

Introduction

Today's students receive information from an ever-increasing number of sources. To manage this overload of information, students must be able to distinguish between what is important and what is not—a key skill in reading nonfiction. They must understand what they read in traditional forms of nonfiction, such as textbooks and news articles, but they must also comprehend newer forms of nonfiction, such as advertisements on Web sites and e-mail on the Internet. Many students can benefit from reading more nonfiction, but finding good examples of nonfiction for instruction at different grade levels can be challenging.

How to Use This Book

The purpose of this book is to provide interesting, well-written nonfiction selections for students to read. These selections can be used for practice and instruction in reading nonfiction, and they can be used to help prepare students for taking tests that include nonfiction passages.

This book provides 24 grade-appropriate nonfiction texts in a wide variety of genres, from informational articles, letters, and biographies to e-mail announcements and how-to guides. Each text (of one page or less) focuses on a high-interest topic and has:

- a prereading question to help students focus on what they read.
- a set of 2–6 comprehension questions that resemble the kinds of questions students will see on standardized tests.

The questions with these texts are designed to measure critical thinking and comprehension skills, such as summarizing information, drawing conclusions, and evaluating an author's purpose and point of view. These questions will help you assess students' comprehension of the material and will help students practice answering test questions. For different passages, questions include multiple-choice items, short-answer items, and written-response items that require longer answers. (You will find answers to these questions in the Answer Key beginning on page 46.)

Extending Activities

For some of these richly detailed texts, you may want to have students go beyond answering only the questions that are provided. For example, for any given text you could have students write a summary of the selection in their own words or rewrite the passage from a different point of view. For some pairs of texts, you might have students compare and contrast the two selections. For other texts, you might want to create writing prompts and have students write full-length essays about what they have learned. Students will benefit from reading and analyzing these texts, discussing them in class or in small groups, and writing about them in a variety of ways.

Text 1 Which taste better, mealworms or crickets?

Eating Bugs

Some insects, such as butterflies and ladybugs, are quite beautiful. But, did you know that many bugs are also edible and are filled with protein?

Aletheia Price knows this—and a lot more—about bugs. She also thinks you should try eating some. If you visit the Web site www.eatbug.com, you will find all kinds of information about edible insects. Most of it was written by Aletheia Price when she was fifteen years old. Aletheia started eating bugs at the age of thirteen. Before long, she found that she really enjoyed some of them. She also became interested in finding out more about which kinds of bugs could be eaten and how to cook them.

According to Aletheia, there are at least 1,462 kinds of edible insects. (Doesn't that make you wonder who tried all of them and decided they were edible?) Some of her favorite dishes include mealworm chocolate chip cookies, ant tacos, and chocolate-covered crickets. On her Web site she offers information for anyone who wants to raise bugs for food. She also has recipes for insect entrees and some helpful tips. For example, Aletheia prefers eating cooked insects to live ones because she likes food that cannot crawl off her plate. Also, when preparing crickets, it is best to remove their legs before cooking. (The legs tend to get stuck in your teeth.)

Aletheia realizes that eating bugs is not for everyone. But, if you think about it, you have to admit that eating bugs might be a good idea. There are billions and billions of bugs in this world. If we could get used to eating them, we would have plenty of food for everyone.

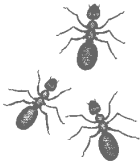
Today's Menu

Mealworm bread
Ant brood tacos
Chocolate-covered crickets



1. Which information can you find on the Web site www.eatbug.com?

- (A) the names of restaurants that serve bugs
- (B) recipes for preparing food made with insects
- (C) a list of 1,462 kinds of edible bugs
- (D) suggestions for solving the world's hunger problems



2. Based on what you have read here, how would you describe Aletheia Price? What kind of person is she? Tell why you think so.

Text 2 *Where can the skateboarders go?*

To the Editor:

As the owner of a local restaurant, I try to stay on good terms with the members of the community, both young and old. I encourage local people to spend time in downtown Burlington, and I also encourage young people to exercise as much as they can. However, having these same young people riding skateboards up and down our sidewalks, knocking over pedestrians, and generally being a real nuisance, is not exactly what I had in mind.

Right now, young people are skating on the sidewalks and in the parking lots after school and on weekends, but school will soon be out. What will happen then? I think we all know the answer. Kids will be riding up and down the streets all day long and into the evening.

Most of the skateboarding kids are polite and considerate. They try not to bother people walking on the sidewalks, and they



stay out of the traffic. But they are still kids, and there will be dozens of them on the street as soon as school lets out. There are always a few troublemakers, too, and they will cause some problems.

I would like to suggest that we avoid the whole situation by doing something about it now. I think the best approach would be to build a skate park in the downtown area where kids can skate as much as they want. Such a park would provide a place for the kids to go and would help prevent accidents on the sidewalk and in the streets. I also think this can be done inexpensively. A skate park does not require a lot of resources, and I think many parents would contribute time and money to the project.

Martin LaPierre
Burlington

1. **What is the writer of this letter most concerned about?**
 - (A) Young people do not have good manners.
 - (B) There will soon be too many skateboarders on the sidewalks.
 - (C) Students do not spend enough time in school.
 - (D) Young people need more exercise.

2. **The writer's main purpose in this letter is to —**
 - (F) help solve a problem.
 - (G) praise the city.
 - (H) compare young people of the past and present.
 - (J) criticize the local government.

3. **List three positive reasons to support the idea of building a skate park.**



Answer Key

1. Eating Bugs

1. B
2. Answers will vary. Students might describe Aletheia Price as unusual, interesting, curious, admirable, adventurous, or something similar because she eats insects and seems to enjoy them.

2. Letter to the Editor

1. B
2. F
3. Examples: The skate park will help prevent accidents on the sidewalks and streets; kids will enjoy having a park; kids will have a place to go; it will not cost much to build; skateboarding is good exercise.