



in this chapter

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Reading and Writing to Understand Texts

- What Are Common Myths about Readers?
- How Do You Read Actively?
- How Do You Write a Summary?
- Readings on Success and Happiness



What kind of reader are you? Are you a sit-at-the-desk-and-read-with-a-pen-in-hand kind of reader? Or are you a read-in-bed-while-trying-to-keep-your-eyes-open kind of reader? Whatever kind of reader you are, you are probably familiar with the experience of getting to the end of a paragraph or a few pages and then realizing that you have no clue what you just read. Your eyes scanned every word, but your mind was elsewhere, and by the end you neither understood nor remembered any of it. To help you improve your understanding of college course material, this chapter explains several active reading strategies that will help you stay engaged with the text to improve your reading comprehension and summary writing skills. You will practice these new strategies on three types of texts (an article, a speech, and a selection from a book) and then you will write one-paragraph summaries of each of the readings included in this chapter.

Myths about Readers

Let's dispel some common reading myths that can stand in the way of your success:

- **Reading speed.** Many people believe that reading speed is related to intelligence or efficiency. Not true! Some slower readers read very deeply and carefully and get more out of their reading than faster readers. Taking the time to subvocalize (think or say the words to yourself as you read) dramatically improves reading comprehension. Also, since our working memory can hold only so much information, pausing to process ideas as you read is key to comprehension—and that takes time. The more complex the text, the more time you will need to process the ideas.
- **Reading with a disability.** Many people believe that reading disabilities, such as dyslexia, go hand in hand with low intelligence or that readers with dyslexia cannot achieve the same reading level as others. Wrong again! In fact, people with dyslexia are often highly intelligent people who have developed strong coping skills to accommodate their disability. If you have a reading disability, be sure to take advantage of the technological tools available to you. If you think you have a reading disability but have never been tested, ask your college counselor about your school's resources. Some experts believe that about 10 percent of the adult population has undiagnosed dyslexia.
- **Reading in a second (or third) language.** Many people believe that reading in a second language can never achieve the same level of

sophistication as reading in a first language. Again, not true. It takes time and the right kind of practice, but second-language readers can build the vocabulary necessary to read well. In fact, reading in a language improves spoken fluency. Look up unfamiliar words in a bilingual dictionary *before* you start to read the text; then, as you read, say the words in English as you read them. If you still encounter words you don't know, look them up at the end, and then reread the text.

Do not believe any of these myths. The fact is that everyone can improve his or her reading through active reading strategies.

Active Reading to Improve Comprehension

Active reading means that you are paying attention to what you are reading and thinking about it as you go. If you are a passive reader, you read just to plow through the material, and you often don't pay sufficient attention to the ideas or information. If you find yourself daydreaming or falling asleep when reading, you are probably reading passively, and you need to find a time to read when you can be more alert and focused. Setting aside enough time to read when you are alert is crucial, but so are good reading skills.

► For specific vocabulary-building activities, see Chapter 5, Building Vocabulary.

Reading comprehension is the ability to understand and interpret a text. Your reading comprehension can be improved dramatically once you learn and apply strong active reading techniques. Vocabulary is a big part of reading comprehension, but it also requires figuring out the author's main point and purpose, and recognizing the supporting information.

In the next few pages, we use one short article, Ashley Merryman's "Losing Is Good for You," to demonstrate various reading comprehension techniques. You'll practice each technique, and then at the end of the chapter, you will have three more readings for further practice.

PRE-READING THE TEXT TO INCREASE COMPREHENSION

Good readers don't just begin by "reading" the text. They begin with what is called *pre-reading*. Pre-reading is like previewing, and it is done quickly before you read the entire text. Pre-reading helps you focus on the important parts of the reading and makes it easier to find the main points. To pre-read well, follow these steps:

STEP 1: Read the title and make predictions. Are there any words in the title that imply a particular point of view or opinion? Words like "benefits" or "myth" in the title should give you an idea of what the author's

perspective is. Based on the title, what do you expect the text to be about? The title often reveals the focus or main point, and taking stock of it before you jump into reading will prepare you for what is to come.

STEP 2: Read the headnote (the sentences that introduce the reading). The headnote usually gives clues about the author, source, and intended audience. What clues does the headnote provide you about what the reading will be about, where it was published and who is likely to read it, or what the purpose of the text is? If there is no headnote, go to the end of the reading to see if any information about the author is included.

STEP 3: Flip through the reading to see how long it is and how it is laid out. Is the reading divided into sections or paragraphs? Look at any pictures, charts, or graphs that might be included. Be sure to read any captions or notes along with them. What do the images suggest about the topic or purpose of the reading? Also read any headings that divide up the text. This kind of overview will give you a good idea of what the text covers. Write out a bulleted list or a brief summary of the topics or points the text will cover based on this step.

STEP 4: Quickly read the introductory paragraph. Based on the first paragraph, what can you expect the reading to discuss? Write down your predictions in your notebook or directly in the margins of the reading.

STEP 5: Quickly read the last paragraph. What can you learn from it? What clues does it provide about the author's purpose? Write down your predictions in your notebook or directly in the margins of the reading.

STEP 6: Read any discussion or comprehension questions that are at the end of the text. The questions at the end of a chapter or text will highlight important ideas in the reading. Reading them first means you will know what to look out for as you read.

Now let's see how one student put these pre-reading steps into practice.

OPINION

Ashley Merryman is the coauthor of the book *Top Dog: The Science of Winning and Losing* (2014). This article was originally published in the *New York Times* as an opinion piece written by an outside expert. The article was massively popular on social media, which shows it clearly struck a nerve with Americans.

Headnote: The *New York Times* is a major newspaper, so it's written for a general audience — probably mostly adults, since little kids don't really read the newspaper. Merryman is an expert, but this isn't a research article.

Title: Hmm . . . I guess the article is going to say it's okay to lose. I wonder why.

Intro: Based on this opening, this is an advice article to parents, and it's about kids and trophies and how we give them too many. I bet she thinks kids today are a little spoiled.

Format: No pictures or graphs. Pretty straightforward and short. I can probably read this in one sitting.

ASHLEY MERRYMAN

Losing Is Good for You

As children return to school this fall and sign up for a new year's worth of extracurricular activities, parents should keep one question in mind. Whether your kid loves Little League or gymnastics, ask the program organizers this: "Which kids get awards?" If the answer is, "Everybody gets a trophy," find another program.

Trophies were once rare things—sterling silver loving cups bought from jewelry stores for truly special occasions. But in the 1960s, they began to be mass-produced, marketed in catalogs to teachers and coaches, and sold in sporting-goods stores.

Today, participation trophies and prizes are almost a given, as children are constantly assured that they are winners. One Maryland summer program gives awards every day—and the "day" is one hour long. In Southern California, a regional branch of the American Youth Soccer Organization hands out roughly 3,500 awards each season—each player gets one, while around a third get two. Nationally, A.Y.S.O. local branches typically spend as much as 12 percent of their yearly budgets on trophies.

It adds up: trophy and award sales are now an estimated \$3 billion-a-year industry in the United States and Canada.

Po Bronson and I have spent years reporting on the effects of praise and rewards on kids. The science is clear. Awards can be powerful motivators, but nonstop recognition does not inspire children to succeed. Instead, it can cause them to underachieve.

Carol Dweck, a psychology professor at Stanford University, found that kids respond positively to praise; they enjoy hearing that they're talented, smart and so on. But after such praise of their innate abilities, they collapse at the first experience of difficulty. Demoralized by their failure, they say they'd rather cheat than risk failing again.

In recent eye-tracking experiments by the researchers Bradley Morris and Shannon Zentall, kids were asked to draw pictures. Those who heard praise suggesting they had an innate talent were then twice as fixated on mistakes they'd made in their pictures.

By age 4 or 5, children aren't fooled by all the trophies. They are surprisingly accurate in identifying who excels and who struggles. Those who are outperformed know it and give up, while those who do well feel cheated when they aren't recognized for their accomplishments. They, too, may give up.

It turns out that, once kids have some proficiency in a task, the excitement and uncertainty of real competition may become the activity's very appeal.

If children know they will automatically get an award, what is the impetus 10 for improvement? Why bother learning problem-solving skills, when there are never obstacles to begin with?

If I were a baseball coach, I would announce at the first meeting that there would be only three awards: Best Overall, Most Improved and Best Sportsmanship. Then I'd hand the kids a list of things they'd have to do to earn one of those trophies. They would know from the get-go that excellence, improvement, character and persistence were valued.

It's accepted that, before punishing children, we must consider their individual levels of cognitive and emotional development. Then we monitor them, changing our approach if there's a negative outcome. However, when it comes to rewards, people argue that kids must be treated identically: everyone must always win. That is misguided. And there are negative outcomes. Not just for specific children but for society as a whole.

In June, an Oklahoma Little League canceled participation trophies because of a budget shortfall. A furious parent complained to a local reporter, "My children look forward to their trophy as much as playing the game." That's exactly the problem, says Jean Twenge, author of *Generation Me*.

Having studied recent increases in narcissism and entitlement among college students, she warns that when living rooms are filled with participation trophies, it's part of a larger cultural message: to succeed, you just have to show up. In college, those who've grown up receiving endless awards do the requisite work, but don't see the need to do it well. In the office, they still believe that attendance is all it takes to get a promotion.

In life, "you're going to lose more often than you win, even if you're good at 15 something," Ms. Twenge told me. "You've got to get used to that to keep going."

When children make mistakes, our job should not be to spin those losses into decorated victories. Instead, our job is to help kids overcome setbacks, to help them see that progress over time is more important than a particular win or loss, and to help them graciously congratulate the child who succeeded when they failed. To do that, we need to refuse all the meaningless plastic and tin destined for landfills. We have to stop letting the Trophy-Industrial Complex run our children's lives.

This school year, let's fight for a kid's right to lose.

Conclusion seems to be a call for parents to change their attitudes.

