



LIFE·PAC®

Language Arts

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Alpha Omega Publications®

LANGUAGE ARTS 906 ENHANCING READING SKILLS AND POETIC UNDERSTANDING

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LANGUAGE ARTS 906

ENHANCING READING SKILLS AND POETIC UNDERSTANDING

In the electronic age of mass communication, many people have fallen into the trap of poor reading. Young people who graduate from high school without being able to read well enough to apply for a driver's license have made headline news. Taxpayers who pay for the public school system shake their heads in disbelief. Expensive research programs have been launched to correct this deplorable state of affairs. Nevertheless, many people have not learned to read because they have never understood the need to do so. Mass media has given them all the news, information, and entertainment that is believed necessary. To these people, success in school seems unimportant—not a part of the "real world."

What many nonreaders fail to understand is that reading expands their lives, and that not reading well limits them. A poor reader finds it difficult to follow directions or to learn new skills. One can hardly build a model airplane, fix a car, or cook a meal without reading instructions. Furthermore, a person's inability to read often limits his job opportunities. A blue-collar worker, in a skilled trade must be able to read directions, procedures, and policies. One factory worker was fired because he could not read a warning sign in a restricted area. White-collar workers, on the other hand, must read just to keep up with the daily work.

Poor reading skills will also hinder one from acquiring valuable information about successful, healthy living. A poor reader cannot study the Bible himself. His growth as a Christian will be dependent upon what someone else tells him. His emotional growth will also be limited because a poor reader will not benefit from the experiences of other people who write about their ideas. Much wisdom may be gained by reading books and magazines if the material is critically read.

This LIFE PAC® is written to help you become the kind of reader who comprehends and evaluates the written word. You will learn how to think about the reading process, how to identify what the author has said and has implied, how to use the visual material that books often include, and how to read poetry. Remember that printed material is not always correct and reliable, regardless of how professionally it is prepared. Reading involves accepting and rejecting ideas. Reading in fact, means thinking.

OBJECTIVES

Read these objectives. The objectives tell you what you will be able to do when you have successfully completed this LIFE PAC.

When you have finished this LIFE PAC, you should be able to:

1. Explain the logical arrangement of information in a paragraph.
2. Identify objective writing as opposed to slanted material (propaganda).
3. Identify six propaganda techniques used in writing, such as emotional appeal, bandwagon approach, straw man fallacy, either-or fallacy, endorsements, and hastily drawn conclusions.
4. Write original examples of three of the propaganda techniques.
5. Identify irrelevant ideas in paragraphs.
6. Rewrite poorly organized paragraphs by logically arranging ideas and sticking to the topic.
7. Interpret graphs intelligently.
8. Interpret charts and tables intelligently.
9. Design charts and graphs from statistical information found in books or developed through research.

10. Define poetic terms.
11. Identify examples of the four kinds of poetic feet.
12. Identify examples of trimeter, tetrameter, and pentameter.
13. Determine poetic meter.
14. Identify rhyme schemes in poems.
15. Interpret poetry by making personal applications to poems.
16. Write an original eight-line poem following a set meter and rhyme scheme.

Survey the LIFEPAK. Ask yourself some questions about this study. Write your questions here.

I. DETERMINING THE AUTHOR'S MESSAGE

An author writes with a specific purpose in mind. To understand what the author really means, you should be able to identify the purpose of the book or article you are reading. This skill is one that takes practice and that requires alert reading.

An author may have a clearly stated or plainly **implied** purpose for writing: to tell a story, to inform, to analyze, to persuade, to criticize, or to convince. An author may not always make the purpose clear. This absence of a clearly defined purpose may be through oversight, poor writing, or illogical thinking. Some writers, on the other hand, purposely withhold the intent of a book or an article. This **technique** is used when the writer wishes to convince the reader by writing an entertaining or informative article. In these cases the author may combine several ideas. The most important idea, the author's belief or opinion, may seem the least obvious. When our **adversaries**, or those having opposing views, use this technique, it is sometimes referred to as **propaganda**. When we, or those with whom we agree, use this technique, it is generally called something more acceptable, such as political preference, logical analysis, or gentle persuasion. In fact, it is almost impossible to write without employing some degree of propaganda.

To be a critical reader, one should be able to identify both the stated and implied purposes; and he should be able to evaluate information. This evaluation is done by considering the sources of information, the **logic** of the arguments, and the organization and arrangement of the material. Only when the reader has looked at what the author states and how he states it will he be able to unravel the message the author wishes to convey.

SECTION OBJECTIVES

Review these objectives. When you have completed this section, you should be able to:

1. Explain the logical arrangement of information in a paragraph.
2. Identify objective writing as opposed to slanted material (propaganda).
3. Identify six propaganda techniques used in writing, such as emotional appeal, bandwagon approach, straw man fallacy, either-or fallacy, endorsements, and hastily drawn conclusions.
4. Identify original examples of three of the propaganda techniques.
5. Omit irrelevant ideas in paragraphs.
6. Rewrite poorly organized paragraphs by logically arranging ideas and by sticking to the topic.

