



# LANGUAGE ARTS

STUDENT BOOK

▶ **8th Grade** | Unit 7

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# Language Arts 807

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# Critical Reading and Paragraph Skills

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## Introduction

The study of English is important because language not only affects you, but it also affects others. This LIFE PAC® will focus on the skills of *reading* and *writing*. As you study this LIFE PAC, you will realize more the great impact of reading and writing on your total educational process. Since most information comes by way of the printed page, much of what you know and believe is the direct result of reading. Unless you learn to become a critical reader, you may be misled by the author or misinterpret what has been written.

To effectively communicate ideas in writing is also important. The use of the specific techniques and skills in proper writing is also important. The use of the specific techniques and skills in proper writing will enable you to effectively communicate your own feelings and ideas to others in a clear and precise manner.

Reading and writing skills prepare you for a future of interaction with people who have a variety of feelings and ideas. As a Christian, you will want to be able to evaluate what you read, and this ability will enable you to express yourself well in writing as well. Christians must strive to become “scholars communicating the work of Christ” through the proficient use of language. By learning its fundamentals throughout these LIFE PACs you will be preparing not only for the present but also for the future.

In this LIFE PAC you will learn to read critically and to write unified and coherent paragraphs. Work at the mastery of each section by utilizing all the necessary tools for successful work and interaction with others throughout life.

## 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. Identify the complexities of words.
2. Evaluate an author’s credentials and information.
3. Identify statements of fact, opinion, and bias.
4. Detect misleading reasoning and information.
5. Describe propaganda techniques.
6. Write unified and coherent paragraphs.
7. Correct sentence fragments and run-on sentences.
8. Write a composition that includes the introduction, body, and conclusion.
9. Use and spell the vocabulary words and spelling words correctly.

# 1. CRITICAL READING

In today's society the necessity of reading intelligently, thoughtfully, and critically is essential. Since much of what you know comes from the printed page, you must evaluate material that is compiled by someone else and that may reflect his beliefs and **biases**. Unfortunately, many readers tend to accept everything that is written as fact. A good reader must question what

he reads. A good reader does not automatically accept what he reads until he has evaluated the words, author, and the material content of the book. Concentrate on these goals as you work through this first section in order to become an informed and critical reader.

## SECTION OBJECTIVES

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

1. Identify the complexities of words.
2. Evaluate an author's credentials and information.
3. Identify statements of fact, opinion, and bias.
4. Detect misleading reasoning and information.
5. Describe propaganda techniques.
9. Use and spell the vocabulary words and the spelling words correctly.

## VOCABULARY

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

**affective** (u fek' tiv). Touching the emotions; having to do with feelings.

**bias** (bī' us). Prejudice; a judgment rarely based on fact.

**connotation** (kon u tā' shun). That which is suggested in addition to the primary meaning.

**context** (kon' tekst). The parts that surround a word or passage that clarify its meaning.

**credential** (kri den' shul). Something that gives a title or reference that assures confidence in someone or something.

**denotation** (dē nō tā' shun). The thing to which a name applies; a clear sign.

**directive** (du rek' tiv). Serves to point out the direction to someone.

**disillusioned** (dis i lü' zhund). Disenchanted; disappointed.

**evoke** (i vōk'). To call forth.

**gregarious** (gru gār' ē us). Tending to associate with others; to be social.

**gullible** (gul' u bul). Capable of being deceived.

**incite** (in sīt'). To move to action; to spur on.

**infallible** (in fal' u bul). Incapable of error.

**inference** (in' fur uns). An indication or suggestion about something.



stands for something other than its primary meaning, it becomes a symbol. For example, the word *dove* has become a symbol of peace and the word *hawk* has become a symbol of war. Readers may sometimes be misled by words used as symbols that promote advertising or politics. In advertising, for instance, words may imply something else, and the reader must discern the difference. Such words make promises of youth, athletic ability, acceptance, happiness, health, and the list goes on and on. Most people do not realize that words can be misleading. A certain kind of toothpaste

or tennis shoe transform the wearer into an instant athlete, yet many people are subconsciously affected by the “symbol game” played with words.

Unless a critical evaluation of the **validity** of these written claims is made, people may be **victimized** by carefully worded advertisements or other promises. How many times have other individuals, you, your family, or your friends purchased an item because of the symbolic implication of words rather than the value of the item itself? Keep this thought in mind.



### Complete these statements.

- 1.1 A symbol may represent \_\_\_\_\_ .
- 1.2 Words become symbols in writing especially \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_ .
- 1.3 Most of us do not realize that words may be \_\_\_\_\_ .
- 1.4 As readers you must learn to consider critically the validity of advertiser’s claims and to know how to \_\_\_\_\_ .