Discussion questions on p. 30 seem to be about whether you agree with her or not, so she must be saying something controversial.

COMPREHENSION QUESTIONS

1. How did the mass production of trophies in the 1960s change the way people thought of them?
2. What has the author's research about "nonstop recognition" led her to believe about participation trophies (para. 5)?
3. How would Merryman give out trophies if she were a coach?
4. According to the reading, why is it important for kids to experience losing?

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. What was your experience of getting trophies as a kid? What are your own children (or younger family members) experiencing in youth sports? Is Merryman's description of participation trophies familiar to you?
2. Do you agree or disagree with Merryman's assessment of the damage participation trophies can cause? Explain why.
3. What should coaches and parents be doing to help kids learn to "overcome setbacks" (para. 16) in today's culture?

What does pre-reading the text tell us? Actually, quite a lot. We can define the topic, the audience, the purpose, and some of the important ideas that will be in the article. Now, when you move on to reading the article closely, you will likely comprehend it much more easily. Go ahead and read the whole article if you haven't already, then answer the questions for comprehension and discussion that follow it.

practice it 2.1 Pre-Reading

Practice the pre-reading steps with the three reading selections in the Readings on Success and Happiness section (pp. 45–65), later in this chapter. You might do the first reading with a group, the second with a partner, and the third on your own. Be sure to record in writing the ideas you gain from previewing.

TIP

Annotating is not the same as highlighting, which often takes over the page in a meaningless outbreak of neon. When used sparingly, highlighting is effective at drawing your attention to a particular word or phrase, but it is not as meaningful as writing your own responses and comments.

ANNOTATING WHILE YOU READ TO INCREASE COMPREHENSION

Annotating is a form of note taking that you do directly on the text you are reading. Annotating well will increase your reading comprehension and help you become more engaged in the reading. To annotate, you write directly in the margins, underline or circle words, and mark up the pages with notes. That's right—you are supposed to write in your books!

When you annotate, you "talk back" to the text you are reading through the comments you make in the margins. For example, if you like what the author is saying, you might put a comment like "Yes, I agree!" in the margin. If you think the author uses a great example to support a point, you might simply write "great example." Underline main ideas or lines from the text you find particularly important, meaningful, or interesting.

There is not one correct way to annotate. Most people develop their own system over time, but you can keep the following list of strategies in mind as you begin to become comfortable reading with a pencil in your hand:

- **Annotate your personal reactions.** Pay attention to what you think and feel about a reading, and put those thoughts and feelings into your annotations.
- **Annotate for specific vocabulary.** Reading is one of the best ways to build your vocabulary because it allows you to experience new words in context, which makes them easier to learn. Annotating new words makes your vocabulary grow even more quickly because you are writing the words as well as reading them. Underline any words you don't know, and try to figure them out by context. If you can't figure them out, stop reading and look them up, then write the meaning in the margin. It is important that you write the meaning in your own words so that you can be sure you understand it. Also make note of key terms and phrases relevant to the subject. Many readers draw a circle or a box around words that are likely to be on a test or that they would likely use in writing about the topic.
- **Annotate for main ideas or significant details.** As you get better at annotating, you will learn to distinguish between main ideas and the details that support those ideas. You might underline the ideas and put a star next to the details, for example. If annotating is new to you, don't worry about distinguishing main ideas from supporting details; just mark anything you think is important as you read through the text the first time. You can take a closer look when you review your annotations later.
- **Annotate to ask questions of the text.** As you read, you are likely to have questions about what the text means or whether the author's ideas are good. Include both types of questions in your annotations.

Let's take a look at how our student annotated paragraphs 3–7 of “Losing Is Good for You.”

Today, participation trophies and prizes are almost a given, as children are constantly assured that they are winners. One Maryland summer program gives awards every day—and the “day” is one hour long. In Southern California, a regional branch of the American Youth Soccer Organization hands out roughly 3,500 awards each season—each player gets one, while around a third get two. Nationally, A.Y.S.O. local branches typically spend as much as 12 percent of their yearly budgets on trophies.

key term

Wow! That's a lot.

Maybe that \$ could be better spent?

Who?	▶	It adds up: trophy and award sales are now an estimated \$3 billion-a-year industry in the United States and Canada.
Main point, thesis?	▶	<u>Po Bronson and I have spent years reporting on the effects of praise and rewards on kids. The science is clear. Awards can be powerful motivators, but nonstop recognition does not inspire children to succeed. Instead, it can cause them to underachieve.</u>
innate = born with	▶	Carol Dweck, a psychology professor at Stanford University, found that kids respond positively to praise; they enjoy hearing that they're talented, smart and so on. But after such praise of their <u>innate</u> abilities, <u>they collapse</u> at the first experience of difficulty. Demoralized by their failure, they say they'd rather cheat than risk failing again.
Why?	▶	In recent <u>eye-tracking experiments</u> by the researchers Bradley Morris and Shannon Zentall, kids were asked to draw pictures. Those who heard praise suggesting they had an innate talent were then twice as <u>fixated</u> on mistakes they'd made in their pictures.
What is that?	▶	
stuck on	▶	
Interesting	▶	

practice it 2.2 Annotating

Ready to give annotation a try? Read the following paragraphs from the book *Until Tuesday: A Wounded Warrior and the Golden Retriever Who Saved Him*, by Luis Carlos Montalván. The book is a memoir of the author's relationship with his service dog, Tuesday. These paragraphs describe Lu Picard, the woman who both trained Tuesday and taught Montalván how to help himself emotionally heal. Practice annotating for your thoughts and reactions, vocabulary and key terms, and important ideas. Remember, annotations are your "conversation" with the text.

She isn't in the dog-training business for the money, and unlike some other people I've met in the field, she isn't interested in public adulation or hobnobbing with celebrities. She's in the business for the clients, and the love of the dogs, and the memory of her father.

Lu's father raised her alone after her mother died when she was a teenager. He worked hard, sacrificing for his daughter. He never remarried, but he always planned to travel, maybe move to Florida . . . someday, someday. When he retired, Lu was ecstatic. He was finally going to live his dream. Two weeks later, he had a major stroke. . . .

Unable to walk or talk without difficulty, her father moved in with Lu and her husband. Within a few weeks, he fell into a deep depression.

“I should have died,” he muttered over and over again. “I wish I’d just died.”

Traditional care wasn’t working, so Lu tried something different. She trained a dog. At the time, she was turning young dogs into well-mannered pets for wealthy suburbanites, so she had a veritable kennel in her garage. She built a mock harness with a solid handle and taught one of her best dogs to stand still — a hold, as it’s called in the service dog field, although Lu didn’t know that at the time.

She intended the dog to pull her father off the sofa and assist him in walking around the house. Her father was skeptical — until he tried it. The first day, with the dog’s help, he was able to stand up from the couch. Within a few days, he was walking to the kitchen. More importantly, he was talking, and not in his self-pitying patter. He was talking *to the dog*.

POST-READING STRATEGIES TO IDENTIFY THE MAIN POINT AND SUPPORT

Just as strong readers use pre-reading to develop good reading habits, they practice post-reading strategies to enhance their reading comprehension and reflect on the overall meaning of the reading. Post-reading strategies take many forms, from finding the main idea and supporting details to answering any questions about them. Making a habit of using post-reading strategies will strengthen your understanding and recall of the material. Even discussing the reading with classmates or friends is a helpful way for you to review the concepts introduced in the reading.

Post-reading strategies help you locate and understand the main point of a paragraph (which we call the topic sentence) or the main point of an essay (which we call the thesis statement), which is the most crucial part of ensuring that you comprehend a reading. Topic sentences are often, but not always, the first sentence in a paragraph. Thesis statements are often, but not always, the last sentence in the introductory paragraph. However, in real-life reading, topic sentences and thesis statements are rarely so predictable. Sometimes authors merely imply their main points, and sometimes they bury them in dense language.

► For more about topic sentences, see Chapter 7.

They might even hide the thesis in the conclusion. Identifying key concept words and supporting details will help you find and state the reading's main points.

Using Key Concept Words to Help You State the Main Point Follow these steps to use key concept words to pin down the main point or to put an implied main point into words:

STEP 1: For longer readings, break the text down into its parts. If the article has subheadings, make a list in your notes of each subheading, with plenty of space below each one. If the reading does not have subheadings, look for transitional expressions (especially ones that list out examples, such as “first . . . second . . . third . . .”) or graphics that mark transitions. If the text does not have any noticeable breaks, that's fine; proceed to the next step. For “Losing Is Good for You,” there are no clear section breaks, so we will treat the essay as one section.

STEP 2: Make a list of words that express the key concepts the author discusses. These might be words that are repeated throughout or that the author takes the time to define or discuss in depth. You can look for words you circled or underlined while annotating, or you can reread the text and list the one or two most important words per paragraph or section. Each reader will make a slightly different list of words, but most will have significant overlap. For example, in “Losing Is Good for You,” we might list the following key concept words: *trophies*, *awards*, *praise*, *motivators*, *underachieve*, *competition*, *accomplishments*, *succeed*, and *overcome setbacks*.

STEP 3: Use the key concept words to talk aloud about ideas in the text. Usually, the key concept words are related to the main point of the text, so talking about them can help you articulate the main point. Try grouping them together in meaningful categories, looking for relationships among the ideas. For example, in “Losing Is Good for You,” one reader might make the following links:

trophies — awards — praise
motivators — underachieve — competition
accomplishments — succeed — overcome setbacks

Another reader might link the words differently:

trophies — awards
praise — motivators — accomplishments
underachieve — succeed — overcome setbacks
competition

While there is no “right answer” for how you see the words relating to one another, you should be able to explain why you link them the way you do. Take a few minutes to talk through your ideas, trying out different ways of expressing the main point. Remember to keep your own commentary and beliefs out of the discussion as much as possible (we know that’s hard to do!), since you’re attempting to identify the author’s main and supporting points, not argue for or against them.