VOCABULARY

Study these words to enhance your learning success in this section.

adversary (ad' vur ser' ē). Person or group opposing or hostile to another person or group.

chronological (kron' u log' u kul). Arranged in the order in which the events happened.

condemnation (kon' dem nā' shun). The act of condemning or disapproving.

endorsement (en dôrs' munt). The act of sanctioning, upholding, or backing some concept or product.

exaggeration (eg zaj' u rā shun). To overstate, to increase, or to enlarge.

fallacy (fal' u sē). A false idea, mistaken belief, or error.

implied (im plīd'). Suggested, indicated or understood without express statement.

logic (loj' ik). Based upon reason; a rational approach to something.

propaganda (prop' u gan du). To spread opinions or beliefs.

sequence (sē' kwuns). Coming one after another, in series, or in order.

spatial (spā' shul). Having to do with space.

technique (tek nēk'). A method or system used to accomplish something.

Note: All vocabulary words in this LIFEPAAC appear in **boldface** print the first time they are used. If you are unsure of the meaning when you are reading, study the definitions given.

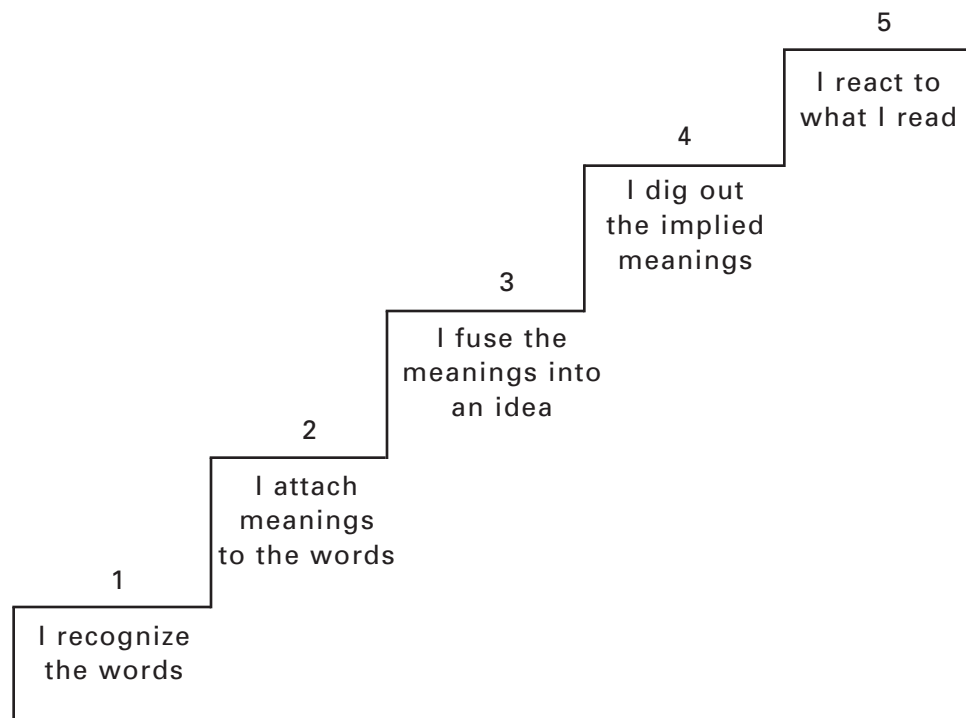
Pronunciation Key: hat, āge, cāre, fār; let, ēqual, tērm; it, īce; hot, ōpen, ōrder; oil; out; cup, pūt, rüle; child; long; thin; /TH/ for then; /zh/ for measure; /u/ represents /a/ in about, /e/ in taken, /i/ in pencil, /o/ in lemon, and /u/ in circus.

ARRANGING IDEAS

Arranging ideas in proper **sequence** is necessary to present ideas with clarity. A thread of unity must hold together these ideas to keep the reader's interest and attention.

The author begins with a clear purpose in mind. The reader begins with the finished product and works through to discover the author's purpose. The steps involved in the reading process begin from simple word identification and build up to a personal reaction. The following diagram indicates five reading steps. Step 1 consists of observing written symbols and recognizing individual words. The definitions of the words are recalled and the meanings

are combined into an idea as in Steps 2 and 3. Step 4 involves understanding implied meanings, and Step 5 consists of the reader's reaction to the material he has read.



The Reading Staircase

Step 3 usually gives students difficulty. They know most of the words; they understand individual sentences; but they may not grasp the main ideas. To fuse the words into a clear idea, one must reread the passage, look for the topic sentence, and restate the main idea. The reader may have to make a conscious effort to practice this procedure if he has not done so automatically.

Because many people have trouble with Step 3 and because Step 3 is vital to reading progress, each of the following paragraphs will require that several procedures be performed. These procedures are arranged in order from the easiest to the most difficult. They will review the steps to use in finding the main idea. Now read the following paragraph.

Paragraph A

Money does not buy happiness or security. John Ringling, one of the five Ringling Brothers of the Ringling Brothers Circus, started out in 1884 with a trained horse and a performing bear. For over forty years he worked hard at the family enterprise, bought up smaller circuses, and imported new acts. In the 1920s he was rated as one of the world's wealthiest men and owned every sizable circus in the country. Over five thousand people were on his payroll, and over two hundred forty railroad cars were in his retinue each time the circus moved. However, at the time of his death, he was a nervous, unhappy man; he was also bankrupt and beset by lawsuits. His carefully built circus empire passed into alien hands. All those years of work had turned to dust.