

COMMON CORE

Grade 4

English Language Arts

CLINICS

Reading Literature

 Options™

Table of Contents

UNIT 1 Key Ideas and Details

Common Core State Standards

| | | | |
|----------|--|----|---------------------------|
| Lesson 1 | Character | 4 | RL.4.3, RL.4.10, RF.4.4.a |
| Lesson 2 | Setting | 8 | RL.4.3, RL.4.10, RF.4.4.a |
| Lesson 3 | Plot | 12 | RL.4.3, RL.4.10, RF.4.4.a |
| Lesson 4 | Theme | 16 | RL.4.2, RL.4.10, RF.4.4.a |
| Lesson 5 | Summarize Text. | 20 | RL.4.2, RL.4.10, RF.4.4.a |
| Lesson 6 | Drawing and Supporting Inferences. | 24 | RL.4.1, RL.4.10, RF.4.4.a |

UNIT 2 Craft and Structure

| | | | |
|-----------|---------------------------|----|---------------------------|
| Lesson 7 | Allusions | 28 | RL.4.4, RL.4.10, RF.4.4.a |
| Lesson 8 | Point of View | 32 | RL.4.6, RL.4.10, RF.4.4.a |
| Lesson 9 | Poem Structure | 36 | RL.4.5, RL.4.10, RF.4.4.a |
| Lesson 10 | Drama Structure | 40 | RL.4.5, RL.4.10, RF.4.4.a |

UNIT 3 Integrate Knowledge and Ideas

| | | | |
|------------------------------|---|----|---------------------------|
| Lesson 11 | Compare and Contrast Patterns of Events | 44 | RL.4.9, RL.4.10, RF.4.4.a |
| Lesson 12 | Compare and Contrast Themes and Topics | 50 | RL.4.9, RL.4.10, RF.4.4.a |
| Graphic Organizers | | 56 | |

Character

Learn About It

The people, animals, and other creatures in a story are the **characters**. We learn about characters by what they say or think and by their actions. Sometimes even the way a character looks can help you know more about a character. A character has a reason for acting a certain way. This reason can help define the character.

Read the passage. Think about what the characters say, think, and do.

Keith sits on the edge of his chair, mumbling to himself. He looks at his watch, then looks around, then looks at his watch again. He wishes that he had spent more time preparing for the test.

Kendra sits up straight. She lines up her sharp pencils and her erasers on the desk in front of her. She checks the time just once and thinks, "I am ready for this."

| Character | Says/Thinks | Does |
|-----------|---|--|
| Keith | Wishes he had spent more time preparing | Mumbles Looks around Looks at watch twice |
| Kendra | Thinks "I am ready" | Sits up straight Lines up pencils and erasers Checks time once |

Try It

Read the passage. Underline the details that tell you about the characters. Use the questions to help you.

Mia's Party Outfit

Tom rolled his eyes and sat down to wait for his sister. He often said that Mia was a pain, but he really thought she was a good kid.

There was a lot of noise coming from her room, but she did not ask for any help. After a while, she came out. She was ready. At least, she thought she was ready. She was wearing a baseball cap with her ponytail sticking out the back, biking shorts, and a T-shirt with the number seven on it. She was clutching an oddly wrapped present and a baseball.

"Let's go," she said. You could tell she was pleased with herself.

"What is wrong with you, Mia? It's a party! You should be wearing your best clothes."

"These *are* my best clothes," Mia answered. She paused and then said, "Well, they are my favorite clothes, and that is the best thing to wear to a party. It's better." She was clearly ready to get going.

Tom told her that everyone would make fun of her and that she would look different if she wore those clothes. At first, she paid no attention. After a while, however, a little doubt came into her eyes. She went back into her room. It was very quiet in there.

Finally, she came out again. She was still wearing her favorite clothes and was ready to go to the party. Tom could see she was very proud of her outfit, so he didn't say anything more. Off they went to the party.

Tom is one character in the passage. There are details in the first paragraph that tell about him. What are they?

You can learn a lot about a person by what that person says or does. How do Mia's actions tell you that she has a mind of her own?



Why do you think Tom doesn't say anything about Mia's outfit after she comes out of her room the second time?

Apply It

Read the passage. Look for details that tell about the characters. Answer the questions on the next page.

The King and the Songbird

Once, a king had a garden. A bird that lived there sang the sweetest songs.

“I must have that songbird for my own,” said the king to his three sons.

“Do whatever it takes to capture that bird for me.”

The three sons set out on their mission to catch the songbird for their father. The eldest son decided he would try with a bow and arrow. The middle son set out with a slingshot and stones. The youngest went with only corn and a soft bag.