STEP 4: Using the key concept words as much as possible, write out sentences that restate the author’s ideas in your own words. This is called *paraphrasing*. You might use related forms of the key concept words, such as *achieve* instead of *underachieve*. For our example of “Losing Is Good for You,” we might jot down the following:

Trophies and false awards give kids the wrong kind of praise.

Real competition motivates people to achieve.

Only by overcoming setbacks do kids feel truly successful in their accomplishments.

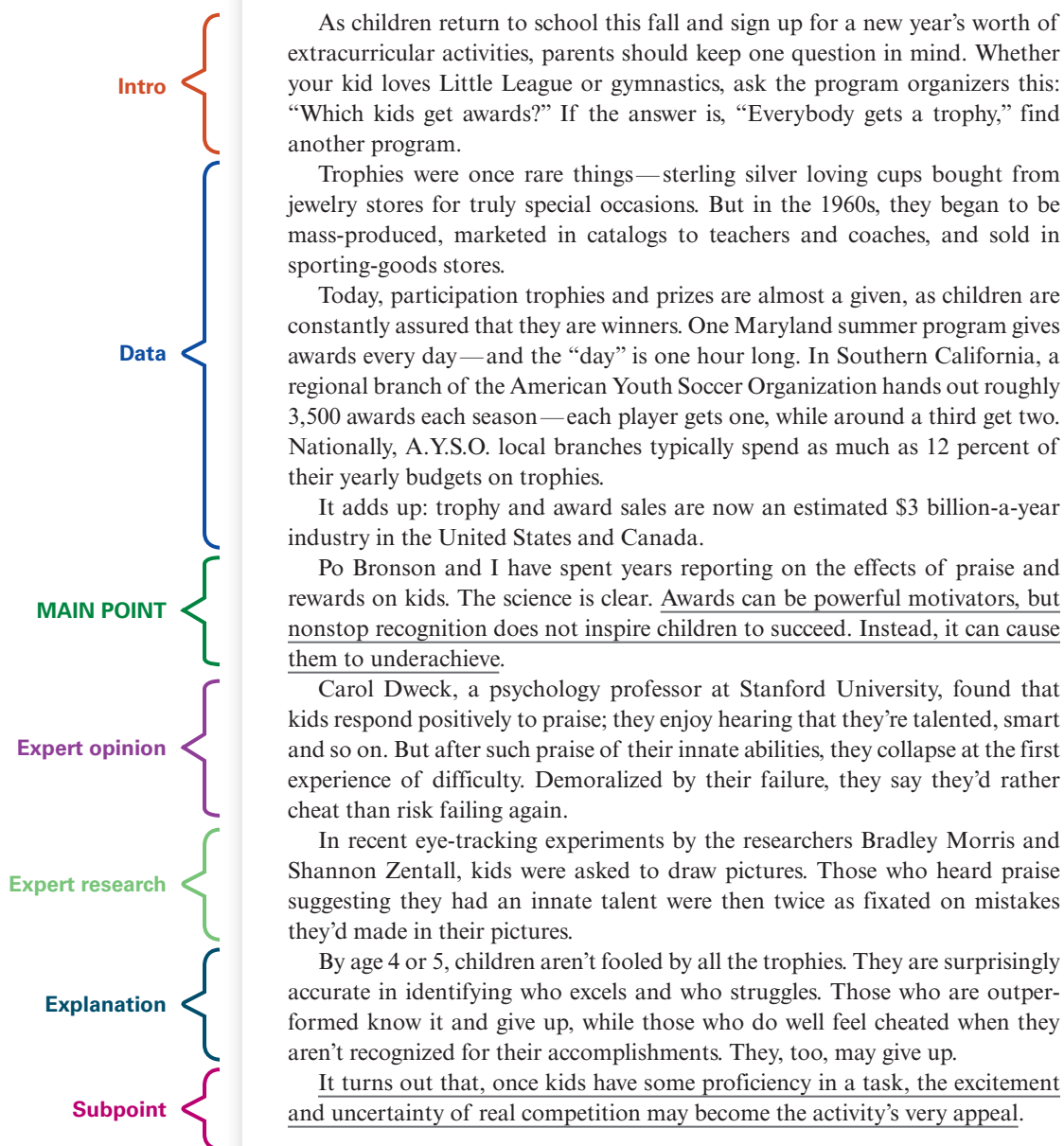
STEP 5: Skim over the text again, checking your draft paraphrases against it. Did you cover all the big ideas? Did you leave anything out? Are you representing the text fairly? Now that you have a good sense of what the article is saying, can you locate the topic sentences you didn’t see before? Can you determine which point is the main point (or thesis), and which ideas serve to develop that main point? Try to underline the thesis and topic sentences, and remember that in a newspaper article like this, some paragraphs will contain only examples.

Before you see how well you identified the main point in “Losing Is Good for You,” let’s try another strategy. Then we’ll look at the points and support together. Don’t peek!

Finding the Support First Can Help You Determine the Main Point Often the support is easier to spot than the main point in a paragraph or an essay, so if you are having trouble finding the main point, start with the support and work backwards to find the main idea. Support is evidence that works to validate the main point. Types of evidence include real or hypothetical examples, details, definitions, data, quotations, expert opinions, research, and explanations. The support of a paragraph or an essay works together to give evidence for *something*, so if you find the support, you can ask yourself what *something* that evidence leads to. Often, through the process of elimination, you can find the topic sentence.

A simple way to do this is to reread the essay and, using a pencil, lightly draw a line through everything that serves as support. So for Merriyman’s article, mark off every quotation, example, and research study she mentions. When you’re done, see what sentences are left, and ask yourself which one is the main idea.

Let's take another look at "Losing Is Good for You," this time with the different types of support and points labeled:



If children know they will automatically get an award, what is the impetus for improvement? Why bother learning problem-solving skills, when there are never obstacles to begin with?

If I were a baseball coach, I would announce at the first meeting that there would be only three awards: Best Overall, Most Improved and Best Sportsmanship. Then I'd hand the kids a list of things they'd have to do to earn one of those trophies. They would know from the get-go that excellence, improvement, character and persistence were valued.

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In life, "you're going to lose more often than you win, even if you're good at something," Ms. Twenge told me. "You've got to get used to that to keep going."

When children make mistakes, our job should not be to spin those losses into decorated victories. Instead, our job is to help kids overcome setbacks, to help them see that progress over time is more important than a particular win or loss, and to help them graciously congratulate the child who succeeded when they failed. To do that, we need to refuse all the meaningless plastic and tin destined for landfills. We have to stop letting the Trophy-Industrial Complex run our children's lives.

This school year, let's fight for a kid's right to lose.

Hypothetical example

Reason

Subpoint

Example

Expert research

Expert opinion

Conclusion restates main point

What do you think? Do you agree that the main point of the article is "Awards can be powerful motivators, but nonstop recognition does not inspire children to succeed. Instead, it can cause them to underachieve"? Does this point encompass all the big ideas in the article? Does it use the key concept words that we identified in the previous strategy? Are you sure it's not a piece of support (an example, a quotation, a research

study)? Did you notice that this main point (or thesis) is actually two sentences? You might have heard that a thesis can only be one sentence, but as we see in this example, many professional writers break that “rule.”

As you read and reread difficult college texts, you will discover that sometimes the first strategy for finding the main point works better, and sometimes the second strategy works better. It depends on the style of writing of the author, as well as your own way of thinking. Neither approach is better, but it is helpful to know how to do both.

practice it 2.3 Identifying Main Point and Support

Using the two strategies outlined on pages 33–38, find the main point and the supporting information in the following paragraph from “The Making of an Expert” (see Chapter 7 for the full article):

The development of expertise requires coaches who are capable of giving constructive, even painful, feedback. Real experts are extremely motivated students who seek out such feedback. They’re also skilled at understanding when and if a coach’s advice doesn’t work for them. The elite performers we studied knew what they were doing right and concentrated on what they were doing wrong. They deliberately picked unsentimental coaches who would challenge them and drive them to higher levels of performance. The best coaches also identify aspects of your performance that will need to be improved at your *next* level of skill. If a coach pushes you too fast, too hard, you will only be frustrated and may even be tempted to give up trying to improve at all.

KWL+ READING STRATEGY

Another reading technique that many students find useful is the KWL+ chart. This is both a pre-reading and a post-reading strategy because you fill out part of the chart before you read and the rest of it while you are reading or after you read. KWL+ stands for:

K = What do I **know** about the topic?

W = What do I **want** to learn about the topic?

L = What did I **learn** from the reading?

+ = What **more** do I want to learn? What questions or concerns do I still have?

Here's an example of a student KWL+ chart about "Losing Is Good for You":

K What do I Know about the topic?	W What do I Want to learn about the topic?	L What did I Learn from the reading?	+ What more do I want to learn?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> From the title, I can guess that the article will discuss losing. I know that everyone loses from time to time. No one is a winner all the time! I have heard that a lot of kids get trophies these days when they play on a sports team. Trophies are an inexpensive way to make a kid feel good. I remember the thrill of getting a trophy when I was a kid — it meant you won; not everyone got one. It seems like more kids play team sports today than when I was a kid. Maybe that's because fewer kids play outdoors in cities and even in suburban neighborhoods. I see a lot of parents coddling their kids. I have also seen some crazy YouTube videos of overbearing sports parents. I think there's even a reality show about it. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> I'd like to know when the idea of giving every kid a trophy started. I expect to learn how losing can be good for you. I want to know what the author is basing this idea on: research or personal experience? I expect the ideas here to be kind of controversial. I hope to learn who Po Bronson is and who Carol Dweck is — they are both mentioned in the article. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Trophies actually cost sports organizations a lot of money — I never thought about how expensive it is when each kid in a whole league gets one! Kids aren't really fooled into thinking they are all winners. They know who the best players and teams are, even if they all get trophies. If all kids get an award, why should they bother to improve? The author connects the widespread trophy-giving to kids with their not trying hard in college or at jobs. Parents should help kids learn to be okay with not winning all the time because that's life. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Are there sports organizations that don't give every kid a trophy? What do most parents think about kids getting participation trophies? How is the author connecting participation trophies for kids and young adult narcissism? Is that based on evidence, or is the author guessing that one leads to the other?

