



Grades 3–8

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inspire every learner

## What does this series do?

*Finish Line PA Core ELA* provides instruction and practice to help students learn the Eligible Content of the Pennsylvania Core Standards and prepare for the PSSA exams. Concise, simply-presented lessons keep students focused and on task. Components include student workbooks, student answer booklets, and annotated teacher's editions.

Choose your components for easy implementation.



Grades 3–8

## Standards Connection

Units parallel the Eligible Content of the Pennsylvania Core Standards.

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300–350 pages of instruction and practice

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## Close Reading of Rigorous Text

As required by the PA Standards and PSSA exams, the books ask students to find evidence from the text to support their answers.

Lesson 2

**2 Focused Instruction**

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

### The Road Not Taken

by Robert Frost

Two roads diverged in a yellow wood,  
 And sorry I could not travel both  
 And be one traveler, long I stood  
 And looked down one as far as I could  
 5 To where it bent in the undergrowth;

Then took the other, just as fair,  
 And having perhaps the better claim,  
 Because it was grassy and wanted wear,  
 Though as for that the passing there  
 10 Had worn them really about the same,

**Think About It**

What **observation is the poet making about the two roads?** To answer this question, pay attention to the title, the central topic, and the actions of the speaker.

What choice does the speaker have to make in the first part of the poem?

What is the theme of the poem?

Why do you think the author chose the title?

Based on the title and the main idea of the poem, the diverging roads suggest \_\_\_\_\_

Lesson 2

**3 Guided Practice**

Read the poem. Then answer the questions.

### Summer Shower

by Emily Dickinson

A drop fell on the apple tree,  
 Another on the roof;  
 A half a dozen kissed the eaves,  
 And made the gables laugh.

5 A few went out to help the brook,  
 That went to help the sea.  
 Myself conjectured, Were they pearls,  
 What necklaces could be!

The dust replaced in hoisted roads,  
 The birds jocosely sung;  
 The sunshine threw his hat away,  
 The orchards spangles hung.

10 The breezes brought dejected lutes,  
 And bathed them in the glee;  
 15 The East put out a single flag,  
 And signed the fete away.



**A CLOSER LOOK**

Why is the rainfall essential to nature? Underline words and phrases the poet uses to describe the effect that the rain has on the rest of nature.

Lesson 2

**3 Guided Practice**

1 What is the central idea of "Summer Shower"?

A Too much rain causes flooding.  
 B People fall in love during summer storms.  
 C All parts of nature are interconnected.  
 D Birds hunt for worms in the rain.

2 Which lines from the poem best support the answer to question 1?

A "A few went out to help the brook,  
 That went to help the sea."  
 B "The dust replaced in hoisted roads,  
 The birds jocosely sung."  
 C "The East put out a single flag,  
 And signed the fete away."  
 D "Myself conjectured, Were they pearls,  
 What necklaces could be!"

What life lesson does the poet wish to share with readers?

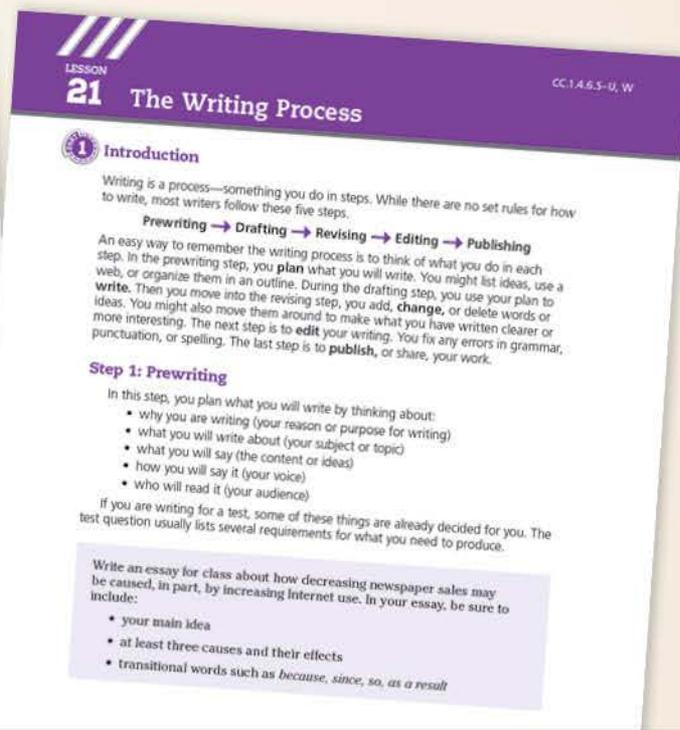
How is the rain intertwined with all of nature?

