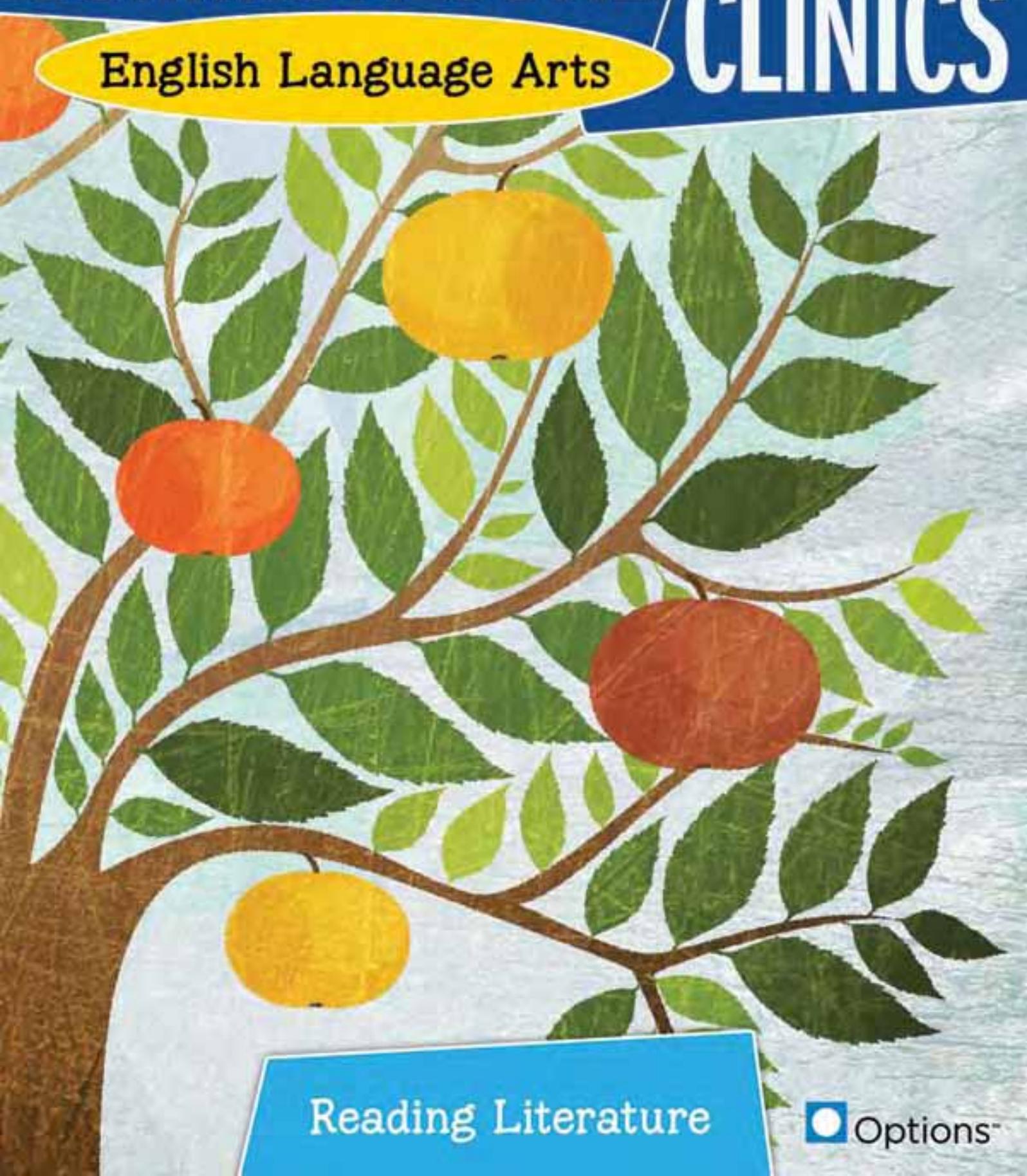


# COMMON CORE

Grade 8

English Language Arts

# CLINICS



Reading Literature

 Options™

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# Dialogue and Incidents

## Learn About It

**Dialogue** refers to the words spoken between characters in a story. In fiction, dialogue is enclosed in quotation marks. In drama, dialogue comes directly after the name of the character who speaks. Dialogue has many purposes. It can establish the setting or mood of a story, reveal details about characters, or move the plot forward. Authors often use dialogue to create a closer connection between the reader and the characters.