Writing a Summary to Demonstrate Comprehension

As you can tell from the title of this book, we believe that by connecting reading and writing, we learn most effectively. You have already been doing many types of informal writing—jotting down notes, annotating, and reflecting. Now it's time to write a bit more formally and to check your reading comprehension through summary writing. By summarizing a text in writing, you will come to understand its content well.

What exactly is a summary? A summary is an objective, concise restatement of a longer work, written in your own words. A summary is not your review of or response to the text. It does not include your opinions, reflections, or reactions to the topic. Rather, it states as clearly as possible the main ideas of the text in your own words.

A summary can be as brief as a single sentence or as long as several pages. Summary writing is the foundation of a lot of the work you will do in college and beyond. Most often you will be asked to write a one-paragraph summary of a reading or to summarize important concepts on an exam.

Why is summary writing so important to comprehension? Since a summary leaves out the nonessential details and examples and focuses on the main ideas of a reading, it is an excellent way to check reading comprehension. After all, if you don't fully understand the main ideas of a reading, you won't be able to summarize them.

WRITING A ONE-SENTENCE SUMMARY

A one-sentence summary may be short, but it captures the most important aspects of a reading. When writing a one-sentence summary, consider the following questions:

1. What is the topic of the reading?
2. What is the author trying to convey about that topic?
3. What important points or realizations does the author uncover?

Once you are able to think through and answer these questions, you can put it all together in a single sentence of your own words. Here is an example of the process using Ashley Merryman's "Losing Is Good for You":

1. What is the topic of the reading?

Participation trophies

2. What is the author trying to convey about that topic?

They aren't good for kids

3. What important points or realizations does the author uncover?

Treating all kids like winners actually makes them not want to try their best.

One-sentence summary:

Rather than benefiting kids, participation trophies discourage effort and send a message that simply showing up is enough, according to Ashley Merryman's article "Losing Is Good for You."

We can even write a one-sentence summary of much longer works. For instance, here is a one-sentence summary of Suzanne Collins's *The Hunger Games*:

*In *The Hunger Games*, teenage heroine Katniss Everdeen bravely volunteers to compete in place of her younger sister in an annually televised fight-to-the-death competition sponsored by the government as a way of keeping down social rebellion.*

And here is a one-sentence summary of Mary Shelley's novel *Frankenstein*:

Victor Frankenstein attempts to put an end to dying by reanimating a corpse, but he's so disgusted by the creature that he rejects it, which causes the creature to seek revenge.

These sample summaries are brief, but they do cover the entire text and use important terms. Of course, your first attempt at writing a one-sentence summary will need to be edited carefully. Read your sentence several times, preferably out loud, and fix errors in spelling, grammar, punctuation, and word choice. Double-check that you have spelled the author's name and punctuated the title correctly.

practice it 2.4 Writing a One-Sentence Summary

As a group or individually, choose a movie you have recently seen or a book you have recently read and try your hand at writing a one-sentence summary of it. Use the three questions on page 41 to help.

WRITING A SUMMARY PARAGRAPH

A summary paragraph is similar to a one-sentence summary, but it includes more key ideas. Here's an example one-paragraph summary of Merryman's "Losing Is Good for You" article:

The opinion piece "Losing Is Good for You" by Ashley Merryman makes an argument for stopping the practice of giving out trophies to kids for simply participating in a sport. Merryman goes further than merely arguing that this kind of practice is actually damaging to kids. She points out that participation trophies are commonplace in kids' sports programs, and they end up costing those programs a lot of money. Citing her experience with Po Bronson in observing how praise and rewards affect kids, she claims that giving kids awards for just showing up does not motivate them; instead, it causes them to underperform. She gives examples from researchers to support this claim and suggests that since awards are a given, kids won't be motivated to try. Merryman also observes that we should reward kids on an individual basis, like we do with punishments. She makes the connection between participation trophies for kids and a broader cultural attitude of expecting praise or rewards for just being present as adults. She concludes by suggesting that adults need to help kids weather the obstacles and losses that are a part of life and not delude kids into thinking they will always win.

How do you get there? Follow these steps to guide your summary paragraph writing:

STEP 1: Look at your annotations. Look over the annotations that identify the main point of a paragraph or section. Make a list of the main point and all the other important ideas you found. Also review the title and the subtitle, if there is one. Often the title of a reading provides a clue to the overall point or purpose of the text.

STEP 2: Make a list of all the key terms. This will jog your memory about important points and give you some terminology to use in your summary. For instance, for Merryman's article, you might include words like *participation trophy*, *praise*, and *persistence*. This list is not complete, so go ahead and add other key concept words that you believe are important.

STEP 3: Draft a list of the main point and subpoints. In your own words, write down a sentence or two that states the main idea of the text. Once you have something written down, look back at the text to see how well you got the author's main idea across. It might take several attempts before you capture it accurately.

TIP

If you skipped annotating for any reason, you will quickly discover how difficult it is to write a summary without a thorough understanding of the reading. You'll have to go back and reread the text, annotating carefully. Get help from an instructor or a friend if you don't understand the material after several attempts to master it.

Read your summary over several times to make sure you have included all the main points, left out details and examples, and put the author's ideas in your own words. Check to be sure you haven't included your thoughts or opinions. Add and delete as needed until you feel confident about your summary paragraph.

STEP 4: Write an introductory sentence. The first sentence of a summary paragraph should include the author's full name, the full title of the work, and a general introductory statement about the text you are summarizing. The general statement might be the purpose of the text or the intention of the author in writing it. Here's an example introductory sentence for a summary paragraph of "Losing Is Good for You."

In her article "Losing Is Good for You," Ashley Merryman discusses the impact of giving all kids participation trophies in sports rather than singling out the very best.

STEP 5: Reread and revise. Read over and revise your summary a few more times so that it reads smoothly and makes sense and is entirely in your own words. Try reading it out loud, too, to catch any errors you might have made. Realize that everyone will summarize a reading slightly differently, though all summaries should include the same major points. One of the biggest errors in summary writing is not staying objective, so watch for that as you revise. Be on the lookout for places where you may have included something like "Author X is right when she says . . ." or "I agree; the author makes a good point." This kind of commentary seems innocent enough, but because your opinion is not in the original text, it doesn't belong in the summary.

practice it 2.5 Writing a One-Paragraph Summary

Follow the preceding steps and write a one-paragraph summary of one of the readings in Part 3 of this book. Be sure to give yourself enough time to preview the text, read and annotate it, reread it, and identify the main points and subpoints.

summary checklist

- ☐ Does the summary include the full name of the text and the full name of the author?
- ☐ Is the summary an objective statement of the author's ideas, rather than a subjective response (your opinions, thoughts, or feelings)? Remember, you shouldn't use "I" in a summary.

- ☐ Does the summary have an introductory sentence that states the purpose or the main idea of the text in your own words?
- ☐ Does the summary use the vocabulary words and key concepts from the text?
- ☐ Does the summary include all the major points of the reading? Is it missing any important points? What more should be included?
- ☐ Does the summary go into too much detail anywhere? What could be cut?
- ☐ Does the paragraph feel coherent and finished? How might you make it better?

Readings on Success and Happiness

Despite our nation's vast wealth and resources, most Americans report feeling more stressed and less happy than they did a generation ago. Study after study proves that money doesn't buy happiness after one's basic needs are met, yet many people still believe that having just one more thing will make them happy, or that they need one more thing to be perceived as successful by others. The readings that follow offer different perspectives and invite you to consider your own definitions of success and happiness.

For each reading, we offer a Model Reading Strategy to help you practice some of the strategies you have learned so far.

MAGAZINE ARTICLE

model reading strategy: Defining Vocabulary

The following article includes several words you will probably need to define. However, you can probably define many of them through context clues rather than by using a dictionary. Try to use context clues to define the words highlighted in yellow, and use a dictionary to define the words highlighted in green. Write the definitions in the margin as you read.

cc = Look for context clues.

d = Use a dictionary.

► For more about using context clues and dictionaries, see Chapter 5.

The article is from the magazine *Harvard Business Review*. Although it was originally published in 2012, the advice it offers is timeless. The author, Shawn Achor, has written several books on happiness. He teaches management at the prestigious Wharton Business School, lectures extensively around the world, and creates content for online personal development training tools. His work, which focuses on the connection between success and happiness,

draws on his background in business management as well as his advanced studies in Christian and Buddhist ethics. The article, “Positive Intelligence,” serves as a good introduction to Achor’s research.

practice it 2.6 Pre-Reading Activity

Make a list of all the things you think you need to achieve in order to consider yourself successful. Then make a list of all the things you think you need to be happy. Compare lists. Also, if you didn’t do so earlier, make sure to preview the text before you begin reading it, and don’t forget to annotate it as you read.

SHAWN ACHOR

Positive Intelligence

Three ways individuals can cultivate their own sense of well-being and set themselves up to succeed

(cc) pester:

In July 2010 Burt’s Bees, a personal-care products company, was undergoing enormous change as it began a global expansion into 19 new countries. In this kind of high-pressure situation, many leaders **pester** their deputies with frequent meetings or flood their in-boxes with urgent demands. In doing so, managers jack up everyone’s anxiety level, which activates the portion of the brain that processes threats—the **amygdala**—and steals resources from the **prefrontal cortex**, which is responsible for effective problem solving.

(cc) amygdala:

(cc) prefrontal cortex:

Burt’s Bees’s then-CEO, John Replegle, took a different tack. Each day, he’d send out an e-mail praising a team member for work related to the global rollout. He’d interrupt his own presentations on the launch to remind his managers to talk with their teams about the company’s values. He asked me to facilitate a three-hour session with employees on happiness in the midst of the expansion effort. As one member of the senior team told me a year later, Replegle’s emphasis on fostering positive leadership kept his managers engaged and cohesive as they successfully made the transition to a global company.

