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Introduction

The old adage “practice makes perfect” can really hold true for children and their education. The more practice students have with concepts being taught in school, the more success they are likely to find. For many parents, knowing how to achieve this goal and support their child’s learning can be frustrating. This book is designed to eliminate the guesswork for parents using it at home, while also being a valuable resource for educators using it in the classroom.

Here’s how: By pairing interesting texts in three different categories (fiction, nonfiction, and informational) with comprehension questions, students will get practice in encountering different text types and showing that they fully understand what they have read.

For Grade 4, *Practice Makes Perfect: Reading Comprehension* covers the following skills:

- using various reading strategies to comprehend text
- using context clues to determine the meaning of unknown words
- skimming text to quickly locate information
- locating the main idea of a text as a whole or of a part (paragraph, etc.) of a text
- making inferences and predictions based on information given

Inside This Resource

Reading Passages and Comprehension Questions (pages 4–39) — There are 18 reading passages that have been divided into three categories: fiction, nonfiction, and informational. These passages can be read sequentially or can be done out of order, as needed.

Practice Tests (pages 40–45) — There are 3 practice tests, one each for fiction, nonfiction, and informational texts.

Answer Sheets (pages 46–47) — These optional sheets provide a similar format to those found on standardized tests. These “bubble-in” answer sheets can be used in the classroom or at home.

Answer Key (page 48) — This key provides the answers for all of the comprehension questions that accompany the passages.

Helpful Tips

- Establish consistency by setting up a certain time of day to work on these practice pages. Look for times in your day or week that are less hectic and more conducive to practicing skills.
- Keep practice sessions short, positive, and constructive. If your child becomes frustrated, set the book aside and look for another time to practice.
- Provide extra guidance and support in the areas in which your child is struggling. Look for ways to apply these skills to real-life situations.

Name: _____

The Chess Champion

Pedro looked down at the chessboard and swallowed. He always got nervous just before a match, and today was no exception. Today was the big chess tournament. All the schools had sent their best players to compete at the convention center downtown. Yet, here sat Pedro, waiting to make his first move.

Pedro felt that he was not the best chess player in his school. Rashid was better, and it was Rashid who had won the match to decide which student from Carver Middle School would qualify for the tournament. Rashid had come down with the flu, though, so now Pedro was here to take his place.

The girl across the board from Pedro looked really tough. Her name was Jasmine, and she had come in third in the state last year. The more Pedro looked at her intent face, the less he thought that he could beat her. He looked down at the board again.

In front of him were 16 white chess pieces. The pawns were the weakest and least important pieces. There were eight of them, facing the pieces across the board. Behind the pawns were the king, the queen, two bishops, two knights, and two rooks. Somehow Pedro had to protect his king while capturing Jasmine's king. It was not going to be easy.

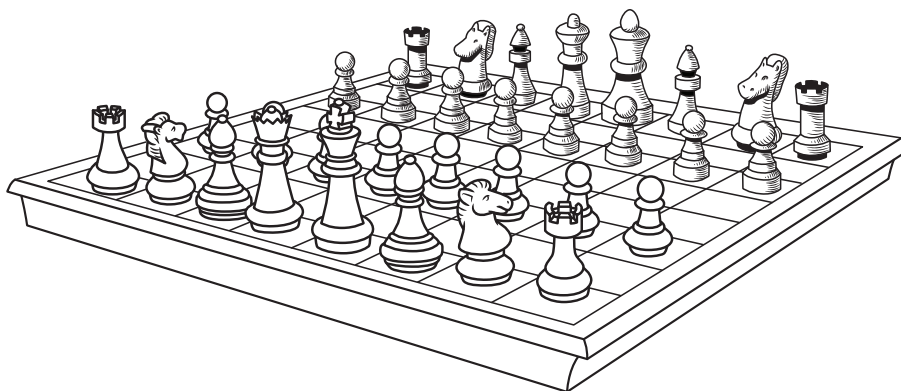
Pedro nervously moved one of his pawns. The game had started. Jasmine quickly moved one of her pawns. Pedro moved another pawn. Jasmine did the same. So far, it was not so bad. In fact, Jasmine was using the same moves that most of Pedro's usual opponents used.

