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Focus Lesson

Narratives are true stories about something that happened in history, a current event, or the story of a person's life. They are about real people and real events. A **biography** is a narrative written to inform a reader about someone. It is written by a person *other* than the subject. An **autobiography** is a narrative written by a person about his or her *own* life. Narrative text should show the reader what is happening or what someone is feeling rather than telling the reader.

When you read any kind of text, you may guess what is going to happen. When you do this, you are making a **prediction.** To make a good prediction, put clues in the story together with what you already know.

The author of a narrative usually gives his or her **point of view,** or opinion. This means that the author tells you what he or she thinks is most important. How do you know if you are reading facts or the author's opinions? A **fact** is something that you can be sure of. It can be proven. An **opinion** tells you how someone feels. Look for words such as *best, worst, always,* and *never.* These can mean the author is not using facts.

When you read, it is important to think about who is telling the story and why it is being told. In some texts, a character tells the story. This is called **first-person point of view.** The characters use the pronouns *I* and *we.* Other stories are told from the **third-person point of view.** The narrator uses the words *he, she,* and *they.* The viewpoint may depend on the **author's purpose** for writing. When two people have different reasons for writing, their writing shows different points of view.

SAMPLE

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Read the passage and answer the questions that follow.

A **title** or **heading** helps you predict what a text will be about.

What does the title tell you about this passage?

My First Race

1 Pursuing a goal is rewarding, even if it seems out of reach. That was the case when I signed up for a race last summer. I've always enjoyed running, but I would just do it for fun. Then one day, my friend Ramon asked me if I wanted to join him in a five kilometer race. Now, he was a much better athlete than me, and he could run longer distances, so I was really hesitant at first.

2 Up to that point, the farthest I ever ran was a mile. But a five kilometer race, or a 5K, is about three miles long.

3 "How can I possibly run that far?" I remember asking Ramon back then.

4 "Don't worry, Antonio, I'll help you train," he said.

5 So I signed up for the race, never dreaming that I'd actually be able to finish it. But I had three weeks to train, and Ramon was going to help me.

6 At first, I didn't know how to properly train for a race. I assumed that on the first day, I would go out there and try to run the full three miles. But Ramon, who really knows his stuff, told me otherwise.

7 "You have to start off slow," he told me. "Set a goal for the first week, like running a full mile without stopping. Then the next week, set another goal to run two miles. Before you know it, you'll be up to three miles, and the 5K will be in your sights."

8 So with Ramon's help, that's exactly what I did. The first week of training, my goal was to run a mile without stopping. On the first day we ran, though, I really struggled. While Ramon showed no signs of tiring, I had to stop twice to catch my breath.

9 "Just keep it up, and you'll be able to do it," Ramon said.

10 Two days later, we resumed training, and I improved—I only had to stop once. By the end of the week, I was able to run the full mile without stopping!

11 But week two of training was brutal. My goal was two miles, and at the beginning of the week, it didn't look like I would even come close. I was exhausted by the time I got halfway through the second mile. Ramon told me what my problem was—I was starting off too fast, and I would tire out too quickly. So the next time we went out, I started off at a slower pace, and I was able to finish the two miles.

12 So there I was—my last week of training before the big race. Obviously, a full three miles was my goal for the week. It was a really tough challenge, and Ramon tried pushing me as hard as he could. But the end of the week came, and I came up short. I was only able to finish two and a half miles. The 5K race was looming over my head, and I was really nervous. I worked so hard, but I just couldn't see myself finishing the race.

Writers may not tell you everything. They want you to figure out some details based on what you know and what you are reading. This is called **making inferences.**

What can you tell about Ramon?

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13 Race day came, and I was still a nervous wreck.

14 "Just be confident and all your hard work will pay off," Ramon told me. I really hoped he was right.