**Give seven words or slogans from advertising and tell what they promise or symbolize to the public.**

- |           |            |
|-----------|------------|
| 1.5 _____ | 1.9 _____  |
| 1.6 _____ | 1.10 _____ |
| 1.7 _____ | 1.11 _____ |
| 1.8 _____ |            |

**TEACHER CHECK**

\_\_\_\_\_ initials

\_\_\_\_\_ date

**Denotation and connotation.** Two other important aspects of wording the reader should know is the **denotation** and **connotation** of words. The *denotation of a word is the thing to which a name applies*; that is, what it refers to or what the reader can actually point to. For instance, the word *cat* refers to a certain cat that one can point to; the word *robin* refers to a bird that can be singled out; and so forth.

The *connotation of a word*, on the other hand, is *what is suggested* rather than literal or simple meaning of the word. It is also *the response it arouses in the minds of its users*. This latter aspect of connotation is the most significant one to the study here. The personal feelings that a word arouses are called **affective** connotations. Many words have affective connotations, and people often use words simply for their *effect*, not necessarily for their actual definition. Therefore, we call someone a “trooper,” an “angel,” or a “doll” simply for the effect of the word rather than for the actual definition.

Be alert to the feelings words arouse and determine whether the true definition is stated or whether the author is simply attempting to **evoke** an emotional response. Remember that people are sometimes motivated by words such as hate, joy, love, fear, awe, and others. The author may use words that have shades of meaning to prompt the reader to respond in either a negative or a positive way. Certain words may suggest certain feelings; others may carry built-in judgments. The reader must be aware of the **implications** of certain words since those implications may be inappropriate,

misleading, or even absurd. Unless the reader is aware of the ability of word power to affect emotions, he too might be controlled by a passage of writing. Notice the connotative differences in the following two reports:

### Report 1

Downtown today, a reporter saw a mother demonstrating parental authority and discipline. The child was throwing dirt at passersby. The mother then proceeded to scold the child, illustrating that all discipline is not lost in America.

### Report 2

In the park this afternoon a reporter witnessed a mother punishing her small child. The child was playing with dirt and scattered some on passersby. The irate mother grabbed the little child and struck him, illustrating, perhaps, the roots of child abuse in America today.

Notice that not only are two opinions expressed but also, and even more **subtly**, the word choice in Report 2 is designed to evoke strong emotion. For example, the reporter used “punishing” that suggests severe treatment. He also mentions that the child is just “playing” with dirt and happens to “scatter” some on passersby. The reporter refers to the “irate” mother as she “grabs” and “strikes” the child. The report hints that any degree of punishment is the root of child abuse in America! Word choice, therefore, is very vital. A reader must constantly be alert to the connotations of words as he reads and evaluates them.



**Complete these statements.**

- 1.12** The actual definition of the object to which a word refers is \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_.
- 1.13** The classifications and feelings that words evoke are called their \_\_\_\_\_.
- 1.14** The feelings that a word evokes in the reader is specifically named its  
\_\_\_\_\_.

**Make a list.**

- 1.15** Make a list of five words or phrases that evoke strong feelings (whether good or bad)...tell what feeling they evoke.
- a. \_\_\_\_\_ b. \_\_\_\_\_
- c. \_\_\_\_\_ d. \_\_\_\_\_
- e. \_\_\_\_\_

**Answer this question.**

- 1.16** What is the “danger” of ignoring the subtle connotations behind words?  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Complete this activity.**

- 1.17** Write examples of connotative differences by imagining two approaches to a single situation.

**TEACHER CHECK**

\_\_\_\_\_ initials

\_\_\_\_\_ date

**Context.** Another method of determining word meaning is from the surrounding words, or **context**. Some words may be used in different ways. A simple word like *bat*, for example, can have varied meanings depending on its usage in the sentence. Read the following example.

- Tom *batted* the ball in practice. (technical aspect of a game)
- Tom *batted* his eyes. (an act of blinking)
- Tom *batted* 1,000 this year. (to do well in something)

The reader cannot know the *exact* meaning of a word ahead of time; therefore, the word must be interpreted within its context. Ignoring the context of a word may cause the reader to be misled by the printed passage. Read, for example, this headline:

### “Governor’s Popularity Rises Sharply”

Taken out of context, this title would lead an incautious reader to accept the governor’s rise in popularity as fact. Actually the *whole* article states that his popularity rose in one section of the state while dropping everywhere else. Unless *all* facts are read (surrounding events, people, time and so forth), you will be misinformed and, as a result, ignorant of important information. Suppose someone taking medicine reads, “Take as needed.” If he were to **literally** follow this advice without reading the rest of the directions, “up to four times daily,” the reader might harm himself. Although these are simple illustrations, the message is clear: To avoid misreading, concentrate carefully on the context of the words. No one is more **gullible** than the reader who routinely accepts as fact all information presented out of context.