After 15 minutes, Pedro realized that Jasmine was beginning to make little mistakes. Once, she almost made a move that would have left her king open. She seemed to be in a hurry, trying to get Pedro to move his pieces quickly. Pedro refused to let her rush him. He took his time.

Then, all at once, he saw his chance. If he moved his queen in front of Jasmine's rook, he would be able to win. He moved his queen, leaving his finger on top of it. As long as he was touching his playing piece, his move was not yet over. He pretended to hesitate; then he took his finger off.

Bam! Jasmine took his queen with her rook, almost knocking it off the table. "Ha!" she exhaled. "Take that!"

Pedro smiled as he moved a piece toward Jasmine's king. "Checkmate," he said. Jasmine's shoulders slumped as she realized her mistake.



Name: _____

The Chess Champion

After reading the passage, answer the questions. Fill in the bubble beside each correct answer.

1. Why did Jasmine say, “Ha! Take that!”
 - (A) She wanted Pedro to take her rook.
 - (B) She wanted to scare Pedro.
 - (C) She thought Pedro’s joke was funny.
 - (D) She thought Pedro had made a mistake.

2. Why did Pedro make sure he played slowly?
 - (A) He felt he might make mistakes if he rushed.
 - (B) Rashid had told him to play that way.
 - (C) He wanted Jasmine to get bored and quit.
 - (D) Tournament rules said to play slowly.

3. How does Pedro feel at the end of the story?
 - (A) sorry that Jasmine lost
 - (B) sad because he lost his queen
 - (C) disappointed that he had made mistakes
 - (D) happy because he won

4. Why did Pedro stare at the board before the game even started?
 - (A) If he looked around the convention center, he would lose his focus.
 - (B) If he looked at Jasmine, his doubts about winning increased.
 - (C) He needed to decide if he should move his queen.
 - (D) The tournament officials wanted him to count his chess pieces.

5. Which sentence from the passage helps you answer question #4?
 - (A) In fact, Jasmine was using the same moves that most of Pedro’s usual opponents used.
 - (B) The more Pedro looked at her intent face, the less likely he thought that he could beat her.
 - (C) If he moved his queen in front of Jasmine’s rook, he would be able to win.
 - (D) As long he was touching his playing piece, his move was not yet over.

Name: _____

How the Food Got Its Name

A snack seen at baseball games, racetracks, or your backyard barbecue, hot dogs are one of the most popular foods in America. Every hour, 1.88 million hot dogs are produced in the United States. On average, every person in the United States eats about 1.2 hot dogs every week. There aren't many foods that were invented in America, but the hot dog is one of them. It's very similar to the sausage that comes from Germany. When did the sausage come to America? How did the sausage become the hot dog? Where did the name "hot dog" come from?

In the 1880s, a man named Charles Feltman moved to America from Frankfurt, Germany. Shortly after he came to America, Feltman sold cold pies from a food cart in Coney Island, New York. But Feltman had competition. He wasn't selling many pies because people preferred to eat in the hotels and restaurants, where they could sit down to eat heated food. Feltman's friends suggested that he sell hot foods, because people might like something warm to eat even if they were too busy to sit down.

Feltman decided to sell something people ate in his old hometown called the frankfurter. He made one important change, though. People in Germany usually ate frankfurters from a plate with a fork. Feltman put the sausage on a bun, covered it with mustard, and offered sauerkraut with it. He called it the "frankfurter sandwich." People loved Feltman's new creation, and the frankfurter sandwich became very popular. Feltman's business grew quickly. Soon, he was able to open his own restaurant.

