
Reading for Understanding – Level 7-8

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About the Book

The *Reading for Understanding* books have been designed to improve students' skills in the areas of sequencing, recognising details, main idea, character analysis, drawing conclusions, predicting outcomes, similarities and differences, cause and effect, evaluation, inference and following directions. Each page features 'real' kids facing 'real' situations making learning easy and fun for students. This book is a valuable tool for any reading program.

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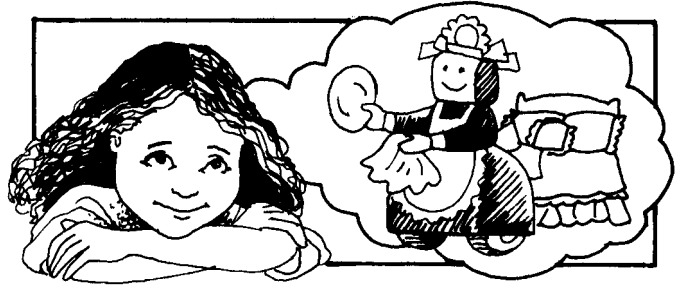
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Let the Robots Do It!

Maria is having a good day. It all began when her father announced that his plant was chosen to implement a new robotics system. Maria is excited because she knows her dad has been wanting this for a long time.



The robots will enable his company to assemble more machines faster. This, in turn, will enable the company to sell more machines and thus make more money.

Since Maria doesn't understand much about robots, she decides to do some research. She reads that a robot is a mechanical device that operates automatically. She already knows that! Maria goes on to read that robots perform a wide variety of tasks—especially those that are too boring, difficult or dangerous for people. Maria knows that there are lots of those jobs at her dad's plant. Maria decides that robots will probably be very useful there.

Maria learns that the word *robot* comes from the Czech word *robota*, meaning drudgery. She reads that robots efficiently carry out such routine tasks as welding, drilling, and painting automobile parts. Producing plastic food containers and wrapping ice cream bars also can be done by robots. A typical robot performs a task by following a set of instructions, entered and stored in the robot's control centre, that specify exactly what must be done to complete the task. Maria notes that robotics is the science and technology dealing with robots. Her dad's life will be made much easier by robotics. Maria wonders if her dad could get a robot for their house. She thinks it would be nice to have a personal robot to make her bed, wash the dishes, and vacuum. But as Maria reads on, she learns, to her disappointment, that few robots resemble the humanlike variety seen on TV. Rather, most are stationary structures with only a single arm capable of lifting objects and using tools. Nice idea anyway, thinks Maria.

Write

What is the main idea of the story? _____

Tick

Robots . . .

- | | | | |
|--------------------------|----------------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | perform a wide variety of tasks. | <input type="checkbox"/> | will make more money for the company. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | make more machines faster. | <input type="checkbox"/> | function as automatic, mechanical devices. |

Underline

The robots will be an _____ element in Maria's dad's plant.

inobtrusive

innuendo

irrational

inquisitive

innovative

Write

What are some jobs robots can do? _____

•SOMETHING EXTRA•

Name some companies that use robots.

Which Way Did He Go?

Dukwilma's students have been studying navigators and their exploration routes. One of the explorers they are studying is Christopher Columbus, who is credited with having discovered the Americas. For fun, Miss Freed gathered several facts about Columbus, wrote them down, cut them apart, and put them in a box. In their free time, students were encouraged to go to the box to arrange the strips in chronological order. Miss Freed also supplied them with a stopwatch to time themselves.

See how quickly you can number the strips below in chronological order. **Hint:** You will need to read all the clues before you begin.



