



TACKLING
THE
TAKS 11
IN
LANGUAGE ARTS:
READING

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Contents

Tackling the TAKS 11 in Language Arts: Reading

PREFACE	v	Implied Main Ideas	84
TEST-TAKING TIPS	vi	Chapter 4 Summary	92
WRITING FOR TAKS 11 EXIT LEVEL READING TEST	vii	Chapter 4 Review	93
TAKS READING PRETEST	1	CHAPTER 5	100
EVALUATION CHARTS	E	Organizational Patterns	
CHAPTER 1	13	Chronological Order	100
Open Ended Responses		Directions	101
Literary Response	13	Description	106
Expository Response	16	Compare/Contrast	107
Literary/Expository Response	19	Cause/Effect Relationships	109
Chapter 1 Summary	24	Problem/Solution	112
Chapter 1 Review	25	Chapter 5 Summary	113
		Chapter 5 Review	114
CHAPTER 2	33	CHAPTER 6	120
Word Construction		Author's Purpose and Attitude	
Word Derivations and Analysis	34	Author's Purpose	120
Dictionary Skills	39	Mood and Word Choice	125
Spelling	42	Author's Attitude	128
Analyzing Word Origins	48	Objective/Bias Tones	133
Chapter 2 Summary	50	Recognizing Author's Attitude	135
Chapter 2 Review	51	Chapter 6 Summary	140
		Chapter 6 Review	141
CHAPTER 3	53	CHAPTER 7	146
Word Meaning and Analysis		Fact, Opinion, and Propaganda	
Word Meaning	54	Finding Facts and Opinions	146
Context Clues		Propaganda	152
Connotations and Denotations	60	Uses of Propaganda	157
Literal and Figurative Meanings	63	Chapter 7 Summary	160
Analogies	66	Chapter 7 Review	161
Technical Vocabulary	69	CHAPTER 8	165
Learning Through Study	72	Inferences, Generalizations, Conclusions, and Predictions	
Chapter 3 Summary	73	Inferences	166
Chapter 3 Review	74	Generalizations	168
CHAPTER 4	79	Conclusions	170
Details and Main Ideas		Predictions	174
Locating Details	79	Chapter 8 Summary	177
The Main Idea	82	Chapter 8 Review	178
Directly Stated Main Ideas	82		

CHAPTER 9	185	CHAPTER 12	251
Using Resource Materials		Elements of Literature: Genre, Character & Theme	
Organization of Resource Materials	186	Literary Genres	257
Alphabetizing	186	Literary Characters	269
Thesaurus	187	Characterization	271
Dewey Decimal System	188	Theme	274
Card Catalog	189	Chapter 12 Summary	276
Sections of a Book	190	Chapter 12 Review	277
Reader's Guide to Periodical Literature	195		
Types of Resource Materials	196	CHAPTER 13	285
Primary Resources	196	Literary Devices and Story Structure	
Secondary Resources	198	Literary Devices	285
Encyclopedia	198	Time and Sequence	286
Magazines & Journals	200	Figurative Language	288
Newspapers	201	Opposites or Contrasting Elements	296
Computer Research	203	Story Structure	301
Choosing the Right Resource Material	211	Point of View	301
Chapter 9 Summary	212	Setting	303
Chapter 9 Review	213	Plot	303
		Chapter 13 Summary	309
CHAPTER 10	220	Chapter 13 Review	310
Graphic Aids			
Tables	220	CHAPTER 14	318
Line Graphs	221	Interpreting Literature	
Bar Graphs	222	Scanning Text	319
Symbol Graphs	223	Interpreting Non-fiction Texts	319
Pie Charts	224	Interpreting Fiction Texts	324
Maps	225	Chapter 14 Summary	333
Reading a Grid Map	226	Chapter 14 Review	334
Degrees of Latitude and Longitude	227		
Road Maps	228	CHAPTER 15	344
Diagrams	229	Literary Criticism	
Chapter 10 Summary	230	Biographical Approach	345
Chapter 10 Review	231	Historical Approach	253
		Chapter 15 Summary	360
CHAPTER 11	236	Chapter 15 Review	361
Media and Workplace Documents			
Audio/Visual Media	236	READING POST TEST	368
Print Media	236		
Workplace Documents	238		
Types of Workplace Documents	238		
Elements of Workplace Documents	241		
Chapter 11 Summary	252		
Chapter 11 Review	253		

TAKS Reading Pretest

My notes about what I am
reading

Directions

Read the following two selections and the viewing and representing piece. Then answer the questions that follow.