(cc) precedes:

That outcome shouldn’t surprise us. Research shows that when people work with a positive mind-set, performance on nearly every level—productivity, creativity, engagement—improves. Yet happiness is perhaps the most misunderstood driver of performance. For one, most people believe that success **precedes** happiness. “Once I get a promotion, I’ll be happy,” they think. Or,

“Once I hit my sales target, I’ll feel great.” But because success is a moving target—as soon as you hit your target, you raise it again—the happiness that results from success is **fleeting**.

In fact, it works the other way around: People who **cultivate** a positive mind-set perform better in the face of challenge. I call this the “happiness advantage”—every business outcome shows improvement when the brain is positive. I’ve observed this effect in my role as a researcher and lecturer in 48 countries on the connection between employee happiness and success. And I’m not alone: In a **meta-analysis** of 225 academic studies, researchers Sonja Lyubomirsky, Laura King, and Ed Diener found strong evidence of **directional causality** between life satisfaction and successful business outcomes.

Another common misconception is that our genetics, our environment, or a combination of the two determines how happy we are. To be sure, both factors have an impact. But one’s general sense of well-being is surprisingly **malleable**. The habits you cultivate, the way you interact with coworkers, how you think about stress—all these can be managed to increase your happiness and your chances of success.

Develop New Habits

Training your brain to be positive is not so different from training your muscles at the gym. Recent research on **neuroplasticity**—the ability of the brain to change even in adulthood—reveals that as you develop new habits, you rewire the brain.

Engaging in one brief positive exercise every day for as little as three weeks can have a lasting impact, my research suggests. For instance, in December 2008, just before the worst tax season in decades, I worked with tax managers at KPMG in New York and New Jersey to see if I could help them become happier. (I am an optimistic person, clearly.) I asked them to choose one of five activities that **correlate** with positive change:

- Jot down three things they were grateful for.
- Write a positive message to someone in their social support network.
- Meditate at their desk for two minutes.
- Exercise for 10 minutes.
- Take two minutes to describe in a journal the most meaningful experience of the past 24 hours.

The participants performed their activity every day for three weeks. Several days after the training concluded, we evaluated both the participants and a control group to determine their general sense of well-being. How engaged were they? Were they depressed? On every **metric**, the experimental group’s scores were significantly higher than the control group’s. When we tested both groups again, four months later, the experimental group still showed significantly higher scores in optimism and life satisfaction. In fact, participants’ mean score on the life satisfaction scale—a metric widely accepted

(d) **fleeting**:

(d) **cultivate**:

(d) **meta-analysis**:

(d) **directional causality**:

(d) **malleable**:

(cc) **neuroplasticity**:

(d) **correlate**:

(d) **metric (noun)**:

Happiness and the Bottom Line

For companies, happy employees mean better bottom-line results. Employees who score low in “life satisfaction,” a rigorously tested and widely accepted metric, stay home an average of 1.25 more days a month, a 2008 study by Gallup Healthways shows. That translates into a decrease in productivity of 15 days a year.

In a study of service departments, Jennifer George and Kenneth Bettenhausen found that employees who score high in life satisfaction are significantly more likely to receive high ratings from customers. In addition, researchers at Gallup found that retail stores that scored higher on employee life satisfaction generated \$21 more in earnings per square foot of space than the other stores, adding \$32 million in additional profits for the whole chain.

to be one of the greatest predictors of productivity and happiness at work—moved from 22.96 on a 35-point scale before the training to 27.23 four months later, a significant increase. Just one quick exercise a day kept these tax managers happier for months after the training program had ended. Happiness had become habitual. (See the sidebar “Happiness and the Bottom Line.”)

Help Your Coworkers

Of the five activities described above, the most effective may be engaging positively with people in your social support network. Strong social support correlates with an astonishing number of desirable outcomes. For instance, research by Julianne Holt-Lunstad, Timothy Smith, and Bradley Layton shows that high levels of social support predict **longevity** as reliably as regular exercise does, and low social support is as damaging as high blood pressure.

The benefits of social support are not just physical. In a study of 1,648 students at Harvard that I conducted with Phil Stone and Tal Ben-Shahar, we found that social support was the greatest predictor of happiness during periods of high stress. In fact, the correlation between happiness and Zimet’s social support scale (the academic measure we used to assess students’ positive engagement with their social networks) was a whopping .71—for comparison, the correlation between smoking and cancer is .37.

That study focused on how much social support the students *received*. But in follow-on research I conducted in March 2011, I found that even more important to sustained happiness and engagement was the amount of social support the students *provided*. For example, how often does a student help others when they are overwhelmed with work? How often does he initiate social interactions on the job? Social support providers—people who picked up slack for others, invited coworkers to lunch, and organized office activities—were not only 10 times more likely to be engaged at work than those who kept to themselves; they were 40 percent more likely to get a promotion.

(d) longevity:

10

How does social support work in practice as a tool for employee happiness? Ochsner Health System, a large health care provider that I work with, uses an approach it calls the “10/5 Way” to increase social support among employees and patients. We educated 11,000 employees, leaders, and physicians about the impact of social support on the patient experience, and asked them to **modify** their behavior. When employees walk within 10 feet of another person in the hospital, they must make eye contact and smile. When they walk within 5 feet, they must say hello. Since the introduction of 10/5, Ochsner has experienced an increase in unique patient visits, a 5 percent increase in patients’ likelihood to recommend the organization, and a significant improvement in medical-practice provider scores. Social support appears to lead to not only happier employees but also more-satisfied clients.

Change Your Relationship with Stress

Stress is another central factor contributing to people’s happiness at work. Many companies offer training on how to **mitigate** stress, focusing on its negative health effects. The problem is, people then get stressed-out about being stressed-out.

It’s important to remember that stress has an upside. When I was working with Pfizer in February 2011, I asked senior managers to list the five experiences that most shaped who they are today. Nearly all the experiences they wrote down involved great stress—after all, few people grow on vacation. Pick any biography and you’ll see the same thing: Stress is not just an obstacle to growth; it can be the fuel for it.

Your attitude toward stress can dramatically change how it affects you. In a study Alia Crum, Peter Salovey, and I conducted at UBS in the midst of the banking crisis and massive restructuring, we asked managers to watch one of two videos, the first depicting stress as **debilitating** to performance and the second detailing the ways in which stress enhances the human brain and body. When we evaluated the employees six weeks later, we found that the individuals who had viewed the “enhancing” video scored higher on the Stress Mindset Scale—that is, they saw stress as enhancing, rather than diminishing, their performance. And those participants experienced a significant drop in health problems and a significant increase in happiness at work.

Stress is an inevitable part of work. The next time you’re feeling overwhelmed, try this exercise: Make a list of the stresses you’re under. Place them into two groups—the ones you can control (like a project or your in-box) and those you can’t (the stock market, housing prices). Choose one stress that you can control and come up with a small, concrete step you can take to reduce it. In this way you can nudge your brain back to a positive—and productive—mind-set.

It’s clear that increasing your happiness improves your chances of success. Developing new habits, nurturing your coworkers, and thinking positively about stress are good ways to start.

(cc) modify:

(d) mitigate:

(cc) debilitating:

After you have finished reading the article, take a few moments to skim it over again for the main ideas before you proceed to the activities that follow.

VOCABULARY ACTIVITY

A lexicon is a group of words that are associated with a particular field. As you continue in college, you will begin to develop a lexicon in your selected major or career path. Look over this article, and make a list of all the words and phrases that have to do with the business field. For example, the phrase “global rollout” in the second paragraph is a specific term used by businesspeople to describe the process of expanding a company or product internationally. Define each term you list in the lexicon, either from your own knowledge and experience or by looking it up in a dictionary or an online business reference, such as Businessdictionary.com.

COMPREHENSION QUESTIONS

1. Achor calls happiness “perhaps the most misunderstood driver of performance” (para. 3). In what ways is happiness misunderstood? How does happiness, in Achor’s view, relate to performance?
2. Achor says that while genetics may play a role, “one’s general sense of well-being is surprisingly malleable” (para. 5). What does this mean? Can you give a specific example from your own

observations or experience to illustrate this malleability?

3. What experiment did Achor conduct on tax managers? What was the outcome of this experiment?
4. What has Achor learned from his research on students?
5. What is the difference between seeing stress as “debilitating” and seeing it as “enhancing”?

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. We might simplify one of Achor’s main points like this: Happiness creates success, not the other way around. While this sounds simple, it is actually a rather difficult idea to live by. First, do you agree with Achor’s point? Why or why not? Second, if you do agree, what might you need to change to live by this idea?
2. Near the end of the article, Achor suggests a method for rethinking one’s relationship to stress (para. 16). How effective do you think this might be? What other ways can you think of to reframe your school stress from “debilitating” to “enhancing”?
3. If you could have Achor as a college mentor, what would you want to ask him? Why?

practice it 2.7 Post-Reading Activity

Once you have gathered some ideas about the article “Positive Intelligence,” try your hand at writing an informal response. Begin by jotting down your gut-level reaction to the article. Do you agree or disagree? Do you think Achor is positively brilliant? Positively wrong? Somewhere in between? Then take a step back and ask yourself, “Why do I feel or think this way?” “What parts of the article make you convinced or not convinced of what he has to say?” “How might you apply some of his ideas to your own life?”

SPEECH

model reading strategy: Annotating Thoughts and Reactions

The questions in the margin of this reading prompt you to annotate the text with your own thoughts and reactions, as you learned on pages 30–33. Pause to think about the questions and write your answers as you read.