**Read the drama. As you read, try to figure out what the dialogue reveals about the background, plot, and characters of the story.**

*Setting: Walter and his sister Donna are in a ski resort. Walter has a cast on his right wrist.*

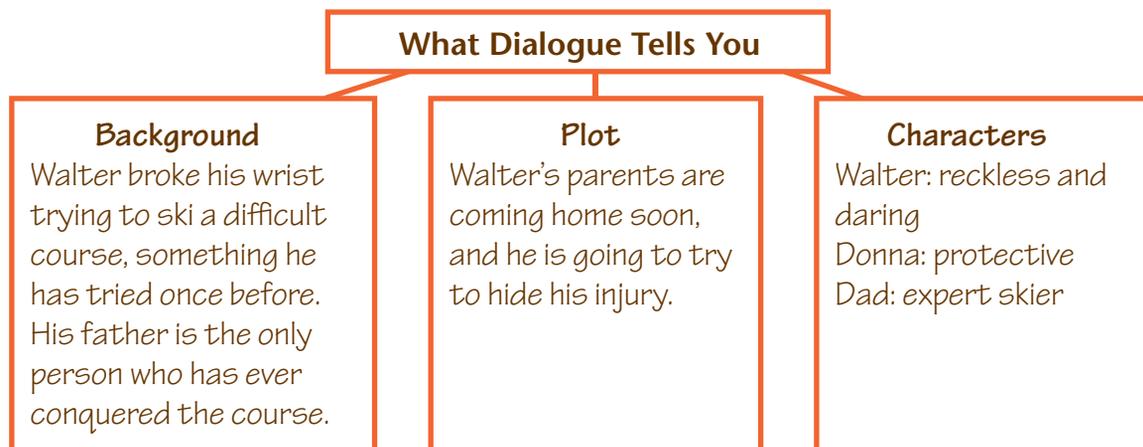
WALTER: Do you think Mom will notice?

DONNA: Walter, your wrist is *broken!* What were you thinking, anyhow? Didn't you learn your lesson the last time you tried to ski that course?

WALTER: I *had* to! Nick *dared* me!

DONNA: Well, it's Dad you should be worried about. He's the only person who's ever skied down the Triple Diamond without wiping out. He's going to be furious!

WALTER: Do you think long sleeves will hide it?



# Try It

Read the passage. As you read, circle the dialogue that reveals information about the characters and how it helps establish the plot of the story. Use the questions to help you.

excerpted and adapted from

## Dracula's Guest

by Bram Stoker

When we started for our drive, the sun was shining brightly on Munich, and the air was full of the joyousness of early summer. Just as we were about to depart, Mr. Delbruck (the owner of the Four Seasons Hotel, where I was staying) came down to the carriage and, after wishing me a pleasant drive, said to the coachman, "Remember to be back by nightfall. The sky looks bright, but there is a shiver in the north wind that says there may be a sudden storm. But I am sure you will not be late." Here he smiled and added, "For you know what night it is."

Johann answered with an emphatic, "Yes, sir," and, touching his hat, drove off quickly. When we had cleared the town, I said, after asking to him to stop:

"Tell me, Johann, what is tonight?"

He answered quickly, "Witches' Night," and started off rapidly, as if to make up for lost time. Every now and then the horses seemed to throw up their heads and sniff the air suspiciously. On such occasions I often looked round in alarm. The road on which we rode was pretty bleak, but as we drove, I saw a road that led through a little winding valley. It looked so inviting that, even at the risk of offending him, I called Johann to stop, and descended from the carriage to get a better look.

"Tell me," I said, "about this place where that road leads," and I pointed down.

He grew visibly nervous and mumbled a prayer before he answered, "It is cursed."

"What is cursed?" I enquired.

"The village."

"Then there is a village?"

"No, no. No one has lived there for hundreds of years."

His evasiveness only heightened my curiosity.

The story opens with a cheerful scene. How does the dialogue change the mood of the story?

