

**FIFTH GRADE****Skill Builders**

Reading Comprehension

Grade**5**

supports

**NCTE
standards****Includes Critical Thinking Pages!**

Skill Builders are great for keeping students current during the school year or preparing them for the grade ahead during the summer!

Reproducible**Clear Examples****Fun Format****Skills Include:**

- Comprehension
- Main Idea
- Sequencing
- Details
- Vocabulary
- Reasoning
- Logic

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Becoming Good Neighbors

Billy and Roger were next-door neighbors and in the same class at Central School. Billy was probably the brightest student in the class. Roger was definitely the strongest and best athlete in the school. The boys often got a ride to school in the morning from one of their parents, but, in the afternoon, they came home separately. Roger stayed and played either soccer or basketball with some of the older boys. Sometimes, Billy watched, but he usually came home and did his homework and read a book.

One day, Billy asked if he could join Roger's after-school games. Roger answered, "No, you are too small and not strong enough." The other boys laughed as they all headed out to the field. Billy was crushed. He went home and studied for the next day's science test.

When Billy and Roger got to the classroom the next day, their teacher said she was going to give the test right away. That way, they could get it back at the end of the day. Everything on the test was material Billy had studied, so he had no trouble answering the questions. Billy noticed that Roger had barely written anything. When the tests were returned, Billy received a 100 at the top of his paper, and Roger had a note saying that he must take the test again. Billy offered to help Roger study for the test.

The next morning on their way to school, Roger invited Billy to play with him and his friends after school. He encouraged Billy by telling him he would teach him how to play the games.

Reading Comprehension

1. Who are the main characters in the story?

2. Circle two of Billy's characteristics.

helpful

athletic

selfish

studious

unfriendly

strong

3. Circle two of Roger's characteristics before the science test.

unfriendly

helpful

athletic

a bully

studious

thoughtful

4. Circle two of Roger's characteristics after the science test.

frustrated

hardworking

considerate

appreciative

threatening

selfish



The New Team

Biff and Scooter sat on the bench and shook their heads sadly as they gazed at the tiny group of fans in the stands. Here it was, only the middle of the football season, and already attendance had dropped. It wasn't that their playing was bad. On the contrary, they were so good that they beat all of the other teams by at least 30 points. The other teams were so bad that the games were dull and predictable. The two players complained to each other that they would never find another good team to play in their part of the state.

The coach turned when he heard what they said. He looked up at the star-filled sky. Then, he turned back to the boys with a twinkle in his eye and said, "I need all of you to be here for next week's game. I've been searching for a strong opponent, and I think I've found just the team to boost our attendance." That was all that their coach would tell them.

The whole town knew that the coach was planning something special. At the next game, the stands were packed. Biff and Scooter were amazed when they looked up at the sky. Not only was there a hot-air balloon and a blimp, but there were several hovering, saucer-shaped aircraft. When Biff and Scooter walked onto the field for the coin toss, they understood. There to meet them was a team of players. Each one had two antennae, large pointy ears, and very long, green arms.

"Where are their helmets?" Scooter asked the referee.

"They don't use them. I guess the steel plates in their heads make helmets unnecessary."

Scooter gulped and looked at Biff. "Wow," he said. "This is going to be an interesting game. It may wipe out our whole team, but at least it filled the stands!"



Reading Comprehension

1. Which of the following best defines the word *gazed*?
 - A. laughed
 - B. yelled
 - C. frowned
 - D. looked
2. The main idea of the first paragraph is that
 - A. Biff's and Scooter's team has been playing badly.
 - B. nobody wants to play Biff's and Scooter's team.
 - C. fans are not attending games because the games are too predictable.
 - D. Biff and Scooter are on the bench because they are the second-string players.
3. The strong opponent that the coach rounded up for special interest was really
 - A. the best team in the state.
 - B. a team from outer space.
 - C. some of the townspeople.
 - D. one of the teams they had already beaten that year.
4. Which of these characteristics would probably *not* make the opposing team hard to beat?
 - A. long arms to catch passes
 - B. steel plates instead of helmets for protection
 - C. good hearing to hear the football plays
 - D. wavy antennae that were purple in color
5. Choose another good title for this story.
 - A. A Star Is Created
 - B. How to Attract Fans to a Football Game
 - C. Another Dull Game
 - D. How to Find Good Football Players

Fact or Opinion

Read the passage. Write **F** before the fact statements and **O** before the opinion statements.

The Great Barrier Reef is considered by many people to be one of the seven natural wonders of the world. It is the largest coral structure in the world and the largest structure ever constructed by living organisms.

The Great Barrier Reef consists mostly of coral, a rocklike substance made by tiny animals. These tiny animals, called polyps, are too numerous to count. The polyps are born in a continuous cycle of reproducing, eating, and dying. New coral is slowly added to the reef through this process.

The fragile reef is constantly changing its shape and color. These changes are caused by many factors, including the polyps' constant activities. People visiting the reef, harmful animals, and changes in the environment can damage the reef through pollution or carelessness.

1. _____ The tiny animals that make the Great Barrier Reef are called polyps.
2. _____ People should not be allowed to visit the reef.
3. _____ It is a good thing that there are so many polyps.
4. _____ The Great Barrier Reef is the world's largest coral structure.
5. _____ The Great Barrier Reef can be damaged by people who visit it.

Fact or Opinion (continued)

Read the passage. Write **F** before the fact statements and **O** before the opinion statements.

Tropical rain forests lie near the equator. In rain forests, rain falls almost every day, and there is little variation in temperature. Tropical rain forests are packed with all kinds of dense vegetation, including trees, vines, shrubs, and brightly colored flowers. About half of the world's species of plants and animals live in tropical rain forests.