The three sons hid in the garden and waited until they saw the songbird. When it appeared, the eldest shot an arrow at it, but missed. The middle son shot three stones at the bird, but also missed.

“I tried,” they both said and returned to the palace.

The youngest son opened the bag with the sweet corn inside and left it in the garden. When the songbird swooped down to eat the corn, the son quickly but gently caught the bird in the bag.

When the youngest son brought the bird to the king, it flew out of the bag and up to the rafters. Then it began to sing a sweet song. The king ordered that the bird be placed in a golden cage.

“No, Father!” said the youngest son. “A bird that sings this sweetly should *not* be in a cage.”

“Your brothers may be lazy, but you have disrespected me! Leave the palace at once!” demanded the king.



Answer these questions about "The King and the Songbird." Write your answers in complete sentences.

1 Who are the main characters in this passage?

2 What does the youngest son do differently from the other two sons when trying to catch the songbird?

3 What do the two older sons do that make their father think they are lazy?

4 What details in this passage tell you that the king is spoiled and easily angered?

5 Think about the character traits of the youngest son. What do you think he will do next? Write one or two sentences telling what he might do next.

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Reading Informational Text

 Options™

Table of Contents

UNIT 1 Key Ideas and Details

Common Core State Standards

| | | | |
|-----------------|---|----|---------------------------|
| Lesson 1 | Main Idea and Supporting Details | 4 | RI.4.2, RI.4.10, RF.4.4.a |
| Lesson 2 | Summarize Text | 8 | RI.4.2, RI.4.10, RF.4.4.a |
| Lesson 3 | Historical Text | 12 | RI.4.3, RI.4.10, RF.4.4.a |
| Lesson 4 | Scientific Text | 16 | RI.4.3, RI.4.10, RF.4.4.a |
| Lesson 5 | Technical Text | 20 | RI.4.3, RI.4.10, RF.4.4.a |
| Lesson 6 | Drawing and Supporting Inferences | 24 | RI.4.1, RI.4.10, RF.4.4.a |

UNIT 2 Craft and Structure

| | | | |
|------------------|---|----|---------------------------|
| Lesson 7 | Academic Vocabulary | 28 | RI.4.4, RI.4.10, RF.4.4.a |
| Lesson 8 | Chronology | 32 | RI.4.5, RI.4.10, RF.4.4.a |
| Lesson 9 | Comparison and Contrast | 36 | RI.4.5, RI.4.10, RF.4.4.a |
| Lesson 10 | Cause and Effect | 40 | RI.4.3, RI.4.5, RI.4.10 |
| Lesson 11 | Problem and Solution | 44 | RI.4.5, RI.4.10, RF.4.4.a |
| Lesson 12 | Compare and Contrast Primary and Secondary Sources | 48 | RI.4.6, RI.4.10, RF.4.4.a |

UNIT 3 Integrate Knowledge and Ideas

| | | | |
|-------------------------------------|--------------------------------|-----------|---------------------------|
| Lesson 13 | Drawings | 54 | RI.4.7, RI.4.10, RF.4.4.a |
| Lesson 14 | Reasons and Evidence | 58 | RI.4.8, RI.4.10, RF.4.4.a |
| Graphic Organizers | | 62 | |