What background information does this dialogue provide?

Continued from the previous page

“But you said there was a village.”

“There *was*.”

“Where is it now?” I demanded.

Whereupon he burst out into a long story in German and English, so mixed up that I could not quite understand exactly what he said.

He was evidently afraid to speak the last words. As he proceeded with his narration, he grew more and more excited. It seemed as if his imagination had got hold of him, and he ended almost paralyzed by fear—white-faced, perspiring, trembling, and looking around him as if expecting that some dreadful presence would set upon us there in the bright sunshine on the open plain.

What kind of character is the narrator?

Finally, in an agony of desperation, he cried, “Witches’ Night!” and pointed to the carriage for me to get in.

Standing back, I said, “You are afraid, Johann—you are afraid. Go home. I shall return alone; the walk will do me good.” The carriage door was open. I took from the seat my oak walking stick—which I always carry on my holiday excursions—and closed the door, pointing back to Munich, and said, “Go home, Johann—Witches’ Night doesn’t concern Englishmen.”

After giving the direction, “Home!,” I turned to go down the cross road into the valley.



Why do you think the narrator does not sympathize with Johann’s fear?

## Apply It

Read the drama. As you read, identify how the dialogue helps establish the background, plot, and characters of the story. Answer the questions that follow.

excerpted and adapted from

### **A Doll's House**

*by Henrik Ibsen*

*The setting is the house of Torvald and Nora Helmer. Enter NORA, humming a tune and in high spirits. She carries a number of parcels, which she lays on a table.*

TORVALD: (*calls out from his room*) Is that my little hummingbird singing out there?

NORA: (*busy opening some of the parcels*) Yes, it is!

TORVALD: Is it my little squirrel bustling about?

NORA: Yes!

TORVALD: When did my squirrel come home?

NORA: Just now. Come in here, Torvald, and see what I have bought.

TORVALD: Don't disturb me. (*A little later, he opens the door and looks into the room, pen in hand.*) Bought, did you say? All these things? Has my little spendthrift been wasting money again?

NORA: Yes, but, Torvald, this year we really can let ourselves go a little. This is the first Christmas that we have not needed to economize.

TORVALD: Still, you know, we can't spend money recklessly.

NORA: Yes, Torvald, we may be a wee bit more reckless now, mayn't we? Just a tiny wee bit! You are going to have a big salary and earn lots and lots of money.

TORVALD: Yes, after the New Year; but then it will be a whole quarter before the salary is due.

NORA: We can borrow until then.

TORVALD: Nora! (*goes up to her and takes her playfully by the ear*) The same little featherhead! Suppose, now, that I borrowed fifty pounds today, and you spent it all in the Christmas week, and then on New Year's Eve a stone fell on my head and killed me, and—

NORA: (*putting her hands over his mouth*) Oh! Don't say such horrid things.

TORVALD: Still, suppose that happened. What then?