What adventures did the raindrops have after they fell?

What are two details from the poem that show how a drop of rain has the power to help other water forms? What theme do these details suggest?

# Language Arts

In addition to lessons on reading comprehension skills, each book includes a full unit of writing standards for students to practice the writing process, learn how to answer open-ended questions, and apply grammar and usage conventions.



## Gradual Release Model

# Part #1: Introduction

Each lesson begins with a brief explanation of the focus standard(s) and how students will use it. Example text, pictures, or graphic organizers support the instruction to help students better understand the skills.

CC.1.3.6.B: Cite textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly, as well as inferences and/or generalizations drawn from the text.

LESSON  
**1** Supporting Inferences with Evidence

**1** Introduction THEME: » Nature's Ways

As you read, you frequently make **inferences**. You use **clues** from the story to figure out information that the author does not state. Think of this skill as filling in the blanks by using facts or details found in the story. Authors might leave out information because they want you to think about the results. Then you make educated guesses using **evidence** along with **reasoning** based on your own experiences to make generalizations.

Look at the illustration below. What is going on in the picture?



Fill in the chart to make inferences and/or generalizations about the illustration.

Visual Clues	What I Know	Inference
Bear and cub	Mother bears protect their cubs.	
Thunderclouds	Thunderclouds mean a thunder and lightning storm will soon follow.	
Hiker		

## Gradual Release Model

### Part #2: Focused Instruction

Students can collaborate with a partner, in small groups, or as a class to practice the skill. They read a story, poem, play, or nonfiction piece and work through a series of guiding *Think About It* questions to help them organize their thoughts and build comprehension strategies.

**2 Focused Instruction** Lesson 1

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

**Lines Composed in a Wood on a Windy Day**  
*by Anne Brontë*

My soul is awakened, my spirit is soaring  
And carried aloft on the wings of the breeze;  
For above and around me the wild wind is roaring,  
Arousing to rapture the earth and the seas.

5 The long withered grass in the sunshine is glancing,  
The bare trees are tossing their branches on high;  
The dead leaves beneath them are merrily dancing,  
The white clouds are scudding across the blue sky.

**Think About It** 🐾

**What effect does the storm have on the poet?** First, look for words and descriptions about the theme and mood of the poem.

What is the poem about? \_\_\_\_\_

What is the mood, or feeling, of the poem? \_\_\_\_\_

What verbs help describe this mood? \_\_\_\_\_

What emotion does the storm trigger in the poet? \_\_\_\_\_

## Gradual Release Model

### Part #2: Focused Instruction

As the lesson progresses, students apply their close reading skills by completing *A Closer Look* activity. Shaded boxes with hints and reminders are also provided for extra support. Focused Instruction concludes with a *Discuss It* question to reinforce the skill through speaking and listening activities. Students are asked to analyze part of a text to answer a question, and then discuss their answer with their peers.

**2 Focused Instruction** Lesson 1

Continue reading the poem. Then answer the questions.

10 I wish I could see how the ocean is lashing  
The foam of its billows to whirlwinds of spray;  
I wish I could see how its proud waves are dashing,  
And hear the wild roar of the thunder today!

**A CLOSER LOOK**  
How the poet uses words helps readers envision the storm. Underline words that show the storm's strength.

