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LESSON

8

Analyzing Connections: Comparisons and Analogies

PART 1

Introduction

THEME: >>> Favorite Pastimes

Authors often make connections between individuals, ideas, or events in texts through comparisons and analogies. You compare and contrast events and how individuals respond to them. You draw **analogies**, or comparisons between ideas. When you read for information, note how the text makes these connections both directly and by inference. Recognizing these connections will help you explain something that is unfamiliar.

Look at the cartoon.



Benjamin Franklin created the above cartoon, which was featured in the *Pennsylvania Gazette* on May 9, 1754. It later became a symbol for the American Revolution. The joint snake, a mythical creature that can reassemble itself after being cut into pieces, inspired the cartoon.

Now analyze the art by answering the questions below.

The pieces of the snake in the cartoon are labeled with the names of the colonies.

What is the cartoon suggesting that the colonies do? _____

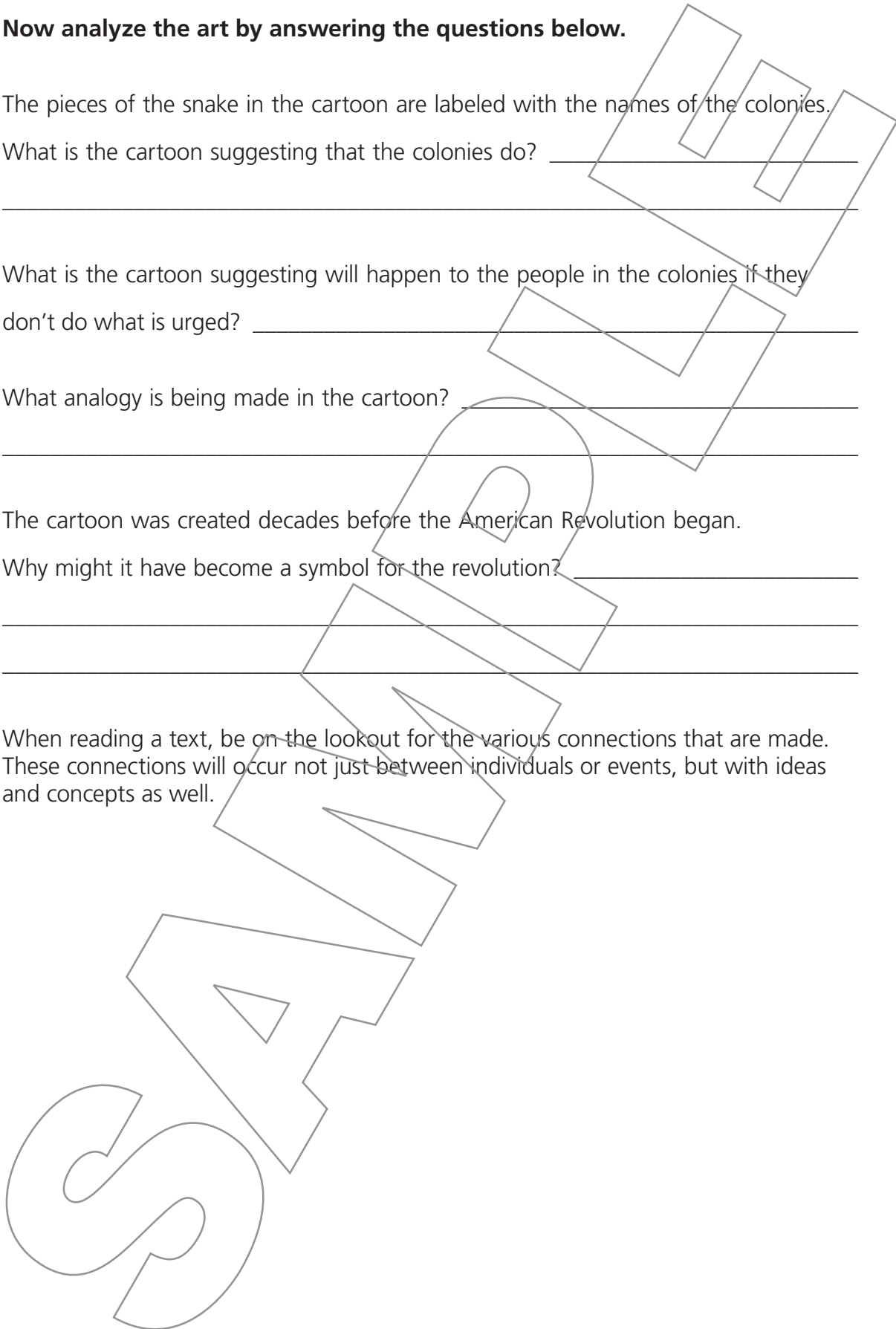
What is the cartoon suggesting will happen to the people in the colonies if they don't do what is urged? _____

What analogy is being made in the cartoon? _____

The cartoon was created decades before the American Revolution began.