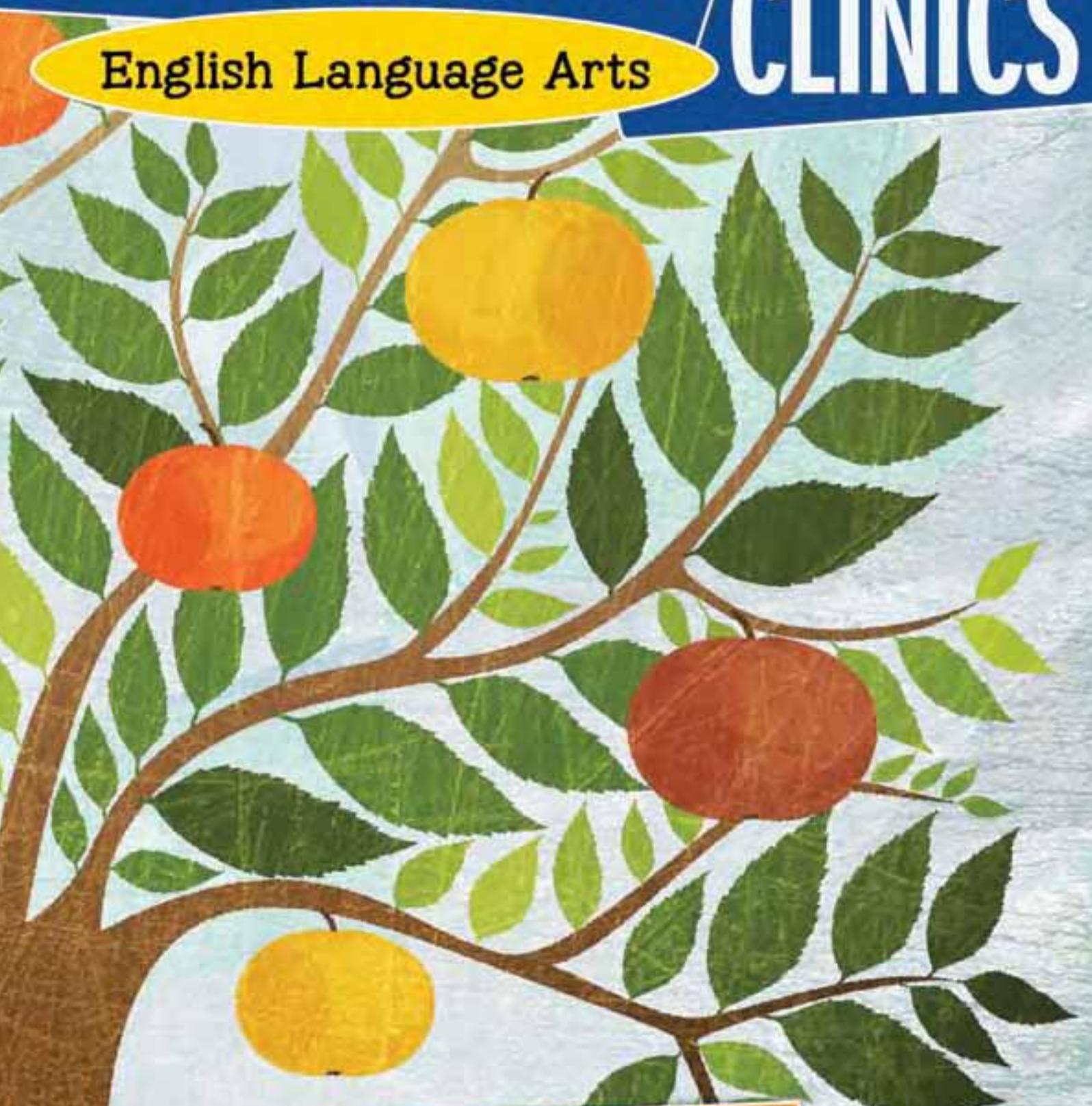
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# COMMON CORE

Grade 8

English Language Arts

# CLINICS



Reading Informational Text

 Options™

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# Figurative, Connotative, and Technical Meanings

## Learn About It

Words can have figurative, connotative, or technical meanings. To make their writing more expressive and interesting, authors will often use **figurative language**. This literary device involves using words in ways that go beyond their literal, dictionary definitions. One of the most common uses of figurative language is a **metaphor**, which is a direct comparison between two unlike things. **Connotation** is an implied meaning or an emotional weight a word carries. Some nonfiction is **technical** and uses words specific to a particular topic, such as computer terms.

Read the passage. As you read, pay attention to the author's use of language.

A pedometer is a device used to count the number of steps you take. It is about the same size as a cellular phone. You wear it on your belt or place it in a front pocket in line with the middle of your leg. Inside the pedometer is a tiny spring-set horizontal arm. The arm moves up and down each time you take a step. Each step is counted when an electrical circuit senses the movements of your pelvis.

Technical Words	Meanings
<i>Pedometer</i>	<i>Step counter</i>
<i>Device</i>	<i>Tool</i>
<i>Cellular</i>	<i>Wireless</i>
<i>Electrical circuit</i>	<i>Path</i>
<i>Pelvis</i>	<i>Hips</i>

## Try It

Read the passage. As you read, underline any figurative language. Use the questions to help you.