When did people start calling the frankfurter sandwich a hot dog? At first Feltman's invention was known by many names. People called the frankfurter sandwiches "franks," "red-hots," or "wieners." One day in 1916, a cartoonist named Tad Dorgan was at a baseball game. He heard the frankfurter sellers yelling, "Get your red-hot dachshund sausages!" This gave Dorgan an idea for a new cartoon. Dachshunds are long skinny dogs with short legs. They are shaped very much like a sausage. Dorgan drew a cartoon of a dachshund inside a bun, as if it were a sausage with mustard on it. Dorgan didn't know how to spell the name of the dog, so when he drew the sausage seller, he made him yell, "Get your hot dogs!" The name stuck, and now most people know Charles Feltman's frankfurter sandwich as the "hot dog."



Name: _____

How the Food Got Its Name

After reading the passage, answer the questions. Fill in the bubble beside each correct answer.

1. Why was Charles Feltman having trouble selling his cold pies?
 - (A) People preferred to eat heated food in hotels and restaurants.
 - (B) Feltman was from Frankfurt, Germany.
 - (C) The cold pies did not taste very good.
 - (D) People preferred hot dogs.

2. What did Charles Feltman call his creation of a sausage on a bun with mustard?
 - (A) hot dog
 - (B) cold pie
 - (C) hot dachshund
 - (D) Frankfurter sandwich

3. Why did Ted Dorgan write “Get your hot dogs!” at the bottom of his cartoon?
 - (A) He did not want people to call the treat “franks” anymore.
 - (B) He wanted to be the first person to invent a name for the treat.
 - (C) He did not know how to spell *dachshund*.
 - (D) He wanted to sell hot dogs at baseball games.

4. How did Feltman probably feel when his creation became popular?
 - (A) glad
 - (B) tired
 - (C) disappointed
 - (D) puzzled

5. You can tell from the passage that the hot dog
 - (A) is not very popular.
 - (B) has an interesting history.
 - (C) was named in Germany.
 - (D) is always served with mustard.

Name: _____

Community Message Board

Choir Practice
7:30 P.M. Wednesdays.
10th St. Baptist Church.
Meet in the fellowship hall.

Volunteer Firehouse Pancake Supper
Come get Fireman Frank's Famous Flapjacks this Saturday from 5 P.M. - 7 P.M.

Karate Classes
Two 1-hour classes weekly, Tues. and Thurs., starting at 6 P.M.
Instructor has a black belt in karate. Learn to defend yourself and have fun!

Moving Sale
56 East Grove Street
Selling furniture, toys, clothes, a bike. Washer and dryer, \$100.00 for both.

Need your lawn mowed?
I will work hard.
Call Mike at 555-8721.

LITTLE LEAGUE TRYOUTS
Little League tryouts this Saturday afternoon at 1:00.
Call Brad at 555-2941 for more information.
Bring your own glove.

Dog Wash in Marlow Park
Bring a dirty dog, leave with a clean one! \$5.00 per dog.
Flea dip extra.
Call Lisa at 555-0971 for more information.

New Day to Recycle is Wednesday
Recycling pick-up day has been changed. It is now Wednesday. Be sure to put your recycling on the curb before 8:00 A.M.

Name: _____

Community Message Board

After reading the passage, answer the questions. Fill in the bubble beside each correct answer.

1. When should you put your recycling on the curb?
 - (A) Wednesday afternoon
 - (B) after 8:00 A.M. on Wednesday
 - (C) at 8:00 A.M. on Wednesday
 - (D) before 8:00 A.M. on Wednesday

2. At about what time will the karate classes end?
 - (A) 6 P.M. on Tuesdays and Thursdays
 - (B) 7 P.M. on Tuesdays and Thursdays
 - (C) 7 P.M. on Saturdays
 - (D) 8 A.M. on Wednesdays

3. Who is the message board for?
 - (A) only dog owners
 - (B) everybody in the community
 - (C) mostly people who are moving
 - (D) everyone in the neighboring town

4. Which of these is a fact found on the message board?
 - (A) All of the dogs in the community have fleas.
 - (B) Mike needs his lawn mowed.
 - (C) Only the Baptist Church has a choir.
 - (D) The little league does not give players gloves.

5. Which number should a person call if their lawn needs mowing?
 - (A) 555-0971
 - (B) 555-2941
 - (C) 555-8721
 - (D) 555-8271