

# Table of Contents

<b>Introduction</b> .....	<b>4</b>
<b>Unit 1: Vocabulary Development</b> .....	<b>5</b>
L.4.4, RL.4.4, RI.4.4      Lesson 1      Word Meanings .....	<b>6</b>
L.4.5, RL.4.4, RI.4.4      Lesson 2      Word Relationships .....	<b>20</b>
L.4.6, RL.4.4, RI.4.4      Lesson 3      Content-Specific Words.....	<b>35</b>
Review      Vocabulary Development.....	<b>44</b>
<b>Unit 2: Key Ideas and Details</b> .....	<b>51</b>
RL.4.1, RI.4.1      Lesson 4      Understanding a Text.....	<b>52</b>
RL.4.2, RI.4.2      Lesson 5      Main Idea and Summaries .....	<b>61</b>
RL.4.3      Lesson 6      Literary Elements.....	<b>74</b>
RI.4.3, RI.4.7      Lesson 7      Analyzing Events and Concepts.....	<b>87</b>
Review      Key Ideas and Details .....	<b>98</b>
<b>Unit 3: Craft and Structure</b> .....	<b>105</b>
RL.4.5      Lesson 8      Literary Structure.....	<b>106</b>
RI.4.5      Lesson 9      Text Features.....	<b>118</b>
RL.4.6, RI.4.6      Lesson 10      Point of View and Author's Purpose.....	<b>131</b>
Review      Craft and Structure.....	<b>143</b>
<b>Unit 4: Integration of Knowledge and Ideas</b> .....	<b>151</b>
RI.4.7      Lesson 11      Visual Literacy .....	<b>152</b>
RI.4.8      Lesson 12      Identifying Connections.....	<b>163</b>
RL.4.9, RI.4.9      Lesson 13      Comparing and Contrasting .....	<b>170</b>
Review      Integration of Knowledge and Ideas.....	<b>182</b>
<b>Practice Test</b> .....	<b>189</b>
<b>Glossary</b> .....	<b>207</b>

## Identifying Connections

RI.4.8

**Vocabulary**  
landfills

When you read, do you know whether you are reading a factual account or someone's opinion? When you read, you need to understand the difference. A **fact** is a something that you can *prove*. An **opinion** tells you how someone *feels*. Look for words like *best* or *worst*. These words can mean the author is giving an opinion. Words like *always* and *never* often show opinions, too.

In some texts, you know the author is giving his opinion. Examples of these texts are book reviews and editorials. Sometimes, however, writers want you to agree with their position. They write to persuade you of a particular opinion. However, they should support their position or opinion with facts.

As you read, pay attention to what the author says. Does she write information that you can prove? Does it sound like the author knows what she is talking about? Is the author leaving out facts that don't support her opinions? Is the information current? Does the author present both sides of her story?

Ask yourself questions like these as you read. They will help you separate fact from opinion.

**Guided Practice**

Read the passage. Then answer the questions.

**Susan's Recycling News****Tips You Can Use!**

There are so many good things about recycling. Many people only think about the benefits to the environment, but the benefits don't stop there. Recycling can save money. Recycling items is less expensive than throwing them away. There is a cost to having landfills and picking up trash. When more people recycle, the cheaper it is to recycle. Recycling creates jobs. In fact, recycling has created more than a million of them!

**landfills**

areas where trash and garbage are buried to build up low lying land

Recycling is good for the earth, too. Every ton of paper that is recycled saves 17 trees! The more we recycle, the less pollution Earth will have.

We could do a lot better with our recycling. There are easy ways to do this. There is more to recycling than just putting cans in a recycling bin! When you go to the store, do you use paper bags? Do you use plastic bags? The best bags to use when you shop are cloth bags. These bags can be used over and over.

Other items also can be reused! Bottles and plastics can be recycled in bins to be used again, of course. You can give old clothes to charity, and you can buy used items instead of new ones. That way, items are getting another life instead of being sent to a landfill.

There are too many good things about recycling for anyone not to do it. Recycling saves energy. It saves natural resources. If we recycle more, we will need less land for landfills.

Some progress has been made. Since 1977, 2-liter soda bottles have gotten lighter, so less plastic is being used to make them. Because of that, we have saved 250 million pounds of plastic! Isn't that amazing?

Many people say that it is too hard to recycle. They do not think it is convenient. I think the facts speak for themselves. Everyone should recycle as much as possible. It makes too much sense not to.



What is the *main* point that Susan makes?

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Here is a sample answer:

Susan thinks that everyone should recycle because it is good for the environment and it conserves natural resources. This is her opinion. She tries to support her opinion with facts.