Matt de la Peña is an author of books for children and young adults. In 2016, he won the Newbery Medal—the most prestigious award in children’s fiction—for his picture book *Last Stop on Market Street*. His acceptance speech is transcribed below as it was published on the website of the Association for Library Service to Children, the division of the American Library Association that administers the award. As a speech, this text is much less formal than an academic essay or even a magazine article. Still, it touches on very profound issues that you might explore in a college class.

practice it 2.8 Pre-Reading Activity

Sometimes we will read something about a very fresh topic. In these cases, it can be helpful to have some background knowledge—also called *schema*—before you begin. Take about five minutes before you read this speech to familiarize yourself with some of Matt de la Peña’s books by looking them up on the Goodreads website. And if you didn’t do so earlier, make sure to preview the text before you begin reading it, and don’t forget to annotate it as you read.

MATT DE LA PEÑA

Newbery Medal Acceptance Speech

“I had never known, never even imagined for a heartbeat, that there might be a place for people like us.”

This is the last line of Denis Johnson’s short story collection *Jesus’ Son*, and it describes perfectly the way I felt way back in 2003 when I was informed that my first novel, *Ball Don’t Lie*, was going to be published by Random House. It describes the way I feel tonight, too, over a decade later, as I stand here among you all.

All dressed up and a fresh haircut.
A seat at the table.

How do you feel
when you read
Johnson’s quote?

What's your reaction to Matt's family?

Do you know anyone like Mrs. Frank?

Growing up, I never could've imagined anything like this. Me and books? Reading? Nah, man, I was a working-class kid. A half-Mexican hoop head. I spent all my afterschool hours playing ball down at the local pick-up spot off Birmingham. I dreamed of pretty girls and finger rolls over outstretched hands.

But age has a way of giving a guy perspective.

Turns out I was wrong.

Turns out I've been a reader all along.

Maybe I didn't have my nose in a novel, but I read my old man's long silences when the two of us sat in freeway traffic in his beat-up old VW bug. I read the way he pulled himself out of bed at 3:30 every morning to get ready for work. How he never took a sick day. I read my mom's endless worry about the bills. About the empty fridge. But I also read the way she looked at me and my two sisters. Like we were special. Like we could make something of our lives. I read the pick-up politics at Muni Gym in Balboa Park. How the best players assumed a CEO-like power the second they laced up their kicks and called out to the crowd, "Check ball." And I read how these same men were stripped of this power as soon as the games died down and they set foot outside the gym, out of their domain and back into yours.

I didn't read past page twenty-seven of *The Catcher in the Rye*, but I read *Basketball Digest* cover to cover. Every single month. I'd show up at my junior high library an hour before school, find an empty table in back, and tuck the latest issue inside the covers of the most high-brow book I could find—usually some Russian novel with a grip of names I couldn't pronounce. Mrs. Frank, the warm-smiling librarian, would occasionally stroll past my table and say, "War and Peace, huh? How are you liking that one so far?"

"Oh, it's great, miss," I'd tell her. "I really like all the wars and stuff. And how it eventually turns peaceful." She'd grin and nod and move on to the next table. I'd grin, too, marveling at my own slick ways. But then a few days later she'd confuse me by sliding the newest *Basketball Digest* across the table to me with a wink.

Back then I never would've described myself as a reader, but Mrs. Frank knew better. And the truth is, I wasn't reading those magazines for stats or standings, I was reading to find out what certain players had to overcome to get where they were. I was in it for the narrative. And what I found in some of the better articles wasn't that inferior to what I would later discover when I read *War and Peace* for real.

Over the past ten years I've visited hundreds of schools and met tens of thousands of young people. And so many of them are just like that old version of me. Self-defined nonreaders who spend all day reading the world. My mission as an author is to help a few of them translate those skills to the written word. It didn't happen for me until college, when I was introduced to books like *The Color Purple*, *Their Eyes Were Watching God*,

One Hundred Years of Solitude, *Drown* by Junot Díaz. When I finally fell for literature, I fell hard.

But what if I can nudge a few of these kids toward the magic of books at a younger age? What if I can write a story that offers that tough, hoodied kid in the back of the auditorium a secret place to feel?

"I had never known, never even imagined for a heartbeat, that there might be a place for people like us."

• • •

Unfortunately, we don't always get that far. Sometimes we have to back up and address something much more basic and urgent. "Hey, mister," I've heard time and time again, always from kids at the poorer schools, "why would you come *here*?"

The subtext is obvious.

This school is not worthy of your time.

We are not worthy of your time.

When I sat down to write the text of *Last Stop on Market Street*, this troubling mind-set was rattling around in my brain. Nana, the wise grandma in the book, is urging CJ to see the beauty of his surroundings, yes, but she's also steering him toward something much more fundamental. She's teaching CJ to see *himself* as beautiful. To see himself as worthy. "Sometimes when you're surrounded by dirt, CJ, you're a better witness for what's beautiful."

And sometimes when you grow up outside the reach of the American Dream, you're in a better position to record the truth. That we don't all operate under the same set of rules. That our stories aren't all assigned the same value in the eyes of decision makers.

There was something else on my mind when I wrote *Last Stop*. Up to that point, I'd published a handful of literary urban novels that tackled race and class head-on. I was proud to see the books carve out a real presence in schools with diverse populations. But when I visited the more affluent schools, the private schools, my books were harder to find. Either they were set aside on the "Diverse Books" shelf, or they weren't there at all. This frustrated me. And why was it so common for me to see a class full of Mexican kids reading *The Great Gatsby* when I almost never saw a class of white kids reading *Yaqui Delgado Wants to Kick Your Ass*?

Sometimes I was part of the problem, too.

Once a librarian invited me to visit her school, saying, "I'm so excited, Matt. You're going to be my Mexican author."

I cringed and told her, "Actually, ma'am, most of my books are about not feeling Mexican *enough*."

She ignored me, saying, "We just received a very generous grant from the district. We're prepared to offer you double your current honorarium."

Do you agree or disagree? Why?

How do you feel about Matt at this moment?

"Like I was just telling you, ma'am," I fired back. "I'm your Mexican author."

A few years later I had a much more troubling exchange. At one of the big national conferences, a librarian approached me outside an event space and excitedly introduced herself. "I want you to know," she told me, "that I really like your books. I mean, we don't have those kinds of kids at our school, so we don't stock many of them, but I want you to know how much I appreciate your work."

"No, I totally get it, ma'am," I said. "Out of curiosity, though, how many wizards do you have at your school?" (Shout out to Tim Federle!)

• • •

With *Last Stop* I set out to try something new. I tried to write a book featuring diverse characters in a storyline that wasn't focused (at least overtly) on diversity. When I finished the seventieth draft of the text, I was proud of CJ's journey, both inside and out. And I was proud of the music of the language. But it wasn't until I saw the words transposed over Christian Robinson's soulful and whimsical art that I first wondered—secretly, of course—if we might've made something special.

But I never imagined anything like the morning of January 11.

30

I was in Minneapolis that week, teaching at Hamline University—with Printz winner Laura Ruby, coincidentally. I had stayed up until 2:30 a.m., finishing up my next YA novel. It felt amazing to send the manuscript off to my editor. I could finally rest. Before I went to sleep, I set my phone next to my bed and turned on my ringer. There was a little buzz that *Last Stop* might have a shot at some kind of Caldecott recognition. I knew the committee wouldn't call me, but Christian and I have the same agent, Steve Malk, and I thought he might call if there was any exciting news.

An hour later the phone rang.

But it wasn't Steve.

The man on the line said, "Hi, Matt? My name is Ernie Cox, and I'm calling on behalf of the Newbery committee. We have some news." I remember thinking, This guy must've been out all night drinking. He said the wrong committee name. I remember sitting up and pressing the phone closer to my ear. "Your book *Last Stop on Market Street*," he went on, "has been awarded the 2016 John Newbery Medal." A chorus of committee members cheered behind him.

At first I was just really, really confused.

35

And then I was overwhelmed.

Before that morning, I hadn't cried since I was thirteen years old. Sadly, that's not an exaggeration. But in the middle of that short conversation with Ernie Cox and the rest of the committee, the streak was

Can you identify with his feelings about writing?



Joshua Lott/The New York Times/Redux

Matt de la Peña speaks to students at a high school in Tucson, Arizona.

broken. Warm tears rolled down my cheeks. Not because I felt happy — though I definitely felt happy — but because I felt like I'd been forgiven for all my shortcomings as a writer. This job can be a lonely, lonely ride. And there are moments when it's nearly impossible to maintain a belief in yourself. Ninety-nine percent of the time the words don't seem quite good enough. Or the characters don't seem quite real enough. Or worst of all, you don't feel quite talented enough. At the end of every single work day, I find myself muttering the same two sentences, over and over. "I should have accomplished more today. I should have been better." But on the morning of January 11, these people on the phone were telling me I had done something good. Something worthy.

I couldn't speak for a long stretch of time. I was too busy trying to understand.

"Matt?" Ernie said. "Are you still there?"

As soon as we hung up, I called my wife. "Caroline," I said, in an even voice, "I have something I need to tell you." I paused for a long time, trying to keep myself in check. Like I have all my life.

"What?" she said. "Is everything okay?"

"I think *Last Stop* just won the Newbery [instead of the Caldecott]."

She paused. "Wait, are you sure?"

"No," I answered.

40

Who would you
thank for a big
accomplishment?

She fired up her iPad and went onto the ALA website and looked up the 2016 award committees and asked me, “Okay, was it a man or woman on the phone?” 45

“A man.”

“Holy shit,” she said. “The chair of the Caldecott is a woman.”

• • •

There are so many people I want to acknowledge.

First and foremost, I want to thank Christian Robinson. *Last Stop on Market Street* is a picture book, and I’ve always believed that your brilliant illustrations are what make this book what it is. You are a special person, Christian. And your Nana is a special woman. I’m honored to have made this story with you.