Excerpt from Friends in San Rosario by O. Henry

A bank examiner, Mr. Nettleswick, has arrived in San Rosario to conduct the periodic inspection of the two local banks and their procedures. Mr. Nettleswick is now meeting with the president of the First National Bank, Major Tom Kingman, to question him about the bank.

- 1 “I find, sir, the condition of your bank to be very good, considering the poor crops and the depression in the cattle interests of your state. The clerical work seems to be done accurately and punctually. Your past-due paper is moderate in amount, and promises only a small loss. I would recommend the calling in of your large loans, and the making of only sixty and ninety-day or call loans until general business revives. And now, there is one thing more, and I will have finished with the bank. Here are six notes aggregating something like \$40,000. They are secured, according to their faces, by various stocks, bonds, shares, etc. to the value of \$70,000. Those securities are missing from the notes to which they should be attached. I suppose you have them in the safe or vault. You will permit me to examine them.”
- 2 Major Tom's light-blue eyes turned unflinchingly toward the examiner. “No, sir,” he said, in a low but steady tone; “those securities are neither in the safe nor in the vault. I have taken them. You may hold me personally responsible for their absence.”
- 3 Nettleswick felt a slight thrill. He had not expected this. He had struck a momentous trail when the hunt was drawing to a close.
- 4 “Ah!” said the examiner. He waited a moment, and then continued: “May I ask you to explain more definitely?”
- 5 “The securities were taken by me,” repeated the major. “It was not for my own use, but to save an old friend in trouble. Come in here, sir, and we'll talk it over.”
- 6 He led the examiner into the bank's private office at the rear, and closed the door. There was a desk, and a table, and half-a-dozen leather-covered chairs. On the wall was the mounted head of a Texas steer with horns five feet from tip to tip. Opposite hung

Model Student Response - Score Point 0

Steve dreams that he is in a car accident, then he gets into a car accident.

Annotation - Score Point 0

This response summarizes the story but does not answer the question.



EXPOSITORY SELECTION

4-point Rubric for Open-Ended Response Items

- 3** Exemplary responses must draw an insightful conclusion, interpretation, or prediction or thoughtfully analyze and evaluate a characteristic of the text. Exemplary responses demonstrate the student's ability to effectively incorporate accurate textual evidence into the answer.
- 2** Sufficient responses must draw a reasonable conclusion, interpretation, or prediction or reasonably analyze and evaluate a characteristic of the text. All answers must be supported with appropriate textual evidence.
- 1** Partially sufficient answers may offer a reasonable conclusion, interpretation, or prediction or offer a reasonable analysis and evaluation of a characteristic of the text but may contain weak textual support or no textual evidence at all. Partially sufficient responses may offer accurate textual evidence but lack any kind of conclusion, interpretation, prediction, or analysis.
- 0** Insufficient responses do not answer the question or use examples that are not based on the reading. A general or vague response will also be considered insufficient.

Now, read the following expository selection. Then, study how a student responded to an open ended response question. The sample responses range from a 3-point score to a 0-point score.

Dream On

For years psychologists have been fascinated by the human subconscious and how it manifests itself in dreams. There are about as many explanations for dreams as there are dreams themselves, but there are five widely accepted, although contradictory, theories for why people dream.

Sigmund Freud (1856-1939) was one of the first psychologists to explore the world of dreams. His theory is that dreams are a combination of our innermost desires and the previous day's events. He believed that dreams represented conflicts between our conscious and our subconscious. When our desires are repressed and not met, our minds play them out in dreams. In this way, our dreams protect us from an unhealthy build up of psychological tension.

Whereas Freud felt that only a psychologist could interpret dreams, Jung (1875-1961) believed that everyone could and should interpret their own dreams. Rather than interpreting an isolated dream, Jung suggests examining a dream in relation to other recent

Organizational Patterns

5

Organizational patterns shape how an author arranges and links details or ideas in a passage. Questions dealing with patterns require you to find the types of connections the author uses in a passage and to identify how the organization of the passage helps communicate its meaning. There are many ways to organize passages. The following ways are found in this chapter: **chronological order, directions, description, compare/contrast, and cause/effect** relationships.