*The following is an excerpt from a speech given by former British Prime Minister Winston Churchill at Westminster College in Fulton, Missouri, on March 5, 1946.*

A shadow has fallen upon the scenes so lately lighted by the Allied victory. Nobody knows what Soviet Russia and its Communist international organization intends to do in the immediate future, or what are the limits, if any, to their expansive... tendencies. I have a strong admiration and regard for the valiant Russian people and for my wartime comrade, Marshal Stalin. There is deep sympathy and goodwill in Britain—and I doubt not here also—towards the peoples of all the Russias and a resolve to persevere through many differences and rebuffs in establishing lasting friendships. We understand the Russian need to be secure on her western frontiers by the removal of all possibility of German aggression. We welcome Russia to her rightful place among the leading nations of the world. We welcome her flag upon the seas. Above all, we welcome constant, frequent and growing contacts between the Russian people and our own people on both sides of the Atlantic. It is my duty however, for I am sure you would wish me to state the facts as I see them to you, to place before you certain facts about the present position in Europe.

What is the connotative meaning of the word *shadow* as it is used in the first paragraph?

When Churchill says that “we welcome her flag upon the seas” in the first paragraph, what do you think he means?

From Stettin in the Baltic to Trieste in the Adriatic, an iron curtain has descended across the continent. Behind that line lie all the capitals of the ancient states of Central and Eastern Europe. Warsaw, Berlin, Prague, Vienna, Budapest, Belgrade, Bucharest and Sofia, all these famous cities and the populations around them lie in what I must call the Soviet sphere, and all are subject in one form or another, not only to Soviet influence but to a very high and, in some cases, increasing measure of control from Moscow. Athens alone—Greece with its immortal glories—is free to decide its future at an election under British, American, and French observation.



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The Russian-dominated Polish government has been encouraged to make enormous and wrongful inroads upon Germany, and mass expulsions of millions of Germans on a scale grievous and undreamed-of are now taking place. The Communist parties, which were very small in all these eastern states of Europe, have been raised to preeminence and power far beyond their numbers and are seeking everywhere to obtain totalitarian control. Police governments are prevailing in nearly every case, and so far, except in Czechoslovakia, there is no true democracy.

How is the word *sphere* used in this passage? How does this use differ from its mathematical meaning?

If now the Soviet government tries, by separate action, to build up a pro-Communist Germany in their areas, this will cause new serious difficulties in the American and British zones, and will give the defeated Germans the power of putting themselves up to auction between the Soviets and the Western democracies. Whatever conclusions may be drawn from these facts—and facts they are—this is certainly not the liberated Europe we fought to build up. Nor is it one which contains the essentials of permanent peace.

What are communism and democracy? What is the connotation of each one?