15 When the race began, I was sure to start off at a nice, slow pace, just as I did during training. The first mile seemed to fly by, and my nerves settled as I began the second mile. Other runners were flying past me, but I tried to remain focused. I felt myself really tiring about two miles in, and all I could think about was the fact that I never made it past two and a half miles. But I pressed on and tried to stay confident, as Ramon had told me. I can do this, I thought to myself. And before I knew it, I could see the finish line ahead. Seconds later, I crossed the finish line! Boy, was I exhausted. But I was elated at the same time. My hard work really did pay off.

16 Looking back, I'm really glad I decided to run in the race. The experience taught me that you can do anything if you work hard enough. In fact, this summer I started training for my first 10K.

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1 Part A

How did Antonio initially feel about the 5K?

Reread the beginning of the passage. What does Antonio say about the race? Antonio was hesitant about signing up for the 5K because he felt he would not be able to run that far.

Part B

Based on your answer to Part A, how does Antonio feel about running at the end of the passage?

Reread the end of the passage. What does Antonio tell the reader? Antonio is confident in his running abilities. He was able to finish the 5K, and he even began training for a 10K.

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Guided Practice

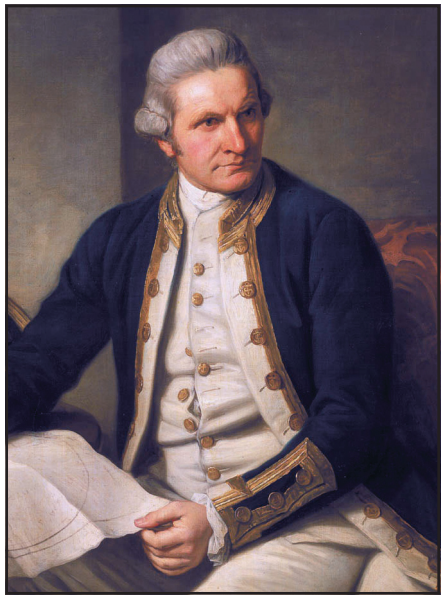
Read the passage and answer the questions that follow.

See page 17
Focus Lesson:
Narrative Text

Captain Cook in Australia

1 In the year 1728, there was born in the village of Marton, Yorkshire, England, a boy whose later life would become full of adventures and discoveries. This boy was named James Cook, and he grew up to be one of the most famous navigators that ever lived.

2 When Cook was still a boy, he made up his mind that nothing would keep him from becoming a sailor. When he grew up, he finally fulfilled this dream and later made one of the most significant discoveries of any European at that time.



3 By the year 1770, Captain Cook had been sailing the ship *Endeavour* in the South Pacific Ocean. He became the first to sail all the way around the islands of New Zealand, but the discovery for which he would forever be remembered came later, after he had left New Zealand.

4 On April 1, Cook and his crew aboard the *Endeavour* left New Zealand at Cape Farewell and headed west, sailing toward the coast of present-day Tasmania, the large island to the southwest of Australia.

5 But a strong wind drove Cook farther to the north than he had meant to go, and on April 19 land was sighted. This point was later named Point Hicks, after Lieutenant Hicks, who was the first to see it. Cook first called this entire area of land Cook New Wales, but this was later changed to its current name, New South Wales. Cook was the first European to discover the previously unknown east coast of Australia.

6 As the *Endeavour* sailed up the coast, Cook gave names to various places that are now commonly known: Cape Howe, Point Upright, the Pigeon House, and others. Cook later described the countryside he saw as "very agreeable and promising."

7 There had been heavy autumn rains some time before Cook arrived in the country. As a result, when he finally landed on the shore, he was able to look with delight on the island's "good grass" and "fine meadow" everywhere. He also took great joy in the rich soil, which supported endless fields of wildflowers. The abundance of all of this vegetation led to Cook naming the area Botany Bay, using the term referring to the study of plant life.

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8 As Cook continued to sail north up the coast, he sent parties inland to look for food and other supplies. While these groups searched, they came across curious-looking animals that they had never seen anywhere before. They hopped along furiously on two legs and had little pouches on their stomachs. The search parties learned from the natives of the island that these animals were called kangaroos. This was the first time that Europeans had ever seen kangaroos.