The subject of the passages may be a historical event, a story, a news report, or directions for an activity. One of the more common patterns is the **chronological (time) order**, starting with the first event, followed by the second event, then the third event, and so on. The passage and the questions about it will usually contain **key words** that will help you locate the answers. Some key words are listed below:

first	before	next	second	after	until	later	now
third	then	finally	when	last	between	most important	

For example, if you are given a passage about the discovery of oil in Texas, you might be asked the kinds of questions found below. (Look for answers in a history book or encyclopedia.)

1. What was Texas like **before** the discovery of oil?

2. **When** and **where** was oil discovered in Texas?

3. What was Texas like **during** the '30s through the '50s when oil was in short supply?

4. Which important events happened **after** oil was discovered?

CHRONOLOGICAL ORDER

Chronological order is one way to show that events or ideas are related. In chronological order, the earliest event or events appear first. Events happening later in time follow after the earlier event or events. In this way, events are arranged in a sequence.

- Example:**
1. Ray watered the tree.
 2. Ray walked outside.
 3. Ray filled the can with water from the well.



In this example, the time order is 2-3-1. First, Ray walked outside. Then, Ray filled the can with water. Last, Ray watered the tree.

<p>Inference <i>The narrator believes that hope is within.</i></p>	<p>The narrator says that hope “perches in the soul.” To find it, we only have to look inside ourselves.</p>
<p>Generalization <i>Everyone has found hope when they didn’t expect it.</i></p>	<p>In order to generalize, take the idea from the poem and apply it to a larger context. Notice, not just the narrator that finds hope; everyone finds hope.</p>
<p>Conclusion <i>Hope may rise above any hardship.</i></p>	<p>“Hope is a thing with feathers.” It is a bird and can fly higher than we can see. Therefore, it can see beyond our troubles when we can’t.</p>
<p>Prediction <i>Dickinson will always be able to find hope.</i></p>	<p>Since hope is always present, and the poet has heard it singing in the “chillest lands,” we can assume that she will always find hope.</p>

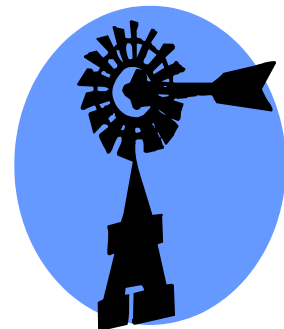
In this chapter, you will learn how to make **inferences**, make **generalizations**, make **predictions**, and draw **conclusions**. These skills are important for improving your reading comprehension and literary analysis.

INFERENCES

You can say that making **inferences** is making connections between the various pieces of information given in the text or reading appropriately between the lines. The ability to make suitable inferences is one of the most important skills a reader can develop. Many writers don’t tell readers everything outright. They rely on you making reasonable inferences.

The following is a passage in which the topic must be inferred. Notice how the details in the paragraph contribute to the inference.

These storms occur over land and are the most violent of all atmospheric disturbances. They are highly localized and, therefore, do not affect large areas at one time. The actual path of destruction of these storms is rarely more than 100 yards in width. They take the form of a rotating column of air that extends down to the land from a thundercloud. They happen most frequently in the Midwestern states and in the southeastern part of the United States.



Media and Workplace Documents

11

School libraries are seldom referred to as libraries anymore. Instead, they are called “media resource centers” because they hold much more than books. **Media** refers to anything that carries a message: television, radio, newspapers, magazines, brochures, advertisements, and various documents, including those found in the workplace.

Audio/Visual Media

Audio/visual media targets two of our five senses: sight and hearing. The television and the Internet are two examples of this type of media. The **Internet** is unique because the audience can interact with it, whereas **television** also affects our audio and visual senses, but we cannot interact with the characters on the screen. Between 1950 and 2000, the percentage of American homes with television sets went from 9% (approximately 3 million) to 98% (approximately 100 million). In just four years, from 1996 to 2000, the number of American homes with computers climbed from approximately 30 million to close to 70 million, and those homes with access to the Internet also more than doubled from 10 million to more than 20 million. Those families that do not have access to the Internet in their homes can gain access through work, school, or the public library. As you can see from the numbers, television and the Internet have had enormous impacts on families in the United States. These numbers don’t even begin to tell the story of how these two forms of media have influenced our culture.



Audio Media

Audio media targets just our hearing. The **radio** relies solely on audio communication through news stories, music, and commercials. The radio’s influence on American culture reaches back even further in our history. The radio was, at one time, the fastest way to get the news. Families would spend evenings crowded around the radio to hear the latest news, sports, and programs, much like families with television today. Radio is still an effective form of media because the audience can listen while doing other things like working or driving.