Why might it have become a symbol for the revolution? _____

When reading a text, be on the lookout for the various connections that are made. These connections will occur not just between individuals or events, but with ideas and concepts as well.



Read the first part of the passage. Then answer the questions.

Effects of Technology

1 In today's world, technology surrounds kids. It comes in many forms including televisions, computers, phones, and video games. As beneficial and entertaining as technology is, many people are becoming increasingly concerned about the effects of technology on kids. Doctors advise parents to set limits on technology using the recommendation of the American Pediatric Society (APS). The APS suggests that kids spend no more than 1 to 2 hours watching quality TV or playing video games per day in order to prevent developmental delays, behavior problems, and learning difficulties. However, scientists have questioned this idea.

2 Scientists wondered if there were different effects for different types of technology. They conducted studies to determine if there was a difference in effect between playing video games and watching television. Their findings show that there is a difference. Video games have a largely positive effect on kids. According to an article published by the American Psychological Association, video games can increase learning, health and social skills, and creativity. However, the effect of large doses of other types of screen time, such as television, is negative. In a guide published by the University of Michigan Health System, negative effects from watching TV include less time spent reading, being physically active, and playing with friends as well as poor grades, sleep problems, and behavior problems.

Think About It

How are the ideas in the text connected through comparison? The question asks you to analyze the text and determine how ideas go together.

Underline the reason the APS suggests that kids spend no more than 1 to 2 hours a day playing video games or watching television.

What are the scientist's findings about playing video games? _____

What are the scientist's findings about watching television? _____

What ideas are connected through comparison in the text? _____

A CLOSER LOOK

Underline sentences in paragraph 3 that give information about playing video games. Circle sentences in paragraph 3 that give information about watching television.

Continue reading the passage. Then answer the question.

3 The reason for the difference in effect between video games and TV is based on engagement. Video games call for active engagement, whereas watching television requires only passive engagement. Visualize a kid watching a television show and a kid playing a video game. When kids watch television, they zone out most of the time because they do not have to strategize, problem solve, or respond in any particular way. However, the opposite is true for video games. Kids are sometimes so engaged in a video game, they don't even hear what people are saying around them. That is like the black belt of learning because it shows highly engaged attention toward the mastery of a skill.

4 Based on the findings that technology can have positive effects, the focus of technology use in kids is changing. Doctors, researchers, and scientists are continuing their study of the effects of technology on children. In the future, scientists might have different recommendations on how much time watching TV and playing video games is healthy as well as what kinds of video games and television programs are most advantageous.

How are the ideas in paragraph 3 connected?

What is one difference between watching television and playing video games?

- A Playing video games requires passive engagement.
- B Watching television requires active engagement.
- C Kids are actively engaged while playing video games.
- D When watching television, kids must strategize or problem solve.

DISCUSS IT

Think about the analogy used in paragraph 3: "That is like the black belt of learning because it shows highly engaged attention toward the mastery of a skill." Turn to another student and discuss how the analogy connects ideas in the text.

Read the passage. Then answer the questions.

From Video Games to the Race Track

- 1 Life skills are those abilities that are necessary for coping with everyday challenges. Many of these skills are learned in childhood through social interaction and play time. In today's culture, kids seem to be spending more and more time playing video games than playing with each other. Critics of video games claim that children are not learning the life skills they need because they spend too much time with technology. Racecar driver Jann Mardenborough would have to disagree. Although he had never driven a full-size racecar until he was 19 years old, he began training for it in his bedroom playing a racecar video game.
- 2 Researchers are finding that there are many positive effects that come from playing video games. One of those effects is learning life skills. Studies show that video games can teach many applicable, real-life skills such as perseverance, critical thinking, sharing, planning, communicating effectively, and good decision-making. Scientific tests showed that when both gamers and nongamers were asked to identify, locate, and track objects, those proficient in video games were up to 50 percent better at those skills. Research also shows that playing video games increases the ability to quickly make decisions, which is important in many areas of life.
- 3 Different kinds of games teach different kinds of skills. Video games that require users to alternate controllers when more than one player is present teach kids to share and take turns. Multiplayer online role-playing games require users to set goals and work as a team to achieve those goals. Games that have puzzles and levels that increase in complexity and include obstacles teach kids to strategize and problem solve. Life-simulation video games teach players that there are consequences for poor choices such as getting fired for missing work.
- 4 For Mardenborough, the racing video game he played gave him many of the skills that are necessary when driving a racecar in real life. According to Mardenborough, when he was driving on a real circuit and his car began sliding sideways, he applied what he learned in the video game to handle the situation. He isn't the only one applying video game skills to everyday life. A recent study published in Archives of Surgery states that surgeons who play video games on a regular basis are more skilled than nonplayers at laparoscopic surgery, minimally invasive surgery performed with a fiber optic instrument through a small incision.

