

**READ THE PASSAGE** Look for reasons why things happen.

### **Not the Way to Start the Day**

Sophie rushed as she got ready for school. She had waited until last night to do her book report. Sophie's idea was great. She had created a small stage and finger puppets to retell the story she had read. But Sophie spent most of the night putting it all together. She did the rest of her homework that morning.

The stage and puppets were in the car and so was Sophie's mom. She did not want to be late for work. Sophie's mom blasted the horn. The noise startled Sneakers, Sophie's cat. He dashed in front of Sophie just as she started to zip her backpack. Sophie tripped and out flew her papers. Gonzo woke up, ready for a chase. As the dog ran, his claws pierced Sophie's homework. Now it was full of tiny holes. Sneakers jumped onto the table, where he thought he was safe. Gonzo stood on his hind legs and plopped his big paws near the cat. As he barked, one paw knocked over a glass of juice. Sophie saw the juice drip slowly and steadily onto her homework. She would have a lot of explaining to do at school!

**SKILL PRACTICE** Read the item. Write your response.

1. How does the car horn start a chain reaction?

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2. Why didn't Sophie finish her homework the night before?

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3. What is Sophie going to have to explain at school? Who will ask for the explanation?

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**STRATEGY PRACTICE** Underline verbs in the passage that helped you visualize the actions.

**READ THE PASSAGE** Notice the causes of things that happen.

### Please Make Spelling Simple

Do you have trouble spelling? Do you think that the rules are confusing? If you do, most people would agree with you. In fact, about 100 years ago, Andrew Carnegie tried to make changes in the English language. He correctly predicted that English would become the most important language in the world. So he wanted to make English easier to read and write. He gathered together a group of 30 very smart men. They created new spellings for 300 common words.

The men believed that words should be spelled the way they sound. So they used the letters for the sounds they heard and got rid of silent letters. For example, *surprise* was spelled *surprize*, *ghost* became *gost*, and *through* became *thru*.

Most of the spelling changes that the men suggested never happened. But, thanks to Andrew Carnegie, we now write *fantasy* instead of *phantasy* and *hiccup* instead of *hiccough*.

**SKILL PRACTICE** Read the item. Write your response.

1. Why did Carnegie want to make English easier to read and write?

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2. Why were silent letters eliminated in the new spellings? State text evidence.

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3. Why do you think that most of the spelling changes the men suggested didn't happen?

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**STRATEGY PRACTICE** Look at the second paragraph. Circle the sentence that tells a cause. Underline the sentence that describes the effect.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

**READ THE PASSAGE** Look for words that give someone's opinion.

### Up, Up, and Away!

"Impossible!" said some. "It's foolish!" said others. Frenchman Jean-Pierre Blanchard claimed that he could fly. He had come to America with his hot-air balloon. President George Washington thought the idea was wonderful and wished Blanchard good luck. Scientists asked to go along on the flight. But Blanchard said no. He wanted the honor all to himself. As he was ready to lift off, however, something furry was shoved into his hands. A small dog would share Blanchard's fame!

Cannons fired and bands played. The balloon rose slowly into the sky. Blanchard waved his feathered hat and a small flag to the crowds below. They cheered from roads, fields, and even rooftops. Blanchard liked all of the attention.

The balloon sailed over a river. It seemed as narrow as a ribbon to Blanchard. Thin clouds looked like pulled cotton. About 46 minutes later, Blanchard landed the balloon in a farmer's field. He and the dog had flown 15 miles (24 km). The farmer had never seen a man come down from the clouds. He ran off into the woods!

**SKILL PRACTICE** Read the item. Write your response.

1. Which fact let you know that this balloon flight happened long ago?

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2. Write the sentence that is an opinion in paragraph two. How do you know?

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3. What caused the farmer to run into the woods?

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**STRATEGY PRACTICE** Describe to a partner a scene in the passage that you most enjoyed visualizing.

**READ THE PASSAGE** Notice what is fact and what is opinion.

### Filming Animals

Some marine animals and land animals make movies. They actually do the filming! Cameras called Crittercams are safely and gently attached to the animals. The cameras record pictures and sounds for scientists to study. Scientists believe that the cameras are the best tools for studying animals in the wild. Best of all, the animals aren't bothered by the cameras.

Marine animals were the first Crittercam moviemakers. In 1989, a sea turtle had a Crittercam strapped to its back. The camera soon fell off. Four years later, cameras were attached to seals, using safe, sticky patches. In 1996, special suction cups were used to attach cameras to whales. In 1999, penguins wore backpacks.

Scientists thought it was important to try cameras on land animals. In 2003, a Crittercam sat on the back of a lion hunting in Africa. Today, bears, lions, and hyenas wear the cameras as collars. Crittercam gives us an up-close look at the secret lives of wild animals. These films are exciting to watch!

**SKILL PRACTICE** Read the item. Write your response.

1. Write two opinion statements from the text. How do you know they are opinions?

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2. Why are the facts in the first paragraph essential to the text?

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3. Why do you think the scientists used Crittercams on marine animals first?

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**STRATEGY PRACTICE** Which paragraph gives the most information chronologically?

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Name: \_\_\_\_\_

**READ THE PASSAGE** Visualize the animal as you read.

### **Hanging Around**

Sloths are animals that make their homes in trees. This flat-faced mammal lives in rainforests. It spends most of its time hanging from tree branches. A sloth is adapted to live its life hanging like a hammock.

A tree is a place of safety for a sloth, and the ground is not. Long, curved claws on each foot help it climb a tree and hang. With strong shoulder and neck muscles, a sloth can hang with ease. But a sloth's back legs are so weak, it cannot stand. It is a plant eater, so food is handy in a tree. A sloth simply tugs on a branch until its long tongue can reach the leaves.

Spotting a sloth is not easy. For one thing, it stays very still and moves ever so slowly. It may take the mammal a day to inch from one tree to another. And all of the moisture in the rainforest causes tiny green algae to grow on the sloth's brown fur. With a mossy-green color, the sloth blends right in with its home. Going "green" is easy for a sloth!

**SKILL PRACTICE** Read the item. Write your response.

1. What causes a sloth's fur to be a mossy-green color?

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2. What is the effect of the sloth's strong neck and shoulder muscles?

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3. Jenny says, "This scooter is as speedy as a sloth!" What does she mean?

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**STRATEGY PRACTICE** Describe a sloth, using details you visualized as you read.