Print Media

Print media (newspapers, magazines, and brochures) are purely visual forms of media that communicate through words and pictures. **Newspapers** present the news objectively, with no bias, except in an editorial article, which is the writer’s opinion. **Magazines** have a bit more freedom to present the story from the writer’s point of view. They also develop the stories further than a newspaper might. Both newspapers and magazines contain advertisements. **Brochures** are a kind of advertisement developed and distributed by the company or group that makes the product or offers the services being promoted.



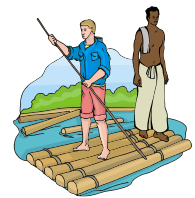
Huckleberry Finn by Mark Twain is an example of how authors create a world for characters. Huck and Jim are rafting south on the Mississippi River, **interacting** closely.

Relationships: Jim is an escaped slave, running from the law. Huck is a runaway Southern boy. He is fleeing from responsibility and his abusive father. How these two characters will work out a relationship on the raft is an important part of the story.

Motivations: Jim has never known freedom and wants to be free to join his wife and child. Huck has lived without rules for most of his life. He also wants to be free and irresponsible by leaving his home.

Conflicts: Huck has a major internal conflict (a conflict inside his mind). How should he treat Jim, the runaway slave with him on the raft? Huck is not ready to free himself of the cultural lies about white people being better than black people, but learns he can talk to Jim and depends on him as a friend. Jim also has a conflict, but his is an external conflict (a conflict outside of himself): He's a hunted runaway. How can Jim get home free and keep Huck safe, so no one can blame him for any harm to Huck?

Influences: Huck is influenced by ideas he's been brought up on: black people should be slaves and treated as beneath white people. The same ideas influence Jim, but on the river, he's able to take new ideas for himself: the ideas of true justice and humanity. Jim is able to influence Huck with pure honesty and friendship.



At the journey's end, Huck has worked out his internal conflict: Jim is his friend. Jim has also worked through his conflict: he has his freedom. Twain creates interest in the plot through conflicts since Huck doesn't turn Jim over to the law as soon as he can; influences give it suspense as the reader can't be sure of Huck's loyalty to Jim; relationships and motivations make both characters likeable because they have good reasons for running away.

Character Types

CHARACTER TYPES Just as there are different parts of the body doing different things, there are different types of characters. They perform different roles or jobs in a literary work.

Narrator the person telling a story. In *Huckleberry Finn*, the narrator is Huck, and he is a main character. Also, in Maya Angelou's *I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings*, the narrator is a young girl who is the main character. Often, the narrator will be a main character.

Protagonist the main character(s). Jim and Huck are the main characters in *Huckleberry Finn*. The protagonists are Romeo and Juliet in Shakespeare's famous play of the same name. The protagonist is not always a hero or even a likeable character. For example, Shrek, the ogre in the movie of the same name, is not very likeable in the beginning of the movie and certainly does not act like a hero.

Antagonist an opponent or rival of the hero. The antagonists in Hemingway's *Old Man and the Sea* are the sharks. The Southern laws and culture were the enemy for Huck and Jim in *Huckleberry Finn*.

SUMMARY OF CHAPTER 15: LITERARY CRITICISM

Literary Criticism means simply to talk or write about a work of literature, looking for hidden meanings, new insights, or a connection to another time and place.

- **Biographical Approach** to literary criticism helps readers understand a literary work by looking at how the author's life is reflected or followed by the work. There are two influences in an author's life that are studied in the biographical approach: heritage and culture.
- The four main influences that shape authors and their writings are below:
 - **Heritage** is something handed down through the right of birth. This something could be possessions or it could be social status or it could be the sum total of a society's knowledge and understanding of the world. Heritage is considered unchangeable.
 - **Cultural Traditions** are customs followed by a people from established social rules. They are patterns of thoughts or actions followed by a society that may limit it, but also keep it strong. These traditions may or may not be followed by individuals. These traditions may also change over time. Traditions may be tied to several elements of a society. For example, they may be tied to religious practices or may be tied to economic practices.
 - **Attitudes** are the strong thoughts or opinions a person or groups of people have regarding a fact or a condition. Attitudes may also change over time.
 - **Belief** is the trust and confidence given to a person or a thing. A little less strong than faith, beliefs are often part of religious or national identity. Beliefs are less likely to change than attitudes, but may do so.
- **Historical Approach** to literary criticism is a way of reading a work of literature focusing on either details of the history in the work or on the historical time that the author wrote the work. It is the effect that the historical time had on the writing or details that is important for the historical approach. The recognition of the historical references and realities enhance works of literature by bringing understanding of the challenges, the beauties, and the social mores that existed in the time period the material is set or the time period during which it was written.