Steven Malk. I stand by what I said way back in January. You are the Steve Nash of children’s books. Not only are you the one who paired Christian and me together, you’re the one who suggested I try my hand at picture books in the first place. I was a brand-new novelist, and you saw something that might work in a picture book text. My first thought was, This guy’s out of his mind. But it turns out you weren’t. I’m so proud to be on your squad. 50

Jennifer Besser. Thank you for taking a chance on publishing this book and for fighting behind the scenes to keep CJ’s dialogue authentic. You understood from the beginning that CJ would switch codes if he was at school. But he wasn’t at school. He was with his Nana on the bus.

Cecilia Yung and Lauren Donovan. Thank you for being the very first champions of CJ’s story. Cecilia, I’ll never forget the two-hour conversation we had about *Last Stop* in L.A., back when the book was nothing more than a single-spaced, spoken word poem. Your art direction is brilliant. Lauren, you are a publicity magician (and I kind of know about that stuff). I think you’re both amazingly talented and generous, and I want to do all my picture books with you.

To the entire Penguin school and library department—especially Carmela Iaria, Venessa Carson, and Alexis Watts. I can’t begin to explain how much your support has meant to Christian and me over the past year. Thank you for all your hard work behind the scenes. Also, I just like hanging out with you guys.

To everyone else at Penguin who touched this book in any way. I know it takes an army to give a book a life. I am incredibly grateful to each and every one of you.

To the librarians out there who work tirelessly to put good books into the hands of young people. Thank you for your gift. I’m fully aware that it is because of your profound support that I have a career. 55

To my family. The de la Peñas. Mom, you’re the reason I try hard at life. Thank you for allowing me to run every single draft of this book past you. Turns out your feedback was Newbery-worthy. Dad, thank you for teaching me

the world. I've told the story of your late turn toward literature a number of times. I bet twenty percent of the people here tonight know your story. What they don't know is that I drew on your quiet wisdom when I wrote Nana's dialogue.

Caroline. My wife. My best friend. I want you to know that I *see* you. I've been on the road a lot the past couple years. And when I'm home I've been on deadline. You've been amazing through it all. Not to mention the fact that you have a full-time job of your own. I see you. And I love you. And there's nothing I'm more proud of than the life we're making together.

To my two-year-old daughter Luna, who's back in our hotel room right now, sleeping. At least in theory. Thank you for giving me such incredible joy. You make my heart beat with such purpose. I love you, little girl.

And finally, to the 2016 John Newbery committee. I am humbled beyond belief by this mind-blowing honor. What makes me especially proud is the thought of all the diverse readers out there who desperately need to see themselves in books. I want to tell you about two of them right now.

• • •

The first is a girl I met at a really rough high school in Newark, New Jersey. An organization called My Very Own Library donated one hundred of my books to students, and at the end of the presentation, the kids got in line to have them signed. One African American girl—frizzy braids, dirty jeans, messed-up teeth like mine—took her signed copy and looked at it and then looked at me and said: "Ain't you gonna ask for MY autograph, mister?"

Her girls laughed and laughed and one of them said: "Now why's he gonna want your autograph, dum-dum? You ain't famous!"

Normally I would have laughed right along with them.

But I saw her face.

Instead I handed this girl my Sharpie and held out the inside of my forearm and told her: "Hell yeah, I want your autograph. I don't have paper, but you can just sign your name right here, on my skin."

Because maybe that's the kind of audacity it takes to be someone when you come from nothing. And maybe that's the kind of audacity we need to assume in the book world in order to finally give young people hero choices that reflect our current population.

And finally, I want to tell you about a kid I met in Virginia last year. I had just presented to his entire elementary school, in the auditorium. I read *Last Stop* and told them a few secrets about the book, but before I said goodbye, I explained that I wanted to give away my own copy of the book. The whole time I was talking, I'd been watching them, and there was this one kid I needed to give the book to. I walked up into the crowd and handed it to a boy who was sitting sort of off on his own. He took the book and everyone clapped and I said goodbye.

What do you think of this girl?

What do you think of these kids?

As I was leaving the school about fifteen minutes later, a few kids came and gathered around me. They wanted to talk. And suddenly the boy I'd given the book to appeared. He was still clutching it in his hands. "Mister," he said in a quiet voice, "why'd you give it to *me*?" I shrugged and told him, "I'm not really sure, to be honest. I just . . . I think there might be something really special about you."

And then something powerful happened. He began to cry. And the other kids began rubbing his shoulders and patting him on the back and someone told me, "He just moved here. He's new."

As I walked out into the parking lot, to my rental car, I kept thinking about that boy. And his tears. And how tightly he was holding on to the book. I didn't know what any of it meant, but I knew it was significant.

Then in January you guys called and told me about the Newbery, and I *became* that boy. Why had you picked me? I kept wondering. I didn't understand. And did I really deserve it? And then so many of my peers reached out after the news was announced to rub my shoulders and pat my back. After a few weeks I realized I would never truly understand what any of it means. It will forever remain a beautiful mystery. A significant one.

"I had never known, never even imagined for a heartbeat, that there might be a place for people like us."

Thank you from the bottom of my heart.

VOCABULARY ACTIVITIES

1. In this speech, de la Peña is clearly speaking to insiders of the publishing world, so he makes reference to many unfamiliar people and publications. Mark all the references you don't immediately understand, then do a quick internet search on them to help you with your understanding.
2. In de la Peña's speech, the words *read* and *reader* take on special importance. What are all the connotations, or shades of meaning, of these words? What does de la Peña mean when he says he was "a reader all along" (para. 7) or that he "read [his] old man's long silences" (para. 8)? Think of a time you have read something other than a piece of writing. Describe it and explain what skills you had to have in order to do that type of reading.

COMPREHENSION QUESTIONS

1. What is *The Catcher in the Rye*, and why is it significant that de la Peña didn't read much of it?
2. What does de la Peña mean when he says "The subtext is obvious" (para. 16)?
3. What makes de la Peña give the boy his book (paras. 66–69)?

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Why does de la Peña focus on librarians as much as he does? What role might librarians play in a child's reading life? How is a librarian different from a regular teacher or even a parent?
2. What is de la Peña's attitude toward diversity as a subject in children's literature? How does he seem to feel when the librarian says "'You're going to be my Mexican author'" (para. 23)?

3. Since it is a speech transcript, this text has more informal sentence structure. For instance, he starts many sentences with the word *and*, and he includes many sentence fragments for effect. Does this informal style help you to hear his voice? Based on this voice, how would you describe de la Peña as a person?
4. Matt de la Peña is part of a larger group of writers who advocate for greater diversity in children's literature and young adult literature. What might Americans gain from more diverse children's and young adult literature?

practice it 2.9 Post-Reading Activity

Take a few minutes to expand on your pre-reading annotations. In your notebook, write about your reaction to de la Peña's speech. If you had a chance to talk to him, what would you ask, and why? Try to generate at least five questions that you would ask him if given a chance.

BOOK EXCERPT

model reading strategy: Annotating for Comprehension

The notes in the margin of this reading prompt you to pause and restate main ideas in your own words, as you learned to do on pages 30–33. Fill in the bubbles as you read to check your comprehension. The first bubble has been filled in for you as an example.

Misty Copeland is widely known as the first African American woman to be named a principal dancer for the American Ballet Theatre. She did not begin dancing until she was thirteen years old but was almost immediately recognized as a prodigy. Her autobiography, *Life in Motion: An Unlikely Ballerina*, was published in 2014. The following reading selection is the prologue to that book, in which Copeland describes her thought process as she prepares to dance the leading role of a magical bird in Stravinsky's ballet *The Firebird*. If you are unfamiliar with ballet, you might pre-read by watching a video of Copeland in the role on YouTube.

practice it 2.10 Pre-Reading Activity

Sometimes you need guidance from an expert to know where to even begin when encountering a new topic. For some readers, ballet is a long way from their area of expertise. Other readers might be passionate about dance or may know of Misty Copeland because of her work with African American children. Before reading this piece, take a few moments to create a KWL+ chart for it, and fill out the "K" and "W" columns. (See pp. 38–40 for a model.) Make sure to preview the text before you begin reading it, and don't forget to annotate as you read.

Misty Copeland

PROLOGUE TO *LIFE IN MOTION:* *AN UNLIKELY BALLERINA*



ANDREA MOHIN/The New York Times/Redux

This ordinary morning
is the start to an
extraordinary day.

It's morning. Eight a.m., to be exact. My alarm goes off for no more than five seconds before I sit up to stop the nagging sound.

As I stretch my arms, I realize how achy my body is. Still, it's a wonderful aching every dancer knows.

As many busy New Yorkers do, I click a few buttons on my computer and order my morning coffee—black, no sugar—and blueberry muffin from the corner deli to be delivered to the door of my Upper West Side apartment. Class starts at ten thirty at the Met.

The ordinary rituals of my day belie what will be an extraordinary evening. I'm eager for this day to start so that, later, I can rise again, this time on the stage of the Metropolitan Opera House.

Tonight, I will become the first black woman to star in Igor Stravinsky's iconic role for American Ballet Theatre, one of the most prestigious dance companies in the world.

As the Firebird.

This is for the little brown girls.

My barre warm-up this morning would be familiar to any ballet dancer, whether she's an apprentice in Moscow or a seven-year-old taking his first ballet class in Detroit. It's slow structured yet fragmentary—perfectly designed to bring me to center, where I can dance freely without the barre, each motion a broken-down version of what tonight's solos will be. I start with *pliés*, increasingly deeper bends of the knee which warm up my legs while still allowing them the support that they need. I transition to larger movements of the leg, circling them in my *ronds de jambe*, and bending them in *fondus*, gradually stretching my hips and knees. I finish with a *port de bras*, stretching my torso forward and from side to side.

I move to center, where each aerobic exercise moves more fluidly to the next without the barre's strictures. I know that each graceful *glissade*—where I jump in first position with both legs flicking to a dagger before closing into fifth—stems from that disengaged brush of the leg where my foot leaves the floor, which stems from a *tendu*, a single pointed toe that I've extended while maintaining contact with the floor.