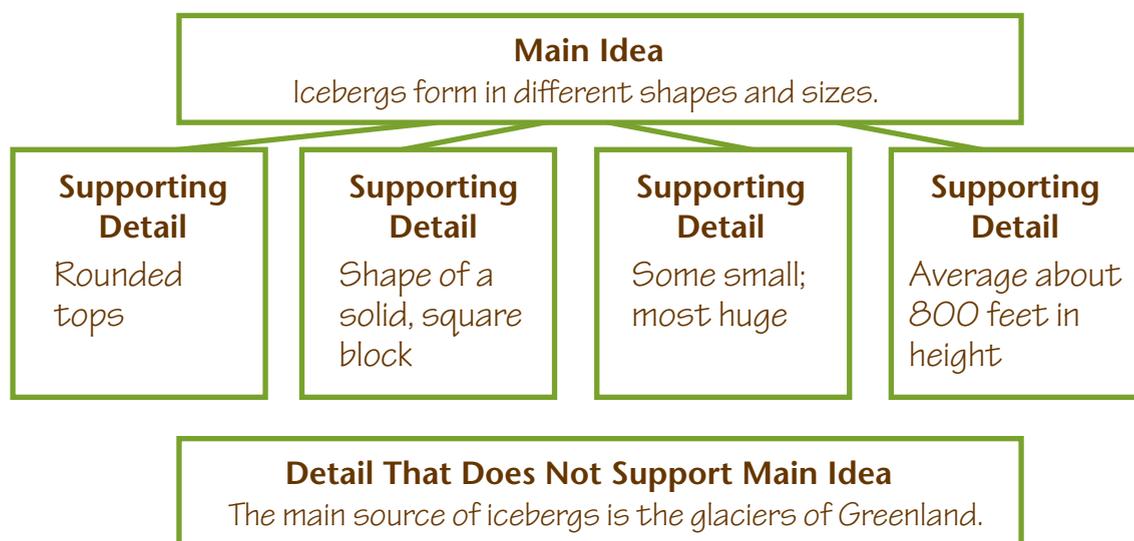
Main Idea and Supporting Details

Learn About It

The **main idea** of a passage is what it is mostly about. The author's main idea is his or her message to the reader about the topic of the passage. **Details** in the passage, such as examples or comparisons, explain and support the main idea. Often a writer will state the main idea, but it also might be implied, or hinted at, throughout the passage.

Read the passage. Look for a main idea statement. Then look for details that support it.

Icebergs form in all different shapes and sizes. Many have rounded tops like mountains, but others can be in the shape of a solid square block. Some icebergs are small, but most of them are huge. Icebergs in the North Atlantic Ocean average about 800 feet in height. The main source of icebergs is the glaciers of Greenland.



Try It

Read the passage. Underline the details that tell you about the main idea. Remember, the main idea is not always stated. Use the questions to help you.

The Fox

A fox is an animal that looks like a medium-size dog. It has thin legs, a long nose, and pointed ears. The most common fox is the red fox. It is covered with a reddish coat and has a bushy tail. The smallest fox is the fennec fox. It weighs about 3.5 pounds.

Because the fox is a nighttime creature, you are not likely to see it during the day. You will have to wait until dark. During the day, the fox sleeps in an underground home called a *den*. At night, it hunts alone for its food. The fox uses its keen sense of hearing to look for mice, rabbits, insects, birds, and other small animals. Sometimes, foxes can help control pests on a farm.

You are more likely to hear a fox during the nighttime as well. You will know one is nearby because of its high-pitched bark or eerie wail. Foxes also make other sounds, like warning calls. Additionally, a young fox asks for attention from its mother with a small bark.

A newborn fox is called a *cub*. Fox cubs are small with black fur all over their bodies. For the first few weeks of life, the cubs' mothers rarely leave their sides. At four weeks, the cubs begin to venture outside, but they stay very close to the den. These small creatures are extremely active at this young age. They play with and chase one another. By twelve weeks, they begin to learn to look for food by themselves, and by ten months, they are fully grown.

What is the main idea of the second paragraph? Which details in the paragraph support the main idea?

Sometimes the main idea is not stated. What is the main idea of the final paragraph?



How do supporting facts back up the main idea of this passage?

Apply It

Read the passage. Look for main ideas and details. Answer the questions on the next page.

Water Striders

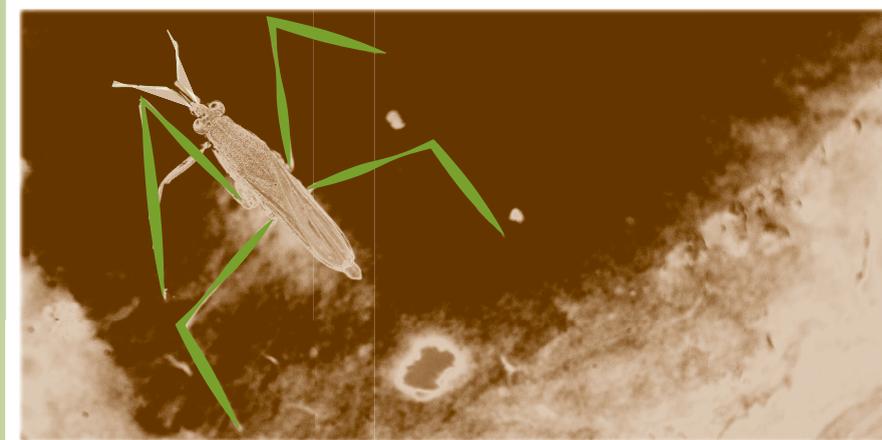
Imagine yourself zooming across the top of a pond or lake without sinking in. While this might be hard for *you* to do, it is easy for a water strider!

A water strider is a water bug that looks like a large mosquito. What makes it different from a mosquito, however, is the fact that it can walk across the water. You can find water striders on the surface of some ponds, marshes, and still water.