Interpreting Literature

14

To interpret means to explain the meaning of something that is mysterious, hidden, or unfamiliar. The explanation is called the **interpretation**. Your teacher interprets many ideas to your class. For example, in a beginning Spanish class, your teacher interprets the text until students begin to understand some of the vocabulary and grammar; in geometry class, your teacher interprets or explains theorems; in literature class, your teacher interprets the uncommon symbols in poetry. In these examples, it is the message of the texts that is being explained to students. When faced with reading assignments, remember to think about the message that you are getting from the author in the text.



In chapter four of this book, you learned how to find and use details to find the main idea in a passage. In this chapter, you will be learning how to find particular details by **scanning** the text and how to use those details to interpret or explain passages which may be interpreted in more than one way. Many texts, both fiction and non-fiction, can have more than one interpretation.

To interpret text, you will learn six strategies:

- 1) scan the **details** of the different parts of the text, putting them together to create the meaning or the message of the text;
- 2) make a **connection** from your own life experience with the text to understand the message that the author is sending, and sometimes you may need to make connections between two or more different texts to compare and/or contrast;
- 3) think what the author's **purpose** is in writing the text;
- 4) read and listen to the **tone** of the text;
- 5) (fiction) take notice of any **ambiguities**, (unclear) statements in the text;
- 6) (fiction) look for any parts of the text that may be **symbolic** and think what the symbols or unclear statements mean in your experience, making a connection with what the author intended the text to mean.

The following sentence is a memory aid for the six strategies:



Dancing Chilies Play Tunes And Sing

<u>D</u> ancing	=	<u>D</u> etails
<u>C</u> hilies	=	<u>C</u> onnections
<u>P</u> lay	=	<u>P</u> urpose
<u>T</u> unes	=	<u>T</u> one
<u>A</u> nd	=	<u>A</u> mbiguities
<u>S</u> ing	=	<u>S</u> ymbols



Expository Text for Post Test

Romanians Mesmerized by Toddler Who Fell Down a Well

My notes about what I am
reading

- 1 *The old black-and-white screen shows a tall, skinny man walking in a crosswalk, probably somewhere in New York City. You begin to look at the names of the stores to figure it out. All of the sudden, the man drops out of sight. You have know idea what happened to him until the camera pans downward to see the man's face looking out of an open manhole. The quiet of the theater is broken by hysterical laughter. People falling down manholes is pure classic slapstick comedy, or is it?*
- 2 *This country appears to have a mixed fascination with people stuck in holes, both comic and tragic. Comic, because it doesn't happen much. In the past it hasn't been a reality for Americans, so it is safe to laugh. Tragic, because in the past twenty years, it is rapidly becoming a reality in America. Although there have only been two reported incidents, they were tragic enough that the national media was there to record the rescues. One involved a child, a symbol of innocence. The other involved nine miners, symbols of American legends like John Henry.*
- 3 *In 1987, eighteen-month-old Baby Jessica fell into an abandoned well about eight inches wide and twenty-two feet deep in Midland, Texas. There was no shortage of volunteers and professional rescue teams to do whatever it took to draw the little girl out of the well to safety. The United States watched and waited two and a half days for her rescue. When she was above ground safe and sound, the nation considered the heroic rescue in Midland, Texas to be a modern-day miracle.*
- 4 *Years later, in 2002, when Baby Jessica had grown to be a freshman in high school, nine miners became trapped in a collapsed mineshaft in Somerset, Pennsylvania. The drama of hero and victim was replayed, nine times over. The miners were trapped 240 feet underground for seventy-seven hours until rescuers could drill an escape hole thirty inches wide and 236 feet long and pull each one to safety. Again the US watched and waited for their rescue. Each of the nine miners was pulled toward daylight in a rescue basket by a crane. The trip to safety took ten minutes for each man.*
- 5 *Some states have officials who seek out and cover abandoned wells. In Arizona, farmers have abandoned makeshift wells as they abandon their fields, letting the desert reclaim the land and leaving a dangerous trap for any unknowing passers-by, human or animal. But many countries cannot afford to pay a salary for someone to look for holes all day, even though that person may save a life or many lives.*