Ballets are just stylized versions of these seemingly basic movements on a grand scale. If the basic strength and elegance of a barre class is like slipping on a little black dress, the challenge of dancing a full three-act ballet is like learning to accessorize for any occasion. I have to think about whether I want to add sass or longing or, as I will tonight, the exotic, otherworldly energy of the mythical Firebird.

You have to know the appropriate way to adorn each story and character with your body. *Sleeping Beauty*, for example, is very elegant and regal; its movements are fluid, with few accents. There are certain ways you have to hold your torso, position your head, and use your arms as a certain character that can differ from what I rehearse in class. The difference between being an amazing technician and being a soloist or principal is mastering those interpretive flourishes to tell the best story. Otherwise you aren't a ballerina—you're just another dancer.

No matter how old you are or how long you've been dancing, ballet professionals know that we have to repeat these steps in class every day to maintain the strength and the clean positioning that's so essential to dancers. I'm constantly working on my technique. Even a single day off can cause my muscles to forget what my mind knows by heart. I take class seven days a week, even though the company only works five days each week.

I know that I'll never perfect the ballet technique—ever. That's why I love it so much. It never becomes boring, even though I've done all these movements in this very studio a million times over thirteen

Restate main idea:

Restate main idea:

Restate main idea:

years. It's my safe place, where I can experiment. I sweat, grunt, and make faces that would never pass on the Metropolitan Opera House stage. It's the time to push myself beyond my limits so that my performances can feel effortless, fresh.

Not everyone wants to push themselves to that brink of breaking, but it's what you commit to when you're a professional—the very present reality that you may break instead of bend.

Today, I don't jump. My left shin has been hurting, and I don't want 15 to risk straining it before tonight's performance.

I have always been known as a jumper, able to soar to great heights and land like a feather on the stage. The Firebird flutters and flies. But it has been difficult to practice her grand jumps the past several weeks. The pain in my leg has been intense, and I've had to save every bit of my strength for the actual performances.

By now, I am as familiar with the feral gestures of the Firebird as I am with my own breath, my own heartbeat. American Ballet Theatre's spring season has been under way for six weeks, with two more to go, and I've previously performed as the Firebird twice in Southern California, barely an hour away from my hometown.

I have a light rehearsal around noon at the Met, to space the choreography and get the feel of the stage. I want to be sure that I hit all of my marks, that I'm always in the right place so I don't collide with the corps de ballet during my variations or move out of sync with my partner when we dance our *pas de deux*.

When the public walks into the hallowed space of the Metropolitan Opera, it sees its gilded foyer, its luxe patron boxes, and its grand stage. But behind the scenes there are studio spaces where performers can hone their magic, eking out a final practice before the show begins.

I spend part of the afternoon in one of those rooms for a private 20 rehearsal with Alexei Ratmansky, *Firebird's* choreographer.

Alexei, ever the visionary and perfectionist, is changing the choreography up until the last minute. He tweaks a leap here, a twist there. We go through all my solos to ensure that the counts are exactly right.

Beat one. On my toes.

Beat two. Dart to the right.

Beat three. Bound through the air.

Alexei changes my entrance to the stage several times before we 25 finally agree on the steps that best suit me. There are two other casts, and the Firebird's entrance in each is different, difficult, unique. I feel energized. I feel ready.

This is for the little brown girls.

Restate main idea:

I walk home to my apartment, a dozen blocks from the Met. I shower and flip to the Food Network just to have some background noise as I try to relax my mind, wind down my body.

A couple hours later, I'm back at the Met. The curtain won't go up until seven thirty p.m., and I won't take the stage until nine, but I want to be early, to not have to rush.

It is a special evening, and not just for me. Kevin McKenzie, ABT's artistic director, is also being honored. It is his twentieth anniversary in that role, and in celebration there will be speeches, a video tribute featuring congratulations from the artistic directors of nearly every major classical company in the world, and performances by all of ABT's principal dancers.

It's getting close to showtime. I have been a soloist for five 30 years, and the eleven of us have a dressing room all to ourselves. But I have never used it. I prefer the comforting camaraderie of the dressing area shared by the *corps*. I spent six years as part of the corps de ballet, and with them I want to remain, preparing for my first principal role in a classical ballet surrounded by loving friends. Nothing feels different between us, even though I'll dance the lead. That, at least, provides normalcy on this extraordinary night.

I have my own corner of the dressing room, claimed long ago. The table is so crowded with flowers and chocolates and photographs that there is barely room for me to squeeze my cell phone. There are bouquets of orchids, my favorite, and dozens of roses. Arthur Mitchell, the founder of Dance Theatre of Harlem, has left me a voice mail, wishing me luck. There are dozens more emails, texts, and cards—from friends, family, and fans all over the country—wishing me well.

Looking at the beautiful bounty, I start to get emotional. But I can't be distracted. I can't be overwhelmed.

This is for the little brown girls.

I go into hair and makeup about a half hour after the evening performance starts. In the mirror, Misty disappears and a mystical creature takes her place, its face dusted with red glitter and painted with dazzling red spirals that shoot from the corners of its eyes. Even my inch-long false lashes are colored red. One of the company's dressers slicks back my hair into a smooth swirl to better attach my red and gold plume.

"Good luck, Misty," a dancer hollers at me with a smile.

"Merde!" one yells.

"Enjoy it!" says another.

I know that they wholeheartedly mean what they say. But those are everyday salutations that can be tossed out before any night's

Restate main idea:

35

performance. They don't reflect the monumental nature of this evening, what it means to me and the rest of the African American community.

Maybe no words could.

Fifteen minutes.

40

I plop down on the floor of the dressing area's lounge, stretching, flexing, staring at myself in the mirror. I stamp that thought down as quickly as it emerges. I think to myself, *This is it, this is my moment.* Finally, the moment to shine, to prove myself, to represent black dancers at the highest level of ballet.

This is for the little brown girls.

But my shin is throbbing uncontrollably.

I know deep down that I can't go on much longer with such pain. Tonight will be the first time I perform as the Firebird in New York, and I pray it won't be my last. By the time *Firebird* is up, ABT has performed several other pieces and two intermissions have paused the program.

I make my way toward the stage. Kevin McKenzie, the conductor, 45 and the rest of ABT's artistic staff are standing there, behind the curtain, wishing me luck.

Restate main idea:

I remember the first time I stood on the stage at the Metropolitan Opera House. I was nineteen years old, still struggling to find my place in ABT's corps de ballet. I traced the marley floor with my pointe shoes and imagined myself on the stage, not as a member of the corps, but as a principal dancer. It felt right. It felt like a promise: someday, somehow, it was going to happen for me.

A decade later, I am here, waiting for the moment when I will explode onto the stage in a burst of red and gold.

Restate main idea:

Outside, the largest crowd I have ever seen waits. Prominent members of the African American community and trailblazers in the world of dance who have seldom received their due are here tonight: Arthur Mitchell, Debra Lee, Star Jones, Nelson George . . . but I know I will also dance for those who aren't here, who have never seen a ballet, who pass the Metropolitan Opera House but cannot imagine what goes on inside. They may be poor, like I have been; insecure, like I have been; misunderstood, like I have been. I will be dancing for them, too. *Especially* for them.

This is for the little brown girls.

I stand in the farthest upstage wing when the curtain rises. There 50 are a flock of "Firebirds" who enter the stage first after Ivan, the prince. I can feel the anticipation rolling off the crowd as they pose and preen. They expect me to be among them. I take a deep breath.

The music starts, and with it comes the cheers, a great roar of love from the audience.

I realize in that moment that it doesn't matter what I do on the stage tonight. They are all here for me, *with me*, here for who I am and what tonight represents. I run onto the stage and feel myself transform. As I approach center, my flock parts, leaving me to stand alone. There's a brief second of silence before the audience erupts into applause once more, clapping so loudly I can barely hear the music.

And so it begins.

VOCABULARY ACTIVITIES

1. This reading selection uses technical jargon about ballet. (*Jargon* refers to the technical words that are specific to a particular field.) Many of these words are in French, since that is the language of ballet. How does Copeland provide context clues to help readers who might be unfamiliar with this language? Find at least three examples of context clues, and see if they are sufficient for you to visualize the movement she is describing. Check your understanding of each term by looking it up in a dictionary or online.
2. Copeland implies that there is a big difference between being a *ballerina* and being a *dancer*. What are the connotations (or shades of meaning) of these two words? How do you know? Find at least one quotation that helps you understand the subtle meanings of the term *ballerina*.

COMPREHENSION QUESTIONS

1. What is the Metropolitan Opera House, and what details in the reading help you figure that out?

2. What does Copeland mean when she writes, "Ballets are just stylized versions of these seemingly basic movements on a grand scale" (para. 10)?
3. Why doesn't Copeland want to use the dressing room that is meant for soloists?

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. What do you think Copeland means when she writes, "*This is for the little brown girls*" (paras. 7, 26, 33, 42, and 49), and why does she repeat that line?
2. What stereotypes do you have about ballet? Does Copeland challenge any of those stereotypes? Why or why not?
3. What qualities do you see in Copeland that might have led to her success?
4. We might categorize this reading as a process essay. What process is Copeland describing in her writing?

practice it 2.11 Post-Reading Activity

Return to your KWL+ chart, and fill in the "L" column. Then add any additional thoughts to the "+" column.

Assignment: Write a One-Paragraph Summary

► For more writing assignments on these readings, see pages 81–83 in Chapter 3.

Now that you have read and discussed each of these three texts, write a one-paragraph summary of each of them (for a total of three one-paragraph summaries). Remember to refer to the steps outlined in the “Writing a Summary Paragraph” section (pp. 43–44).

chapter review

In the following chart, review the list of main ideas from this chapter, and try to summarize them in your own words. Put a check mark in the last column for those main ideas you understand well, and a question mark in the last column for those main ideas you do not understand yet. List any questions you have at the bottom.

main idea	my summary of this main idea	✓ or ?
previewing the text		
annotating		
identifying main point and support		
KWL+		
writing a summary		

Questions I have: