



Reading Informational Texts:

Nonfiction Passages and Exercises Based on the Common Core State Standards

Sample

Prestwick House

Level 8

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Nonfiction Passages and Exercises Based on the Common Core State Standards



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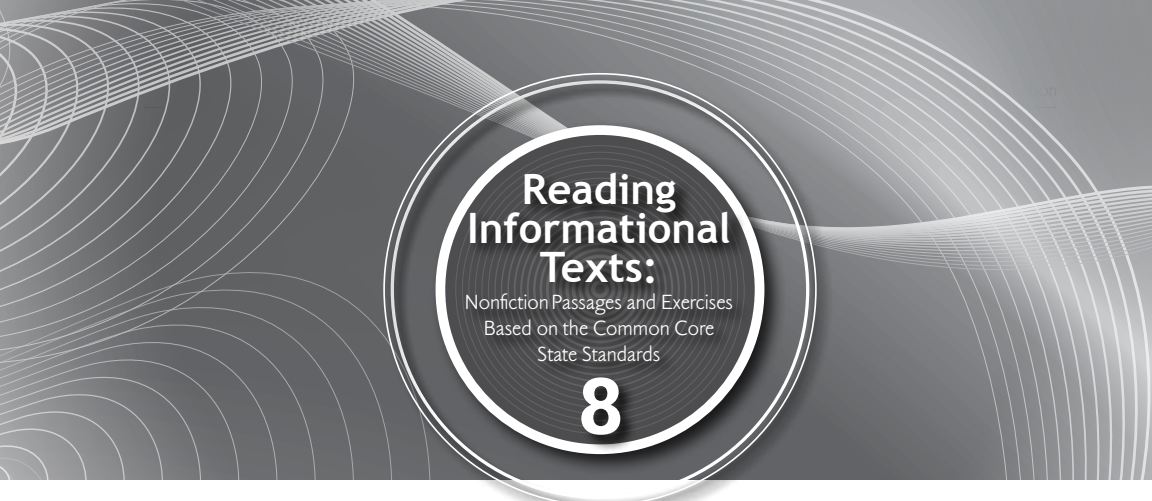
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INTRODUCTION

Chief Tecumseh's Address to William Henry Harrison

On August 12, 1810, Chief Tecumseh, leader of the Shawnee tribe, delivered the following speech to William Henry Harrison. Harrison, who would later become the ninth president of the United States, was, at the time, governor of the Indiana Territory. In the decades leading up to this historic meeting between the two leaders, Native American lands throughout the Midwest had been increasingly threatened by the encroachment of white settlers. Prospective settlers would meet with tribal leaders, offer money or goods in exchange for land, and then force the native tribes to leave their homes and relocate westward. In 1809, Harrison, who had already negotiated numerous land deals with various tribes in the Indiana Territory, persuaded a few tribal leaders in southern Indiana to sign a treaty that proposed the sale of a large tract of land on the banks of the Wabash River, where Tecumseh and many of his fellow Shawnee had been residing, along with various other tribes. The Shawnee and several of the other tribes vehemently opposed the treaty, yet it was nevertheless finalized without their consent. When the Treaty of Fort Wayne was signed on September 30, 1809, over three million acres of Native American land along the Wabash River was sold to the United States.

Tecumseh was outraged by the treaty, declaring it unjust and insisting that it be nullified. In his view, the land in question had been the property of *all* Native Americans—not just that of the few tribes who had agreed to sign the treaty. In August of 1810, he and some four hundred armed warriors traveled to Vincennes, the capital of the Indiana Territory, to meet with Governor Harrison and voice their opposition to the treaty. Speaking in his native tribal language which was then interpreted for Harrison, Tecumseh argued his case against the Treaty of Fort Wayne, claiming that all Native Americans formed a single nation and, therefore, no land could be bought or sold without the unanimous consent of all tribes. Harrison, however, could not be swayed, maintaining that the treaty was legitimate and rejecting Tecumseh's claim that all Native Americans formed a unified people.

not know what will be the consequences among the white people.

Brother, I wish you would take pity on the red people and do as I have requested. If you will not give up the land and do cross the **boundary** of our present settlement, it will be very hard and produce great trouble between us.

▶ The way, the only way to stop this evil, is for the red people to unite in claiming a common and equal right in the land, as it was at first, and should be now—for it was never divided, but belongs to all.

No tribe has the right to sell, even to each other, much less to strangers.

▶ Sell a country?! Why not sell the air, the great sea, as well as the earth? Did not the Great Spirit make them all for the use of his children?

How can we have confidence in the white people? We have good and just reasons to believe we have **ample** grounds to accuse the Americans of injustice, especially when such great acts of injustice have been committed by them upon our race, of which they seem to have no manner of regard, or even to **reflect**.

▶ When Jesus Christ came upon the earth you killed him and nailed him to the cross. You thought he was dead, and you were mistaken. You have the Shakers among you, and you laugh and make light of their worship. Everything I have told you is the truth. The Great Spirit has inspired me.

Tecumseh now restates the point he introduced in paragraph one: Native American lands should be viewed as the common property of all Native Americans. According to him, how will the adoption of this policy stop the “evil” that has been occurring?

Here, Tecumseh makes his point through the effective use of a series of rhetorical questions.

▶ **Rhetorical Question:** a figure of speech used for its persuasive effect; a question to which the speaker does not expect a reply

What point is Tecumseh making with this allusion to Jesus Christ?

