reading Guide

What does the author believe about salaries for professional athletes?

What words does the author use to describe athletes' salaries?

How does the final paragraph support the author's point of view?

# Professional Athletes Earn Too Much

*by Neil Davis*

Americans love their sports teams and the athletes who play on them. We often hear about players who earn millions of dollars. This amount of money can seem almost normal to us. These salaries create serious problems, though.

Many families today cannot afford the ticket prices for sporting events. One reason tickets are so expensive is that players earn really high salaries. Athletes say the high salaries are only their fair share of the billions of dollars owners make from the teams. This is poor logic, though. Both owners and players should accept less money. Cutting player salaries could help make ticket prices more affordable.

Excessive player salaries suggest that the work of professional athletes is more important than it is. Professional athletes earn more than the president of the United States. They earn more than doctors and police officers. Is playing a game more important than leading the country or saving lives? Lower athlete salaries would better reflect the value of their work.

Finally, outrageous salaries for athletes send a bad message to young people. Kids want to be just like their heroes. When a famous athlete gets a million-dollar contract, young people learn to admire greed.

Professional athletes should earn less money. Athletes should be paid for their talent, but they should remember their fans, too. Without fans, athletes would not have a job. The greed of many athletes hurts the very people who support them.

## Answer the following questions.

6. Which sentence BEST tells the author's point of view?
- A. "Americans love their sports teams and the athletes who play on them."
  - B. "This amount of money can seem almost normal to us."
  - C. "Kids want to be just like their heroes."
  - D. "Professional athletes should earn less money."
7. How do you know the author's point of view about salaries?
- A. He gives many examples of why fans support athletes.
  - B. He tells why athletes deserve more money.
  - C. He shows several problems related to high salaries for athletes.
  - D. He explains why team owners should earn less money.
8. Why did the author write this text?
- A. to persuade the reader that athletes make too much money
  - B. to entertain the reader with stories about athletes
  - C. to inform the reader about the business of sports
  - D. to encourage the reader to attend sports events
9. Which word BEST describes athletes' salaries, according to the author?
- A. reasonable
  - B. affordable
  - C. fair
  - D. outrageous
10. Based on the information in the passage, what is the author's point of view about how high salaries affect young people?
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## Lesson Practice

Use the Reading Guides to help you understand the passages.

### Reading Guide

Who are the main characters?

What is the setting?

Think about the main events in the plot. What is the passage about?

## Penny Gets Lost

by Carlos Dale

Penny the dog was on a day trip to the beach when she got lost. Penny had been walking with the family's young daughter, Betty, when something unbelievable happened. Betty dropped the leash! Penny was so excited to be free that she ran off to explore the beach. She dug her feet into the sand and kicked it up behind her. She ran to the ocean and smelled the salty air. She could run for miles along this beach! Penny heard Betty's worried cry behind her, but she kept running. Before she knew it, she could not hear or find Betty.

Penny barked and barked, but Betty was nowhere to be seen. Soon it got dark outside, and Penny became fearful. She was also hungry. It was then that she saw a man. She barked and barked so the man could hear her. The man came over and was very friendly. He petted her and said, "Hi." He then read her tag and saw that her name was Penny. He also read a phone number on the collar. He called the number and said he had found Penny. She knew the man had acted with kindness.

Soon Penny was with her owners again. She was very happy to see them and jumped into the minivan for the long ride home. Betty hugged her and gave her a treat. Now Penny was happier than ever.

## Reading Guide

What is this passage about?

What can be compared between the two passages?

What can be contrasted between the two passages?

## Surprise! by Carlos Dale

"We're lost!" cried Sandy.

Sandy and her older sister Anna had been hiking with their dog, Riley, since after lunch. It was now early evening, and the sun was setting quickly. Anna looked around. "Don't panic. We can retrace our steps," she said, walking in the direction from which they had just come.

Sandy and Riley followed. After some time, they arrived at a clearing. "I don't remember seeing this," said Anna.

"We'll never get out of here!" Sandy said.

"You're a worrier!" laughed Anna, pulling out a map. Sandy waited nervously as Anna calmly reviewed the map. "Okay. I've got it now!" said Anna. She folded the map and returned it to her backpack. "Let's go!" Though she felt unsure, Sandy walked alongside her, much braver sister. They continued to walk, when suddenly a little cottage seemed to appear out of nowhere. "Let's see if anyone's home," suggested Anna. "Maybe they could help us."

"What if they're not nice?" Sandy said.

"Don't be foolish! Besides we have Riley with us," said Anna. She followed the footpath to the darkened cottage. Feeling suddenly brave, Sandy decided to take the lead with Riley. She knocked lightly, then harder. No one answered. Using all of her courage, she slowly turned the doorknob. The door creaked open.

"Surprise! Happy Birthday!" shouted Sandy's friends and family.