#### Complete the following activities.

- 1.18** Accepting a word without reading it closely may misinform a reader, and he may read out of \_\_\_\_\_ .
- 1.19** Words may have varied meanings. To prove this statement, give a possible definition of this nonsense word as used in context:  
Jerry *swuffed* his room.  
It was finally a *swuf* room. definition? \_\_\_\_\_  
He later *swuffed* out the refrigerator.
- 1.20** Think of an example from something you have read (or originate one) that has a word used incorrectly (out of context) that could misinform the reader.  
Example: “The governor is now engaged.”  
(Actual context states that the governor is busy.)
-

**1.21** Provide two sentences that show the different meanings of the following words.

strike \_\_\_\_\_

board \_\_\_\_\_

order \_\_\_\_\_

**1.22** The following statement is simple. Write it in a context that changes its meaning.

Example: I hate the sight of food!

In context: After eating two pizzas, I hate the sight of food!

Now you try it:

“Certainly son, I’ll buy you a yacht for your birthday.” \_\_\_\_\_

**Directive language.** A final aspect of words is **directive** language. Directive language is wording that attempts to direct or influence someone’s actions *by making statements about the future*. Nothing is basically right or wrong with directive language. What is important, however, is that the reader realizes that it does exist and that it has the ability to influence him. Language of this type is carefully designed to create a desired response in the reader.

Directive language is frequently used in advertising and politics. This type of wording promises what can become a reality in the future. Such promises often cannot be disproved in the present, so caution is recommended before blindly accepting directive promises. For example, a menu may advertise, “Try our light, flaky apple pie à la mode.” Without questioning, a person may order the pie. After all, he may reason, if the pie is written about in a positive way, it must be true! After tasting the pie, he may be quite disappointed. The customer eats it anyway and defends the menu by saying that perhaps the chef was having an “off day.” Because

this person was deceived by false promises, he may feel justified becoming critical of the food.

As previously mentioned, directive language may be used for many good purposes. Many ministers, politicians, educators, and scientists write and speak in directive language that helps prepare people for numerous future events. These predictions, or promises, take away some of life’s uncertainties thereby enabling others to face obstacles and problems more easily.

The key factor, however, is that anyone who uses directive language should feel morally bound to be truthful insofar as possible. Directive language is sometimes abused in this area, and it is the reader’s responsibility to detect any misleading directives. Do not be **disillusioned** and disappointed upon discovering false directives; just be prepared. Everyone cannot necessarily live up to all the promises included in directive statements. Therefore, the observant reader must be aware of *realistic* and *nonrealistic* directives. As an individual evaluates what he reads, he will become better prepared to detect false directives.



### Complete these activities.

1.23 Words that attempt to influence someone's actions in the future are called

\_\_\_\_\_

### Write R before the realistic and NR before the nonrealistic statements.

1.24 \_\_\_\_\_ The sun rises at 6:15 a.m.

1.25 \_\_\_\_\_ "Try our award-winning cake ---- a smile in every bite."

1.26 \_\_\_\_\_ "It's never too late to give your life to the Lord."

1.27 \_\_\_\_\_ "Find your place in the sun at Villa Homes."

1.28 \_\_\_\_\_ "Overuse will cause severe skin burn."

### Complete these activities.

1.29 Give an example of a false statement that you have read or heard.

\_\_\_\_\_

1.30 Give an example of a true statement that you have read, one that has been proven to be correct. \_\_\_\_\_

## AUTHOR'S CREDENTIALS AND INFORMATION

So far we have discussed words and the effect of words on the reader. A good reader also needs to know as much about the author of a particular book, article, or pamphlet as possible. This information can be divided into two categories: checking the author's **credentials** and analyzing the author's position.

First, the author's credentials and information should be validated. For example, is he qualified to write on the subject matter? Has he written other books or materials on this subject; and, if so, how were these received? The first step as a careful reader will be to check the author's credentials by reading the book jacket or leaf. Next, check on the publishing company. Is it associated with reliable books, or is it known for inappropriate and unreliable material? Librarians are often quite helpful in answering questions about publishers and

their reputations. Another source to consult is *Current Biographies* for information about living authors. Other sources in the reference section of the library are *Who's Who*, *Who's Who in America*, *Contemporary Authors*, and *Biography Index*. The internet has become a good source of biographical information on authors. School or city librarians can also assist in obtaining information about a particular author.