The world's tropical rain forests are in great danger. They are being cut down to provide timber and firewood and to make room for homes, roads, farms, and factories. Some areas are being cleared for the mining of oil and valuable minerals. The habitats of thousands of species of animals and plants have already vanished. The way of life for many people who live in the rain forests is also threatened by these changes.

6. _____ There is too much vegetation in the rain forests.
7. _____ Tropical rain forests are wet.
8. _____ All development should stop in the tropical rain forests.
9. _____ A tropical rain forest is a densely packed area of trees and plants.
10. _____ Tropical rain forests are interesting to study.



Nine Lives

Do you believe cats have nine lives? If they do, then there is a cat named Scarlett that may have already used a few of her lives.

Scarlett was a *stray* cat surviving in an old, vacant building in New York. One day the building caught fire. Most animals try to escape a situation like that. But Scarlett had five kittens to protect. One by one, she carried her kittens to safety away from the burning building. As the fire got bigger, Scarlett ignored the danger and kept working. By the time Scarlett saved the last kitten, her fur was badly burned, and her eyes were swollen shut.



A kind firefighter found the five kittens and went looking for the mother. Even though Scarlett could not see him, she trusted his voice and let him pick her up. He put her in a box with her babies. She couldn't see her kittens, so she counted them by touching each one's nose.

Scarlett and her kittens were rushed to the nearest animal hospital where it took almost three months for them to heal from the fire. Scarlett's heroic deed was in all of the local newspapers. Hundreds of people wanted to adopt Scarlett and her kittens. The veterinarian made sure they were all adopted into good homes.

Today, Scarlett's calico fur has all grown back and her eyes are opened wide. She plays with crinkled tissue paper balls, paper bags, and string like other cats. Then, she rests on the windowsill. She doesn't walk around like she's famous. She is just happy to live in a safe home with loving owners. To prove it, she purrs very loudly when her owners are near. Scarlett is a true survivor.

Reading Comprehension

1. Choose another good title for this story.

- A. Too Many Cats
- B. Firefighter Hero
- C. Cat's Meow
- D. Mother's Love

2. Which of the following best defines the word *stray*?

- A. homeless
- B. wild
- C. tame
- D. dangerous

3. Number the following events in the order that they happened.

_____ Scarlett and her kittens were adopted.

_____ The cats were taken to the animal hospital.

_____ An empty building caught on fire.

_____ Scarlett carried out each kitten.

_____ A firefighter found the kittens.

4. Why do you think Scarlett let the firefighter pick her up?

- A. She couldn't see and probably couldn't hear.
- B. She was too hungry to run away.
- C. She decided she needed to trust someone.
- D. She heard her babies crying.

5. In what state did this story take place? _____

6. How many kittens did Scarlett have? _____

7. How long did it take the cats to heal? _____

8. Where does Scarlett like to rest now? _____

Answer Key

Page 5, Becoming Good Neighbors

1. Billy and Roger; 2. helpful, studious; 3. unfriendly, athletic; 4. considerate, appreciative

Page 7, The New Team

1. D.; 2. C.; 3. B.; 4 D.; 5. B.

Pages 8–9, Fact or Opinion

1. F; 2. O; 3. O; 4. F; 5. F; 6. O; 7. F; 8. O; 9. F; 10. O

Page 11, Nine Lives

1. D.; 2. A.; 3. 5, 4, 1, 2, 3; 4. A.; 5. New York; 6. five; 7. three months; 8. on the windowsill

Page 13, Coyote and the Rolling Rock

1. A.; 2. A.; 3. D.; 4. Answers will vary.

Page 15, Chambered Nautilus

1. in the Indian and South Pacific Oceans, from 60' to 1,500' deep; 2. It is a living fossil related to the octopus and squid. It has an external, chambered shell and 80–100 tentacles around its head.; 3. tiny fish, shrimp, molted shells of spiny lobsters; 4. They are attached to rocks, coral, or the seafloor for about one year before hatching.; 5. They have tentacles. They live in the ocean. They lay eggs.; 6. They have external shells. They cannot change color. They do not squirt ink. They live longer.

Page 17, Early Pioneer Travel

1. where Kentucky, Tennessee, and Virginia meet; 2. hunted, fished, and carried dried staples; 3. Daniel Boone and about 30 woodsmen; 4. late 1700s and early 1800s; 5. by foot or wagon; 6. several weeks; 7. Answers will vary.

Page 19, Snow

1. The swirling snow blurred the landscape.; 2. Both girls looked up; 3. blowing snow; 4. Cristie fell backwards into the snow.; 5. Her mitten was off, and the dog made her stick her hand into the snow.; 6. Tiny was standing on her back.

Pages 20–21, Stretching It

1. R; 2. F; 3. F; 4. R; 5. F; 6. R; 7. R; 8. F; 9. R; 10. R; Page 21, Answers will vary.

Page 23, The Miracle Vine

1. D.; 2. 4, 1, 2, 3, 5; 3. A.; 4. C.

Page 25, Cesar Chavez

1. D.; 2. 2, 1, 3, 5, 4; 3. A.; 4. C.

Page 27, The Story of Arachne

1. B.; 2. A.; 3. D.; 4. C.

Page 29, Bread

Answers will vary.

Page 31, Winter Sunrise

Answers will vary. Some possible answers include: 1. someone getting out of bed; 2. Fingernails: the first rays of light, Blanket: the night sky, Toes: more light, Body: the sun

Page 33, Theme Park

1. Cal's bedroom; 2. Cal and Cleo; 3. They don't have enough money for admission to the theme park.; 4. They will rake leaves to earn the money.