- _____ In 1485, Columbus offered his services to King Ferdinand and Queen Isabella of Spain. They put him on the royal payroll but waited seven years before giving him the ships and other supplies he needed for his voyage.
- _____ Columbus's last voyages to the New World were in 1498 and 1502.
- _____ Columbus was born sometime between August 25 and October 31, 1451, in Genoa.
- _____ About two months after setting sail, Columbus landed in what are now called the West Indies and took possession of a 'New World' for Spain.
- _____ After Columbus returned home, Ferdinand and Isabella gave him a grand reception and the title of Admiral of the Ocean Sea.
- _____ Ten years before Columbus and crew set sail on the *Santa Maria*, the *Niña*, and the *Pinta*, Columbus's request to search out a short sea route to the Indies was refused by King John II of Portugal.
- _____ Columbus and his crew set sail on the *Santa Maria*, the *Niña*, and the *Pinta* from Spain on his first voyage to America about 13 years after he married.
- _____ The *Niña* and the *Pinta* reached home on March 15, 1493.
- _____ On his second voyage to America on September 25, 1493, Columbus commanded 17 ships carrying over 1000 male colonists.
- _____ In 1479, Columbus married Felipa Perestrello Moniz, who died a few years after their only child was born.

A Holiday—Where?

David’s family is planning a holiday, but they’re not sure where they will go. The time is set for early July during David’s school holidays because his mum can’t leave her job in the summer. David had been surprised when his dad said they were planning a holiday. His dad hates to spend money. David’s dad is happy to spend his holidays at home. He enjoys working around the house and attending events in Dukwilma. David is like his mum when it comes to holidays. She’ll go anywhere, any time, and will try almost anything once. She’s definitely a risk-taker, whereas David’s father is conservative.



David’s father does not like his wife and son’s idea of skiing at Mt Kosciuszko. After all, if they go in early July, they may have no snow or lots of ice on the mountain. David and his mum don’t care. They know they will have fun no matter what. David really wants to go skiing, but he doesn’t know if they should because he knows his dad will worry about driving there (what if they run into a snowstorm?) and about the snow conditions on the mountain. He’s not sure if his dad’s anxiety will be worth the trip.

To help them make their decision, David decided to investigate some of the ski areas. He read that the ski season in the popular resorts of Thredbo and Perisher Valley lasts from early July to September. He also learnt that last July it snowed for 10 days in a row and the snow was almost 2 metres deep. David thinks there will be plenty of snow for great skiing this July.

Write

Do you think David’s family went skiing? Why?

Circle

Because David’s dad is _____, they might not go to Mt Kosciuszko.

moderate

influential

innate

cautious

restrained

Underline

If they go on the trip, David’s dad will definitely cause a...

pilfer.

queue.

pother.

enwrap.

pillage.

Tick

David and his mum would probably like to try...

hang-gliding.

bungee-jumping.

Parcheesi.

chess.

parachuting.

windsurfing.

Did We Evolve?

Donald and Arnold are certain they evolved from apes. They both swear that some of their ancestors look like they could swing from trees. Miss Freed heard the boys talking and laughed. She decided this was a great time to talk to her students about evolution.



Miss Freed began by discussing Chevalier de Lamarck. In the early 1800s, this French scientist proposed a theory of evolution based on two ideas. He proposed that plants and animals change their forms to adapt to their environment ('use and disuse') and that these changes are then passed to their offspring (heredity). For example, organs and muscles frequently used became larger and stronger. Those rarely used tended to shrink. These traits then became hereditary. While some scientists were influenced by this theory, Miss Freed explained that it was later disproved by discoveries in genetics. Miss Freed told her students that, in 1858, a young Englishman named Charles Darwin introduced his theory of evolution. Darwin's theory of natural selection stated that all organisms produce more offspring than are necessary to replace themselves. The earth cannot support all these organisms so they must compete for food and shelter. Animals that prey on them and unfavourable weather also threaten their lives. Furthermore, the theory says that some individuals have traits that make them better suited to the environment than others. Those with favourable traits live longer and produce more offspring. Eventually the unfavourable traits die out.

Match

Darwin

Lamarck

If your parents have strong muscles, you probably will too.

Individuals within a group have variations and are therefore not exactly alike.

Some individuals will survive and reproduce and some won't.

If a body part is not used, eventually it will shrink.

Choose

Choose the correct theory for the examples below. Put an **L** for Lamarck or a **D** for Darwin in the space provided.

_____ Some animals eat other animals.

_____ Reptiles who didn't use their legs turned into snakes.

_____ Some deer reproduce; others do not.

Write

Write how Darwin and how Lamarck would explain the evolution of snakes. _____

•SOMETHING EXTRA•

Do you think we evolved from apes? Why? If so, how?