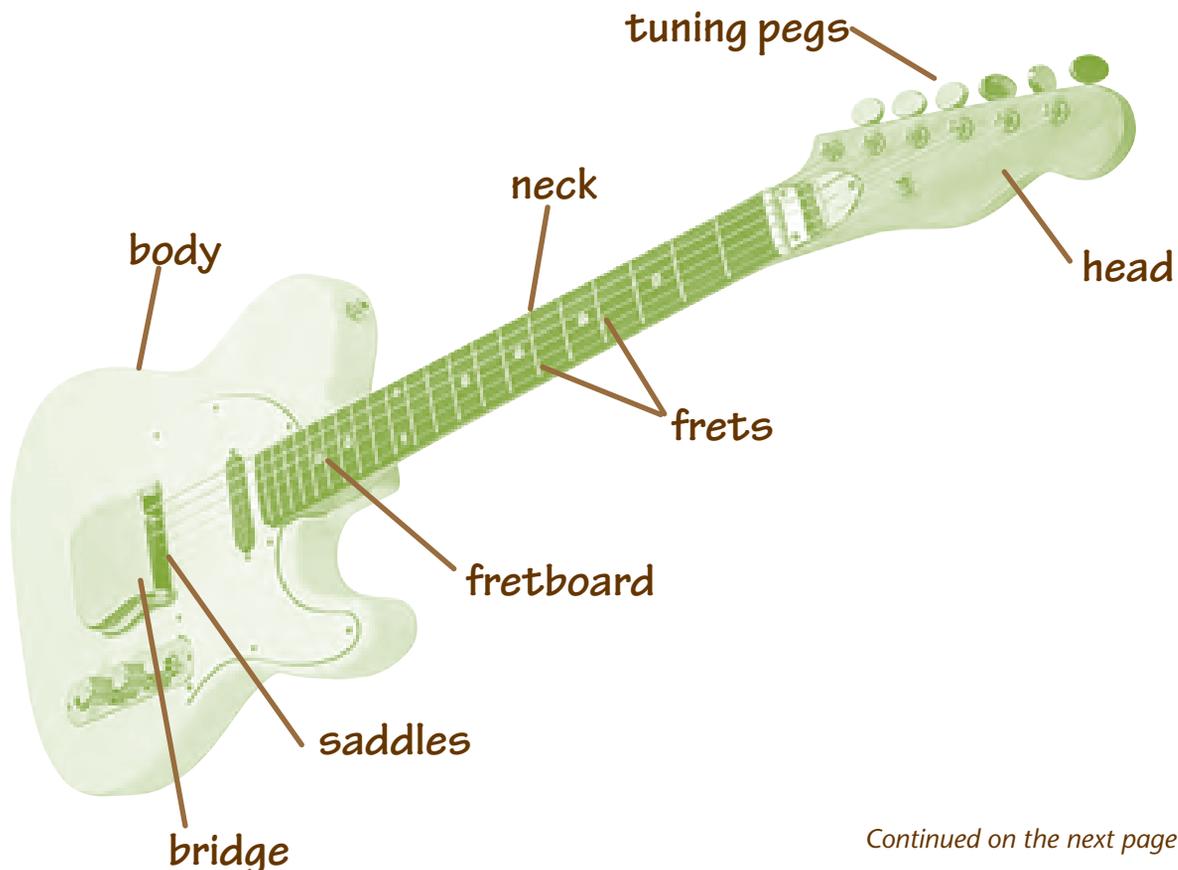
What is the meaning of Churchill's "iron curtain" metaphor?

## Apply It

Read the passage. As you read, pay attention how the author makes use of the meanings of technical terms. Answer the questions that follow.

### The Electric Guitar

The largest part of an electric guitar is known as the **body**. For right-handed players, the body rests on the player's right-hand side. This is the hand the player uses to strum or pick the strings, and to control the guitar's volume and tone knobs. (The opposite holds true for left-handed players). The six strings of the guitar are threaded through the body and over the **bridge**, where each string rests on a **saddle**. The **neck** of the guitar extends from the body across the player's left side (or, again, over the opposite side for left-handed players). The front-facing side of the neck, known as the **fretboard**, is divided into different spaces by small metal dividers known as **frets**. The spaces are in some ways similar to the keys on a piano: as the player presses down on these spaces with left hand and plucks the corresponding strings with the right hand, different notes are produced. As the neck extends away from the body of the guitar, the spaces between the frets get wider and wider, and the pitches produced by pressing down on them gets lower and lower. The fretboard ends at the **head** of the guitar, where the strings are wound into **tuning pegs**.



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In many ways, the term “electric guitar” is something of a misnomer; unlike other electronic devices, the “electric” guitar does not actually run on electricity. It might be more appropriate to refer to the instrument as the “electromagnetic” guitar, since this is the force that allows the instrument to produce sound. The body of every electric guitar is fitted with one or more **pickups**, which are located under the strings between the bridge and the neck. These pickups are made up of six small magnetic rods—one beneath each string—wrapped together with as many as 7,000 turns of fine wire. The pickups create a small magnetic field through which the metal strings of the guitar pass. When the player strums the strings, they vibrate, and this vibration causes a vibration in the magnetic field, which then creates a vibrating current charge in the coiled wire. The pickup’s coil then sends this electrical signal to a volume knob, which controls the amount of signal that reaches the guitar’s **output jack**. Most guitars do not have an internal power source, so on its own this signal is very small. In order for an electric guitar to produce enough sound to be clearly audible, a cable must be connected to the guitar’s input jack. This cable is then connected to an **amplifier**, which boosts the original charge enough to move a speaker, which then converts the electric signal into sound.