A CLOSER LOOK

Underline the distinction made between gamers and nongamers in paragraph 2.

Circle Mardenborough's description of racing in paragraph 4. How are the ideas behind racing in a video game similar to racing in real life?

5 As technology becomes more advanced, it would not be surprising if in the near future, kids begin learning the specialized skills they need for a career while they are still in elementary school. For today's kids, from sharing, to goal setting, to racecar driving, to surgery, video games teach them many skills needed to live in the real world.

What are the positive effects of playing video games described in paragraph 2?

- 1 Which two ideas does the author connect through comparison?
- A Life skills are those necessary for coping with the challenges of everyday life.
 - B People who play video games have a better ability to make decisions quickly.
 - C Mardenborough began training for racing in his bedroom playing a racecar video game.
 - D People proficient in video games were up to 50 percent better at identifying, locating, and tracking objects.
 - E Today's kids are learning to share, set goals, and many other skills needed to live in the real world through video games.
 - F Studies show that video games can teach many applicable, real-life skills such as perseverance, critical thinking, sharing, planning, communicating effectively, and good decision-making.

Reread the information about the study.

2 Part A

Which individuals are compared in paragraph 2?

Part B

Which of the following details from the passage helps support the answer to Part A?

- A** "Researchers are finding that there are many positive effects that come from playing video games."
- B** "One of those effects is learning life skills."
- C** "Studies show that video games can teach many applicable, real-life skills."
- D** "Scientific tests showed that when both gamers and nongamers were asked to identify, locate, and track objects, those proficient in video games were up to 50 percent better at those skills."

How do the skills used by gamers differ by game type?

3 Explain the distinction between different types of video games and the skills they teach users. Use details from the passage to support your answer.

Read the passage. Then answer the questions.

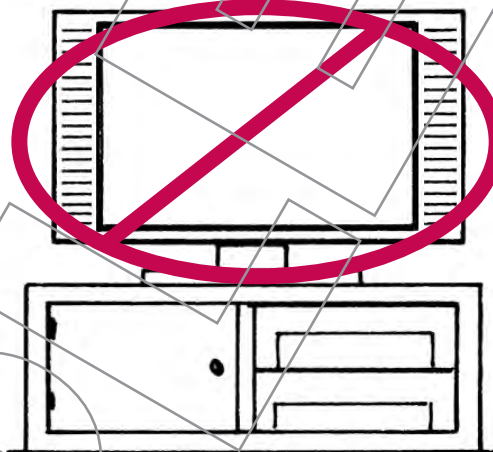
Stories from the Field: New York

Changing Screen Time Behavior in Childcare Centers

1 No doubt about it—interactive video games, television, and the Internet can be excellent sources of education and entertainment for kids. However, just like too much candy can give you cavities and hurt your teeth, too much screen time can have unhealthy side effects. Candy is delicious and television shows can be fun to watch, but it can sometimes be hard to tell how much is too much. Also, children eating the candy or watching the show might not even be aware of the negative effects. Similar to candy, watching television is all about moderation. That's why the American Academy of Pediatrics recommends no more than 1 to 2 hours of quality TV and videos per day for older children and no screen time at all for children under the age of 2.

2 To bring light to the issue, New York State Department of Health (NYSDOH) staff developed *Unplugged: Moving Beyond Screens*, a media reduction module to help childcare center providers recognize the negative effects of too much TV and computer use by young children. The module complements the Nutrition and Physical Activity Self-Assessment for Child Care (NAPSACC) Program, a practice-based intervention designed to enhance policies, practices, and environments in childcare. NAPSACC focuses on improving the nutritional quality of food served, the amount and quality of physical activity, staff-child interactions, and physical activity policies and practices.

3 Sara Bonam Welge, Nutrition Coordinator for the New York State Department of Health, shared how the idea for the module came about and how staff worked together to shape it: "It all started when our bureau director,



after using NAPSACC for some time, thought that more could be done around media reduction. She thought of the idea of creating a companion module to NAPSACC to increase attention to issues related to television viewing."