Which sentence from paragraph 5 is an opinion?

- A** There are too many good things about recycling for anyone not to do it.
- B** Recycling saves energy.
- C** Recycling saves natural resources.
- D** If we recycle more, we will need less land for landfills.



Who decides how many things are “too many”? The other choices can be proven. However, you cannot prove how many things are “too many.” This is the author’s opinion. Many times you can spot an opinion by a writer’s use of words. If there are words such as *best*, *worst*, *most*, *everyone*, and *nobody*, chances are there is an opinion given. Choice A is the right answer.

List two facts that Susan uses to support her main argument.

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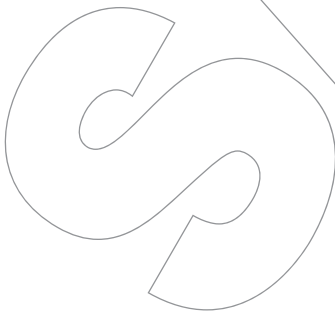
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Often, facts will include numbers and dates that could be proven. This is called data, or research. Susan gives two data facts. Here is a sample answer:

1—Since 1977, 2-liter soda bottles have gotten lighter, so less plastic is being used.

2—We have saved 250 million pounds of plastic—and—every ton of paper that is recycled saves 17 trees!



Does Susan present both sides of the argument? Explain why, or why not.



Analyze Susan's argument. Does she present only her opinion? Here is a sample answer:

Susan mainly presents her side. She does bring up opposing views. She explains that some people think it is not convenient to recycle. However, she mainly supports her argument that people should recycle.

Do you think Susan's closing paragraph helps convince the reader? Explain why, or why not.



Susan has given some good reasons to recycle in her argument. Does she continue to do this in the last paragraph? Here is a sample answer:

Susan's last paragraph does convince the reader. She presents the other side of the argument. But then she mentions facts to support her side. The facts stand out. And she uses them well to help support her view.

# Test Yourself

Read the passage. Then answer the questions.

Dear Mr. Davis,

I am a fourth grader here at Washington Elementary School. I have a suggestion. I think that we should have a "Teacher of the Month" award. My teacher, Mrs. Johnson, should be the first one to receive this award.

Mrs. Johnson is a great teacher. She has a very special way of making everyone feel like her favorite. Whenever I have a problem, Mrs. Johnson is there for me. Sometimes, I think math is pretty hard, and Mrs. Johnson is never too busy to help me make sense of it. She also has a way of making it fun!

Last month, we got a new student in our classroom. His name is Toby. Toby moved here from out of town, and he did not know anyone. Mrs. Johnson welcomed him as if she had known him for a long time! She told us we would all have a new friend, and she helped us all get to know him better. I know Toby really felt better after the warm welcome he received.

Mrs. Johnson always seems to find a way to make things fun and educational. Sometimes, she has us play games, and at the end of the game, we realize we were learning things while we played. She helps us understand why it is important to get a good education, why it is important to pay attention in class, and why it is important to learn as much as we can.

When we're in Mrs. Johnson's classroom, we all feel very comfortable and safe. We know that she is looking out for all of us, and we know that she puts us first, always! She makes sure we understand everything she says, and she makes sure that everyone feels good about himself.

I know that we have a lot of good teachers here at Washington. I will probably have great teachers every year, which is why I think we should give this award every month! A lot of schools give awards like this. The students could vote for a different teacher every month. It would be nice for teachers to know that they are appreciated.

I hope you will consider letting us have this award. I know that Mrs. Johnson would be so happy. Other teachers would be happy to get the award, too.

Thank you for reading this, Mr. Davis. Maybe we could also have a principal's award!

Sincerely,

Becky Brown

1 What is the *main* point of Becky's letter?

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2 What are three reasons Becky gives in support of her argument, and the evidence for each?

Reason a: \_\_\_\_\_

Reason b: \_\_\_\_\_

Reason c: \_\_\_\_\_

3 Which of these sentences states an opinion?

- A Whenever I have a problem, Mrs. Johnson is there for me.
- B Last month, we got a new student in our classroom.
- C A lot of schools give awards like this.
- D She also has a way of making it fun!

**4** Which of these sentences states a fact?

- A** Last month, we got a new student in our classroom.
- B** We should have a “Teacher of the Month” award.
- C** It would be nice for teachers to know that they are appreciated.
- D** My teacher, Mrs. Johnson, should be the first one to receive that award.

**5** What is a point Becky makes that is *not* supported by reasons and evidence? Explain your answer.

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SAMPLE