9 Cook continued to name the new places that he saw—including Broken Bay, Cape Hawke, and Smoky Cape—until the *Endeavour* finally cleared the eastern coast of Australia. After stopping on the island of New Guinea, Cook sailed west to the Cape of Good Hope in present-day South Africa. Here he and his crew rested and restocked on supplies before sailing for home.

10 The *Endeavour* dropped anchor off the east coast of Kent, England, in July of 1771, in the southern North Sea. Cook knew that he was the first European to find the entire eastern portion of the island continent of Australia. All of the world maps would now have to be redrawn around his discovery, and Cook's name would be remembered forever.

1 Part A

Which sentence from the passage supports the inference that Captain Cook understood his impact on history?

_____

_____

_____

This passage is all about Cook's accomplishments. Skim the passage and look for evidence of how he felt about what he had done.

Part B

What evidence does the author provide to support the idea that Cook affected history?

_____

_____

_____

Think about some of the facts the author gives that show the importance of Cook and his discovery.

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Read the passage and answer the questions that follow.

The Hudson River

1 The long, narrow island of Manhattan in present-day New York was a wild and beautiful spot in the year 1609. In these days, there were no tall houses, no church towers, and no noisy hum of machinery.

2 In their place were beautiful trees with spreading branches, stretches of sand hills, and patches of green grass. In the branches of the trees were birds of various colors, and wandering through the tangled undergrowth were many wild animals.

3 It was also in the year 1609 that a little ship sailed up the bay below the island and took the river to the west. The native peoples of the island gathered on the shore and looked with wonder at the ship, as it was so different from any they had ever seen. Then it was swept before the wind up the river and out of sight.

4 The ship was called the *Half Moon*, and it had come all the way from Amsterdam, in the Dutch Netherlands. The Netherlands was a small country in the northern part of Europe and was usually called Holland.

5 But the Dutch owned other lands than these. They had islands in the Indian Ocean that were rich in spices of every sort, and the other European countries needed these spices. These islands, being quite close to India, were called the East Indies. The company of Dutch merchants who did most of the business with them was called the East India Company. They had many ships, and the *Half Moon* was one of them.

6 It was a long, dangerous way to the East India Islands from Holland. Ships had to travel by the Cape of Good Hope in southern Africa, but strong winds blew there, and the waves rolled so high that they often broke apart the ships.

7 So the merchants of Holland were always thinking of a shorter way to the East Indies. They knew very little of North or South America, but they believed that these lands were simply islands. Therefore, they thought that they could find a place to pass through them and make the journey to the East Indies shorter.

8 So the East India Company built the ship called the *Half Moon* and hired an Englishman named Henry Hudson to take charge of it. His assignment was to find the short way to the Indies. Hudson was chosen because he had already made two similar voyages, trying to find that same short passage.

9 Now, while the *Half Moon* was sailing up the river, Hudson was sure that he had found the passage to the Indies. But when the ship got as far as the current location of Albany, New York, the water became shallow, and the river banks came so close together that Hudson gave up trying to sail that way. He became upset because after all his travelling, he had not found the shorter passage to India at all, but only a river!

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2 Part A

Why did the author most likely write this passage?

A to show readers the history of sea trade

B to inform readers about an early explorer

C to educate readers about river geography

D to entertain readers with an adventure tale

Part B

How does the author develop the purpose in Part A?

A by listing important events in order

B by describing many important places

C by giving examples of valuable goods

D by explaining a mysterious disappearance

3 Part A

What is the central idea of paragraphs 5 and 6?

A The Cape of Good Hope was known for high wind and waves.

B Dutch trading ships had to take a long route to the East Indies.

C People in Europe valued the spices of the Indian Ocean islands.

D The Dutch claimed control of many lands beyond their own country.

Part B

Based on the text, what was the effect of the answer to Part A?

A Merchants hoped to find a new shortcut.

B Holland became a very powerful country.

C Many trading ships broke apart and sank.

D Hudson was cast adrift by his own sailors.

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