

## Monitor Comprehension

When students monitor their comprehension, they keep track of how well they understand the material and identify when their understanding breaks down. Related activities include rereading, asking questions, taking notes, and paraphrasing what has been read.

DAY  
1

Reproduce the *Monitor Comprehension* visual aid and distribute it to students. Then build background by showing students the location of the Arctic Ocean on a map or globe. Have students read the passage independently, and then introduce the *Monitor Comprehension* strategy. Explain: **Good readers monitor their comprehension by thinking about what they are reading.** Model the strategy: **I know that this is a nonfiction text that is telling me facts. It is important that I understand those facts. As I was reading, I realized I didn't understand how cold the Arctic Ocean is. So I reread the section titled "Size and Temperature." I figured out that the temperature must be almost as cold as ice because there is so much ice in the Arctic Ocean.** Have students complete the strategy practice activity and share their responses. Then have them complete the skill practice activity. Review the answers together.

DAY  
2

Remind students of the *Monitor Comprehension* strategy and point out the instructions at the top of the page. Ask: **How would pausing and asking myself if I understand help me monitor my comprehension?** (It gives you a chance to think about what you read to make sure you understand it. It tells you if you need to read it again.) After students finish reading the passage, model the strategy: **I didn't understand why Dr. Fowler wanted to save so many different kinds of seeds. I reread the second paragraph and figured out that he wanted to save a variety of seeds to protect the crops that grow in different countries.** After students complete the strategy practice activity, have them share their responses. Then have them complete the skill practice activity. Review the answers together.

DAY  
3

Remind students of the *Monitor Comprehension* strategy. Then say: **We are going to read about a Japanese holiday called Children's Day.** Build background by pointing out Japan on a map and asking volunteers to share what they know about Japanese culture. Then call students' attention to the instructions at the top of the page. Say: **One good way to monitor our comprehension is to recall the main idea of each paragraph.** After students finish reading, have them complete the strategy and skill practice activities. Review the answers together.

DAY  
4

Remind students of the *Monitor Comprehension* strategy. Then read the title of the passage aloud. Say: **Sometimes, titles give us good clues as to what a passage is about. Thinking about the title as you read can help you understand the passage.** After students finish reading, have them complete the strategy and skill practice activities. Review the answers together.

DAY  
5

Before students read the passage, build background by pointing out Mexico and Spain on a map. Explain that before Mexico was its own country, it was part of Spain. Then have students read the passage. Explain: **Sometimes it can be difficult to concentrate while reading. However, if you monitor your comprehension while reading, you can keep yourself on track.** Have students turn to a partner to complete the strategy practice activity by naming a specific action he or she could take to monitor comprehension. Ask volunteers to share their responses and discuss how those actions helped them stay focused while reading. For the skill practice activity, have students answer the items independently and then review the answers as a group.

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

**READ THE PASSAGE** As you read, pause after each section to think about whether you understood the information.

## I. Introduction

The Arctic Ocean is the smallest and coldest ocean in the world. It stretches from the North Pole to Asia, Europe, and North America. The Arctic Ocean is mostly covered in sea ice all year. It is home to walrus, polar bears, and whales. Because the ocean is so cold, few plants and animals can live there.

## II. Size and Temperature

The Arctic Ocean covers 5.4 million square miles (14 million square km). It is smaller than all other oceans. It is also the shallowest ocean. The temperature of the Arctic Ocean stays around 32 degrees Fahrenheit (0 degrees Celsius). The large amount of sea ice in the ocean stops its temperature from changing too much. However, much of the ice in the Arctic Ocean is melting because of global warming.

**STRATEGY PRACTICE** Was there any part of the passage that you did not understand right away? How did you figure it out?

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**SKILL PRACTICE** Read the item. Write your response.

1. What is the article mostly about?

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2. What is the purpose of the side headings?

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3. Name two continents that the Arctic Ocean does not touch.

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**READ THE PASSAGE** As you read, ask yourself, "Do I understand what I am reading?"

### The Doomsday Vault

If you wanted to save one thing for the future, what would you pick? For Dr. Cary Fowler, it's an easy choice. He would save seeds. Dr. Fowler is the scientist who helped create the Svalbard Global Seed Vault in Norway, near the Arctic. Dr. Fowler is trying to collect and save seeds from every food crop in the world.

Why would anyone save seeds? Well, Dr. Fowler believes the world must be prepared in case something terrible happens. Some disasters, whether they are natural or caused by people, could destroy crops around the world. People wouldn't have food, and they might not be able to grow it. Dr. Fowler believes we must protect seeds today so we can grow crops in the future.