Water striders do more than just walk across the water. They also catch and eat their meals on the water, as well. Additionally, because they spend more of their time on the water, water striders feed mostly on other insects that live near water. In fact, water striders only go inland when rain or strong winds force them off the water.

The design of a water strider's body makes it easy for the insect to walk on the water. Its body is only one-half inch long, and it is covered with scales that keep it from getting heavy and sinking. Like all insects, the water strider has six legs. The front pair of legs is short while the middle and back legs are very long. These longer legs can spread over a larger area of water and are useful for rowing and steering across the water. No one leg is heavy enough to sink the insect.

Water striders also have very good vision and can move quickly. These traits help keep them from becoming prey, or food, for other insects.



Answer these questions about “Water Striders.” Write your answers in complete sentences.

1 How does the author use comparisons to support the main idea of the second paragraph?

2 The fourth paragraph is mainly about how a water strider’s legs help it walk on the water. Name one detail that supports this.

3 The fifth paragraph talks about certain qualities water striders have that help them avoid their predators. Name one detail that supports this.

4 What is one detail from the passage that supports the main idea that a water strider is designed for walking on water?

5 Write a main idea statement for the passage.

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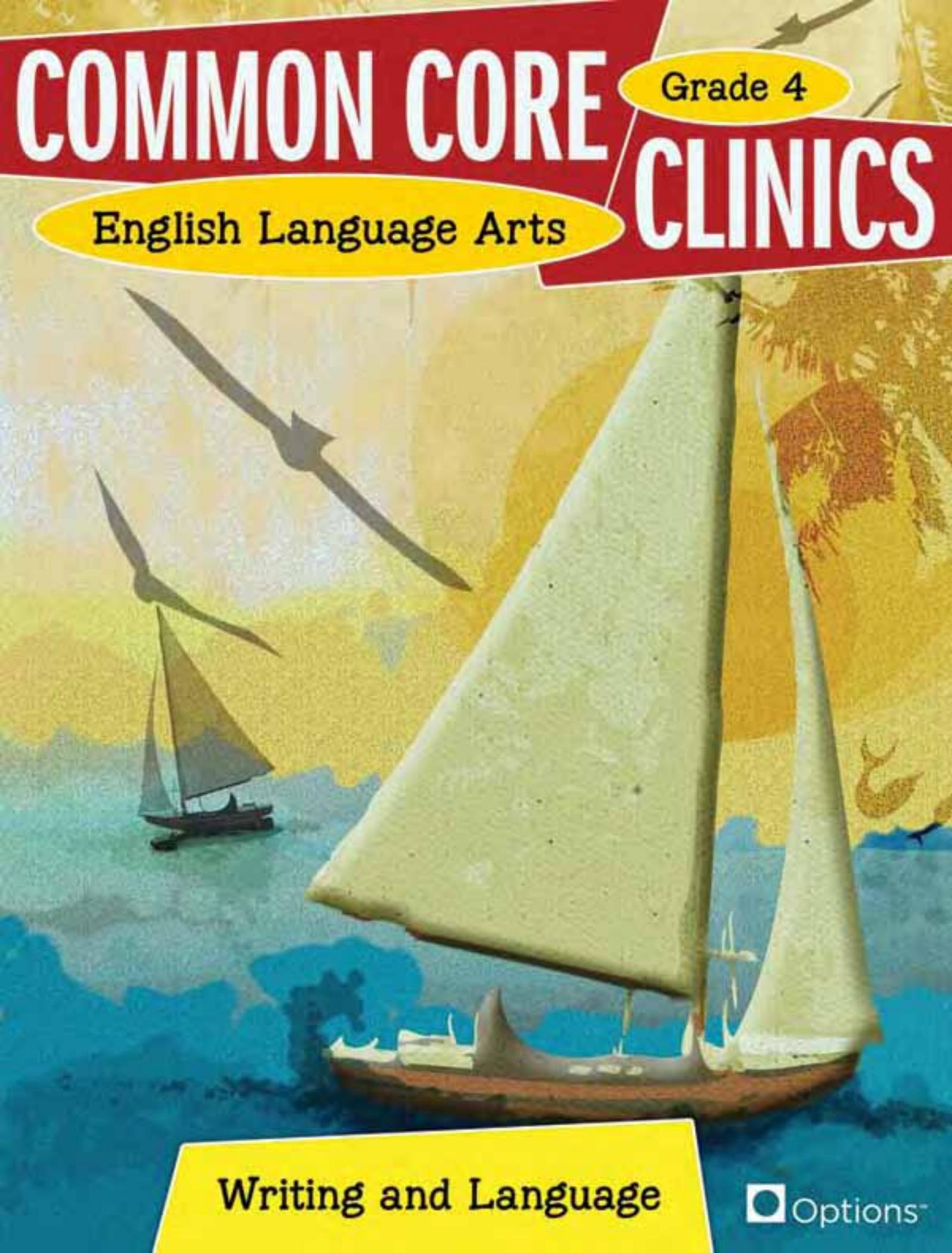