Confirming information about which the author writes and comparing it to what you already know, and what other reliable authors say about that subject is also helpful. For example, suppose a certain author appears to be a valid authority on history and yet as you read, you notice that some of his ideas seem unrealistic and unreliable. In this instance, check several reliable sources about the subject and compare that information with the author's. If very few

# SELF TEST 1

**Answer true or false** (each answer, 2 points).

- 1.01 \_\_\_\_\_ A word that stands for something beyond itself is promotional.
- 1.02 \_\_\_\_\_ A reader needs to critically evaluate words in reading.
- 1.03 \_\_\_\_\_ The material definition of a word or that which one could actually point to is its connotation.
- 1.04 \_\_\_\_\_ The category of a word and the response it arouses is called its motivation.
- 1.05 \_\_\_\_\_ People are often motivated by words to irrational responses.

**Answer these questions** (each question, 4 points).

- 1.06 Why must a reader be aware of the implications of certain words as he is reading?  
\_\_\_\_\_
- 1.07 When a word is defined by its use in a sentence, what is it called?  
\_\_\_\_\_
- 1.08 How could this statement be misleading? What does the statement probably mean with other information given? "I really enjoy drinking."  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
- 1.09 What is directive language? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
- 1.010 How can directive language be used for good purposes? For bad purposes?  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Write the letter for the correct answer in the space provided** (each answer, 2 points).

- 1.011 An author's credentials should be checked by \_\_\_\_\_.  
 a. checking the card catalog                      b. current biography  
 c. book jacket    d. librarian  
 e. a, c, d    f. b, c, d
- 1.012 *Bias* is \_\_\_\_\_.  
 a. an author's theory                                      b. judgment formed  
 c. a favorable connotation                              d. a person's well formed beliefs

- 1.013** Bias is dangerous because \_\_\_\_\_ .
- it seriously narrows your opinions
  - it destroys communication between equals
  - it is deceptive
  - it makes you want to be part of a crowd
- 1.014** An example of inference is \_\_\_\_\_ .
- "The Yankees traded with the Phillies."
  - "No one actually saw him leave the building."
  - "School usually closes between December 17 and January 2."
  - "The child had severe cuts."
- 1.015** Oversimplification in writing is dangerous because it \_\_\_\_\_ .
- allows a reader to follow his opinions
  - leaves few choices
  - destroys the complex plan of the author
  - deceives the reader with the lack of complexity
- 1.016** When an author gives only one choice, he is \_\_\_\_\_ .
- ignoring complexities
  - ignoring alternatives
  - ignoring reader intelligence
  - ignoring the solution to problems
- 1.017** The danger of an emotional appeal is that it \_\_\_\_\_ .
- stresses immediate reaction
  - does not allow the reader to do research
  - uses logic to fool the reader
  - a, b, and c

**Match the technique with its example (each answer, 2 points).**

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| <b>1.018</b> _____ appeal to mass emotion | a. It's so nice to feel so good about a meal.                                   |
| <b>1.019</b> _____ transfer technique     | b. Get the Niagram bed—it is changing the sleeping habits of America.           |
| <b>1.020</b> _____ name calling           | c. Read what the President's wife has to say about good grooming in this issue. |
| <b>1.021</b> _____ black or white fallacy | d. We're number one, we get the job done.                                       |
| <b>1.022</b> _____ bandwagon              | e. Whereas Bane only gives a year's guarantee...                                |

**1.023** Explain why each of the preceding statements (a, b, c, d, and e above) persuades the reader to purchase the products (each answer, 4 points).

a. \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

b. \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

c. \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

d. \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

e. \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

**Write in the blank the letter of the correct answer** (each answer, 2 points).

**1.024** The word victimized means \_\_\_\_\_ .

- a. to be in error
- b. to be swindled
- c. to be disenchanted
- d. to be uncertain

**1.025** The meaning of bias is \_\_\_\_\_ .

- a. to be prejudiced
- b. to be anxious
- c. to be discouraged
- d. to be intolerant

**1.026** The spreading of ideas and facts to further one's cause is known as \_\_\_\_\_ .

- a. gregariousness
- b. infallibility
- c. implication
- d. propaganda

**1.027** To move to action, or spur on, is \_\_\_\_\_ .

- a. to investigate
- b. to review
- c. to incite
- d. to suggest

**1.028** The primary meaning of a term or expression is its \_\_\_\_\_ .

- a. inferred meaning
- b. symbolic meaning
- c. subtle meaning
- d. literal meaning

<div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; display: inline-block;">                 67  <hr style="width: 50%; margin: 0;"/>                 84             </div>		<b>SCORE</b> _____	<b>TEACHER</b> _____	_____ <small>initials</small>	_____ <small>date</small>
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**ABC** Take your spelling test of Spelling Words-1.



LAN0807 - May '14 Printing

ISBN 978-0-86717-377-2



9 780867 173772



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Rock Rapids, IA 51246-1759

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