▶ **Allusion:** a reference to a person, place, poem, book, event, etc., that the speaker expects listeners to recognize

The Shakers were a Protestant religious sect that sympathized with the plight of the Native Americans. They visited with Tecumseh and his fellow Shawnee numerous times throughout the early 1800s.

Excerpt from Chapter X of *Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass*

I had left Master Thomas's house, and went to live with Mr. Covey, on the 1st of January, 1833. I was now, for the first time in my life, a field hand. In my new employment, I found myself even more awkward than a country boy appeared to be in a large city. I had been at my new home but one week before Mr. Covey gave me a very severe whipping, cutting my back, causing the blood to run, and raising ridges on my flesh as large as my little finger. The details of this affair are as follows: Mr. Covey sent me, very early in the morning of one of our coldest days in the month of January, to the woods, to get a load of wood. He gave me a team of **unbroken** oxen. He told me which was the in-hand ox, and which the off-hand one. He then tied the end of a large rope around the horns of the in-hand ox, and gave me the other end of it, and told me, if the oxen started to run, that I must hold on upon the rope. I had never driven oxen before, and of course I was very awkward. I, however, succeeded in getting to the edge of the woods with little difficulty; but I had got a very few **rods** into the woods, when the oxen took fright, and started full tilt, carrying the cart against trees, and over stumps, in the most frightful manner. I expected every moment that my brains would be dashed out against the trees. After running thus for a considerable distance, they finally upset the cart, dashing it with great force against a tree, and threw themselves into a dense **thicket**. How I escaped death, I do not know. There I was, entirely alone, in a thick wood, in a place new to me. My cart

These two statements reveal a great deal about the author at this point in his life. What can you infer about the type of work that Douglass may have done prior to being sent to work for Mr. Covey? How old do you think Douglass may have been upon his arrival at Mr. Covey's?

Inference: the act of drawing a conclusion that is not actually stated by the author

The word *unbroken* means "wild or untamed." Why do you think Covey sends Douglass out with unbroken oxen on his very first job?



EXERCISES

Short-Answer Questions

Answer each of the following questions in a few sentences, based on the text you have just read. Briefly explain each of your answers.

1. Summarize the main point of the reading in one brief paragraph. What crucial idea does Douglass ultimately want to convey to the reader?

“Blood, Toil, Tears, and Sweat”

In this brief opening statement, Churchill explains what he hopes to achieve in delivering this particular speech. What is his goal?

▶ I beg to **move**,

That this House welcomes the formation of a Government representing the united and **inflexible resolve** of the nation to **prosecute** the war with Germany to a victorious conclusion.

What kind of administration does the country need, according to Churchill?

▶ On Friday evening last I received His Majesty's commission to form a new Administration. It was

▶ the **evident** wish and will of Parliament and the nation that this should be **conceived** on the broadest possible basis and that it should include all parties, both those who supported the late Government and also the parties of the Opposition. I have completed the most important part of this task. A War Cabinet

Churchill now provides evidence showing that he already has begun building a united administration. What two examples does he give here?

▶ has been formed of five Members, representing, with the Opposition Liberals, the **unity** of the nation. The three party Leaders have agreed to serve, either in the War Cabinet or in high executive office. The three Fighting Services have been filled. It was necessary that this should be done in one single day, on account of the extreme urgency and **rigour** of events. A

How would you describe the tone of the speech up to this point?

Tone: the atmosphere in a speech or literary work; the attitude an author or speaker puts into a work

▶ number of other positions, key positions, were filled yesterday, and I am submitting a further list to His Majesty tonight. I hope to complete the **appointment** of the **principal Ministers** during tomorrow. The appointment of the other Ministers usually takes a little longer, but I trust that, when Parliament meets again, this part of my task will be completed, and that the administration will be complete in all respects.

I considered it in the public interest to suggest that the House should be **summoned** to meet today.

performed well. His mission concluded the testing for a human orbital flight, achieved by John Glenn on February 20, 1962. Enos died at Holloman Air Force Base of a non-space related case of **dysentery** 11 months after his flight.

On October 18, 1963, French scientists launched the first cat into space on a Veronique AGI sounding rocket No. 47. The cat, named Felix, was successfully retrieved after a parachute descent, but a second **feline** flight on October 24 ran into difficulties that prevented recovery.

Back in the Soviet Union, the dogs Veterok ("Breeze") and Ugolyok ("Little Piece Of Coal") were launched aboard Kosmos 110 by the Soviet Union on February 22, 1966. The flight was an evaluation of prolonged effects during space travel of radiation from the Van Allen Belts on animals. Twenty-one days in space still stands as a canine record and was only **surpassed** by humans in June 1974 with the flight of Skylab 2.

The year 1968 saw the U.S.S.R. turn once again to the animal kingdom for the first passengers of their new, manned moon ship. The first successful Zond ("probe") launch was on September 15, 1968, when Zond 5 was launched. A biological payload of turtles, wine flies, mealworms, plants, seeds, bacteria, and other living matter was included in the flight. On September 18, 1968, the spacecraft flew around the Moon. On September 21, 1968, the reentry capsule entered the earth's atmosphere, braked **aerodynamically**, and deployed parachutes at 7 km. The capsule splashed down in the Indian Ocean and

How does this paragraph relate to the paragraph about Ham? What main point do the two have in common?

What information has been included in the previous accounts that is missing from this one?



EXERCISES

Short-Answer Questions

Answer each of the following questions in a few sentences, based on the text you have just read. Briefly explain each of your answers.

1. What is the purpose of the article? What type of audience does it seem to be aimed at?

2. Briefly summarize the main point of the article.