Today the seed vault has over 400,000 different types of seeds. Dr. Fowler hopes to one day have over 1 million types of seeds. He is asking countries around the world to deposit seeds into the vault so that the seeds can be withdrawn when we need them.

**STRATEGY PRACTICE** Was there anything you read about the seed vault or Dr. Fowler that you did not understand? Write a question you had while you were reading.

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**SKILL PRACTICE** Read the item. Write your response.

1. Why is the Svalbard Global Seed Vault important?

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2. Draw two conclusions about Fowler based on information from the text.

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3. What does the word *deposit* mean? How can you tell?

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**READ THE PASSAGE** As you finish each paragraph, recall the main idea.

### Children's Day in Japan

Every year on May 5, people in Japan celebrate a festival known as Children's Day. This festival celebrates the happiness of children and mothers across the country. It is a national holiday for everyone in Japan.

Children's Day probably began as a festival for boys around AD 600. People flew flags shaped like a fish called a *carp*. The carp is a symbol of strength and health. Each boy had his own flag, and the oldest boy in a family had the biggest flag. People still fly carp flags today. But in 1948, the Japanese government changed the festival so that it celebrated both boys and girls.

People in Japan do many things on Children's Day. They eat special treats, such as rice cakes wrapped in oak leaves. They also take hot baths in water that has the leaves of iris plants in it. These leaves are said to be good for a person's health. But the children in Tokyo, the capital of Japan, get something extra special. They compete in the Kids' Olympics on Children's Day. There is a torch relay and races for kids and their parents. So before you're too old, plan a trip to Japan to celebrate Children's Day, and have fun being a kid!

**STRATEGY PRACTICE** How did thinking about the main idea of each paragraph help you better understand the passage?

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**SKILL PRACTICE** Read the item. Write your response.

1. What do the Japanese think of carp?

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2. What happened to the Children's Day festival in 1948?

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3. In which activity would you most like to participate on Children's Day? Why?

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**READ THE PASSAGE** As you read, think about the title of the passage and how it helps explain what you are reading.

### Real-Life Dragons

Stories about dragons that breathe fire and fly through the air are just make-believe. But some islands in the Indian Ocean are home to a very real reptile called the Komodo dragon. This giant lizard can grow to be 10 feet (3 m) long and weigh up to 150 pounds (68 kg). Komodo dragons don't have wings, or smoke coming out of their nostrils, but they have strong tails and a very nasty bite. A Komodo dragon has a powerful venom and knife-like teeth. When a Komodo dragon bites an animal, the animal usually goes into shock and dies quickly.

Although they can be dangerous, Komodo dragons usually don't attack people. In fact, in the past 35 years, Komodo dragons have attacked only five people. The Indonesian people who inhabit the same islands as the dragons believe that the lizards are special and should be treated with respect.

**STRATEGY PRACTICE** Explain how the title helped you understand the passage.

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**SKILL PRACTICE** Read the item. Write your response.

1. How does the first sentence prepare the reader to understand the text?

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2. Use quotation marks to cite the sentence in the text that tells how Komodo dragons differ from the dragons in fairy tales.

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3. What is the main idea of the last paragraph?

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**READ THE PASSAGE** As you read, keep your attention focused on the facts about Santa Anna's life.

### The Story of Santa Anna

#### Early Life

Santa Anna was born in Mexico in 1794, when Mexico was still owned by Spain. He began his career in the Spanish army when he was only 16. Santa Anna first fought against Native Americans in Mexico. Brave and smart, Santa Anna quickly became popular with the other soldiers. He was given many honors. When Santa Anna turned 22, he was made a captain in the army.

#### Politics

After Mexico declared itself independent of Spain, Santa Anna became a politician. He served as the president of Mexico many times. None of his terms were very long, and he was not a good president. Sometimes, he showed little interest in running a country. Other times, he was a dictator who favored the rich. He made many bad decisions that made the country poorer. However, Santa Anna claimed that he wanted to help Mexico. So every time Mexico was in trouble, he offered his "aid."

**STRATEGY PRACTICE** What advice would you give someone who could not concentrate while reading the passage? Tell a partner.

**SKILL PRACTICE** Read the item. Write your response.

1. Why does the first section have the side heading "Early Life"?

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2. Was Santa Anna a good president? Support your response with two facts.

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3. Summarize the text in two sentences.

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