Table of Contents

UNIT 1 Text Types and Purposes

Common Core State Standards

| | | | |
|----------|--------------------------------------|----|---------------------------------|
| Lesson 1 | Write an Opinion | 4 | W.4.1, W.4.4, W.4.10, L.4.3.a–c |
| Lesson 2 | Write an Informative Piece | 8 | W.4.2, W.4.4, W.4.10, L.4.3.a–c |
| Lesson 3 | Write a Narrative | 12 | W.4.3, W.4.4, W.4.10, L.4.3.a–c |

UNIT 2 Conventions of Standard English

| | | | |
|-----------|---|----|---------|
| Lesson 4 | Relative Pronouns and Adverbs | 16 | L.4.1.a |
| Lesson 5 | Progressive Verb Tense | 20 | L.4.1.b |
| Lesson 6 | Modals | 24 | L.4.1.c |
| Lesson 7 | Adjectives | 28 | L.4.1.d |
| Lesson 8 | Prepositional Phrases | 32 | L.4.1.e |
| Lesson 9 | Fragments and Run-ons | 36 | L.4.1.f |
| Lesson 10 | Commonly Confused Words | 40 | L.4.1.g |
| Lesson 11 | Capitalization | 44 | L.4.2.a |
| Lesson 12 | Commas and Quotation Marks | 48 | L.4.2.b |
| Lesson 13 | Compound Sentences | 52 | L.4.2.c |
| Lesson 14 | Spelling | 56 | L.4.2.d |

UNIT 3 Vocabulary Acquisition and Use

| | | | |
|-----------|--|----|---------|
| Lesson 15 | Context Clues | 60 | L.4.4.a |
| Lesson 16 | Roots and Affixes | 64 | L.4.4.b |
| Lesson 17 | Use Reference Materials | 68 | L.4.4.c |
| Lesson 18 | Similes and Metaphors | 72 | L.4.5.a |
| Lesson 19 | Idioms, Adages, and Proverbs | 76 | L.4.5.b |
| Lesson 20 | Synonyms and Antonyms | 80 | L.4.5.c |
| Lesson 21 | Academic Vocabulary | 84 | L.4.6 |

Write an Opinion

Learn About It

An **opinion** is what someone believes to be true. To help readers understand and agree with their opinions, writers provide support. Writers use **facts**, **details**, and **reasons** to support opinions.

Read the sentences. Look for the writer's opinion. Then look for facts, details, and reasons that support it.

The best source of energy for the future is the wind. Wind power never runs out. It can be found anywhere on the planet. It is free. Imagine the land dotted with wind turbines making power every time the wind blows!

Read the chart to see how the writer supports her opinion.

| | |
|----------------|--|
| Opinion | <i>The best source of energy for the future is the wind.</i> |
| Reason | <i>Never runs out</i> |
| Reason | <i>Found anywhere on planet</i> |
| Reason | <i>Free</i> |

Try It

Read the passage. Underline the sentence that states the opinion. Look for details that tell you more about the opinion. Use the questions to help you.

Save the Park

Conditions in Meade Park are a disgrace. The playground equipment is old and rusted. It is unsafe. The ball fields are in bad shape. The pond has trash in it. There is litter everywhere you look. It saddens me to know that the people of Rockland care so little about their park. How could they let this happen?

What opinion about the park does the author state in the first paragraph?

I grew up playing in that park. I learned to hit a baseball on that field. I met my friends at the playground. My family and I had picnics there. I would like to do those things with my own children someday. But I doubt that it will happen unless action is taken.

What must visitors think when they see the park? If we don't want to keep the park safe and clean for ourselves, we should think about the impression it makes on others who might want to buy homes here.

What are the reasons given for the opinion in the first paragraph?

We need action. Our town leaders need to find money and ideas for getting the park cleaned up. Rules and regulations have to be enforced. People using the park have to start keeping it clean.



What are some other details about the park the writer could include in this passage?

Apply It

Read the writing prompt. Plan your response in the graphic organizer.



People have different opinions about what the best game is to play. Choose which game you think is best. Use details to tell why.

| | |
|-------------------|--|
| Opinion | |
| Reason | |
| Reason | |
| Reason | |
| Conclusion | |