# COMMON CORE

Grade 8

English Language Arts

# CLINICS



Writing and Language

 Options™

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# Write an Opinion

## Learn About It

An **opinion** is a belief that cannot be proved or disproved. When you state an opinion, you are making a **claim**. Claims must be supported by **evidence**, which may include facts, statistics, quotes, examples, or personal stories.

Read the passage. Look for evidence that supports the author's claim.

If you skateboard without wearing a helmet, you could be among one of the thousands of people who suffer brain injuries from not using proper protection. Stop taking this unnecessary risk and start wearing a helmet.

The U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC) reports that hundreds of thousands of head injuries are sustained while bicycling. Skateboarding is cited as causing tens of thousands of such injuries. The CPSC suggests that helmets could have prevented much of this suffering. In fact, according to a study published in the *New England Journal of Medicine*, helmets can reduce the risk of head injury by eighty-five percent and can further reduce brain injury by eighty-eight percent.

The statistics speak for themselves. There is no excuse for not wearing a helmet. You have only one brain. Shouldn't you do everything in your power to protect it?

Claim	Evidence
People should stop taking unnecessary risks and start wearing helmets.	Hundreds of thousands of head injuries occur while bicycling and tens of thousands of head injuries occur while skateboarding. (CPSC)
	Helmets can reduce the risk of head injury by eighty-five percent. ( <u>New England Journal of Medicine</u> )
	Helmets can reduce brain injury by eighty-eight percent. ( <u>New England Journal of Medicine</u> )

## Try It

Read the passage. Pay attention to the author's claim and the evidence used to support it. Use the questions to help you.

### Why So Early?

The alarm rings while it is still dark outside. I drag myself out of bed and walk like a zombie through the house, getting ready for the day. An hour later, when I am waiting for the bus to arrive, the sky is only beginning to lighten. Why am I tortured like this five days a week? To go to school. My school, like many, starts at seven o'clock. Given research about how an early wake-up call negatively affects teens, schools should start later in the day.

What is the author's claim?

A lot of teens have difficulty waking up early. We know now that this is probably due to biology. According to researchers, chemical processes make teens sleepy from 11 P.M. until 8 A.M. This might explain why they are noticeably tired during their first class. According to a National Sleep Foundation poll, twenty-eight percent of these students actually fall asleep during first period. This, as well as the fact that some students simply choose to stay in bed well after the alarm rings, can lead to failed grades and even dropping out of school.

What type of evidence does the author use to support his or her claim?

Just as teens struggle to wake up early, many are also unable to fall asleep early. One reason may be because of the time teens spend in the dark during the morning hours. No matter what the reason, a late bedtime can be problematic. Doctors from Harvard University Medical School report that sleep affects a student's ability to remember, and thus learn new things. This means that a late bedtime could prevent students from learning. A study sponsored by Tel Aviv University confirmed this when they found that the performance of a tired sixth-grade student equaled that of a fourth grader. This research suggests that starting school during the 7:00 A.M. hour fights the nature of teenage students and also prevents their ability to succeed.

How do the reported benefits of a later start time support the author's claim?

Continued from the previous page

A study published in the *Archives of Pediatrics & Adolescent Medicine* in 2010 shows that even a thirty-minute delay of the morning bell could make a huge difference. For instance, when students started school thirty minutes later, they not only woke up later, but also went to bed earlier. This increased their amount of sleep per night to an average of forty-five minutes. While that might not sound like enough to make a difference, students catching more Zs reported feeling happier and more alert. Fewer students skipped class or were tardy, and scores on standardized tests improved. Furthermore, a county in Kentucky reports that once their high schools started an hour later, there was a decrease in the number of students involved in car accidents. These benefits far outweigh the inconveniences posed by making changes to the school schedule.

As numerous studies point out, teens need more sleep than elementary school students. It makes sense then that they should start classes later than their younger siblings and friends. Schools need to delay their start time so that they can help teens be happier, higher-performing, and more rested students.

Which sentence restates the author's claim?



How well does the evidence support the author's claim?

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

**PROMPT**

The average minimum driving age in the United States is sixteen years old. Some people think this age minimum should be increased to seventeen or eighteen years old. Argue for or against increasing the minimum age requirement for a driver's license. Remember to support your opinion with facts and evidence.

Claim	Evidence