4 To pilot the module, NYSDOH called in Child Care Resources of Rockland County (CCRC). With a one-year grant from NYSDOH, CCRC worked with partner agencies in seven surrounding counties to train consultants to pilot the module in 18 childcare centers. Each center served high-need and disparate populations. On the basis of CCRC's recommendation, parents in the same county area received similar training on how to reduce the amount of time their children spend watching television, playing video games, or using the Internet. Parents were given resource materials to use with their children, including ideas for alternative activities. "It took longer than anticipated to recruit a broad spectrum of childcare centers that met the eligibility criteria and did not already have other nutrition or physical activity initiatives in place," says Welge, "but our sample of pilot centers, though small, did prove to be representative in size, location, and socio-economic characteristics."

5 The consultants used feedback sheets to give program staff details about their experiences with presenting the module. Results showed that childcare center staff were generally receptive to the module, but some parents were surprisingly resistant to the idea of reducing their kids' screen time. The consultant at one childcare center commented, "Many parents got defensive, especially when discussing TV in the bedroom or limiting the amount of time with TV... [S]tatements like, 'Do you have children? It is the only thing that quiets them,' were common. Parents were also more likely to resist the alternatives to screen time that consultants suggested." From an evaluation perspective, however, resistance is not always a negative. Program evaluator Mary Jo Pattison commented, "We actually feel that parents' negative response is a sign of engagement."

6 As program staff continues to apply the module in additional centers, they plan to review the parent workshop to provide resources that will prepare the consultants for resistance from the parents. Acknowledging that change is a challenge, the program staff also plans to prepare consultants to engage parents in the discussion of children's screen time behavior.

Importance of Early Success

7 The media reduction module has been shown to be useful in helping childcare centers evaluate and make positive changes in their

screen media practices in a small pilot. After nine months of technical assistance, 16 of 18 centers identified changes they intended to make in their actions and policies regarding screen media. The changes that centers chose most frequently were creating a written media use policy and developing media reduction education for staff and parents. A smaller number of centers focused on reducing TV watching time and improving the content of media watched. The instrument and module can stand alone or might be incorporated in the NAPSACC program as an additional module for childcare centers to choose.

Lessons Learned

- Give childcare centers information on alternatives to screen media and on the negative impact that too much screen time has on children.
- Develop strategies for conflict management and problem solving surrounding media reduction messages.
- Revise the module to help centers develop organizational policies to reduce television viewing.
- Use qualitative instruments with the media reduction self-assessment to collect program participants' perceptions and experiences to continuously improve module implementation.
- Provide centers with guidance on evaluating media content for preschoolers.

- 1 What is one difference in childcare centers after participating in the pilot?
- A Centers created a written media use policy.
 - B Centers evaluated their screen media practices.
 - C Centers provided parents with resources for alternate activities.
 - D Centers banned television, video games, and other types of technology.

2 Part A

How does the author connect the ideas about the two programs created by the New York State Department of Health (NYSDOH)?

- A The author compares the focus of both programs.
- B The author compares the results of both programs.
- C The author compares the application of both programs.
- D The author compares the reasons for the creation of both programs.

Part B

Which of the following details from the passage helps support the answer to Part A?

- A "Results showed that childcare center staff were generally receptive to the module, but some parents were surprisingly resistant to the idea of reducing their kids' screen time."
- B "The module complements the Nutrition and Physical Activity Self-Assessment for Child Care (NAPSACC) Program, a practice-based intervention designed to enhance policies, practices, and environments in childcare."
- C "On the basis of CCRC's recommendation, parents in the same county area received similar training on how to reduce the amount of time their children spend watching television, playing video games, or using the Internet."
- D "To bring light to the issue, New York State Department of Health (NYSDOH) staff developed *Unplugged: Moving Beyond Screens*, a media reduction module to help child carecenter providers recognize the negative effects of too much TV and computer use by young children."

- 3 What two new ideas about how the module will be applied in additional centers does the author connect through comparison?
- A Program staff will prepare consultants for resistance from parents.
 - B Use NAPSACC to focus on improving the nutritional quality of food served.
 - C Use the knowledge that too much screen time can have unhealthy side effects.
 - D Understand that parents were reluctant to accept the alternatives consultants suggested.
 - E Use *Unplugged: Moving Beyond Screens* to help child carecenter providers recognize the negative effects of too much TV.

- 4 What is the analogy in the passage, and what purpose does it serve?