How does the storm put the poet in touch with nature?

How does the storm affect the poet?

A She is in awe of and inspired by the power of the storm.  
B She is frightened by the wild weather.  
C She is bored by the endless wind.  
D She is happy that the storm quickly terminates.

How are the leaves and trees described in the poem?

What season is being described in the poem? Use details from the poem to explain your answer.

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**DISCUSS IT**  
Think about words that suggest flight, such as "soaring" and "carried aloft," that the poet uses in the first stanza on page 9. How do these words help build atmosphere and convey the effect the storm has on her? As a class, discuss how these words hint that the storm has put the poet in touch with nature.

10 UNIT 1 Key Ideas and Details in Literature Text

## Gradual Release Model

### Part #3: Guided Practice

It's time to apply the strategies learned in part #2. In the Guided Practice section, students can work independently or collaboratively to answer multiple-choice and short-answer questions. They will also see hints and reminders, and *A Closer Look* activities.

Lesson 1

**3 Guided Practice**

Read the passage. Then answer the questions.

### Star Watchers

**A CLOSER LOOK**  
Alanna likes to gaze at the stars as a way to relax. Underline words that offer clues about the strong connection that Alanna has with the stars.

- 1 Alanna liked nothing better than to gaze at the stars. Every night she pointed her treasured telescope at the sky and stargazed. When the weather was nice, she put her telescope in its special backpack, climbed the hill behind her house, and set up her tripod.
- 2 The stars had always intrigued Alanna. Her parents gave her the telescope when she was 7, and Alanna had decorated the walls and ceiling of her room with maps of the constellations and planets.
- 3 One night, after Alanna had finished her tour of the night sky, she returned home to discover a surprise roommate—her cousin Miranda. Her mother explained how a small fire had damaged Miranda's apartment building in the city, and Alanna's family would be staying with them for a few weeks.
- 4 By the next day, Miranda had taken over Alanna's room. She tossed Alanna's books that she kept on her spare bed on the floor and spread her belongings all over it. She shoved her clothes in the closet, wrinkling all of Alanna's. Miranda blasted her music, disturbing Alanna as she tried to read her new book about wormholes. She left behind a trail of cookie crumbs and half-empty juice boxes. It was infuriating!
- 5 That night, Alanna tried to escape to the hill with her telescope, but she wasn't fast enough to get away. Miranda yanked at the telescope backpack. "Where are you going?" she asked. "Why didn't you ask me to come along?"
- 6 Alanna continued walking up the hill. "I'm going to look at the constellations," she told her cousin.
- 7 "You can see all that? In the city, there's so much smog that I can barely see the stars," Miranda said.
- 8 Alanna counted her lucky stars that she lived in the country, because clean and she could view the sky without any constellations.

Lesson 1

**3 Guided Practice**

Do Alanna and Miranda have the same interests at first?

- 1 Which sentence from "Star Watchers" helps you to infer that Alanna believes that Miranda doesn't share her interests?
  - A "She was sure that Miranda would quickly forget the names and lose interest."
  - B "She left behind a trail of cookie crumbs and half-empty juice boxes."
  - C "In the city, there's so much smog that I can barely see the stars."
  - D "By the next day, Miranda had taken over Alanna's room."

How does Alanna act when she gets home?

- 2 How does Alanna probably feel about not being invited to the party? Explain how you know.
 

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When does Alanna begin to sympathize with Miranda's situation?

- 3 Explain how Alanna's attitude toward her cousin changes at the end of the story. Use at least two details from the story to support your answer.
 

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## Gradual Release Model

# Part #4: Independent Practice

Students are ready to answer questions on their own without any help or hints. Question types vary by grade level and include those on the PSSA:

- multiple-choice (MC)
- evidence-based selected response (EBSR)
- short answer (SA)
- text dependent analysis (TDA) for writing

**4 Independent Practice** Lesson 1

Read the story. Then answer the questions.

### Adapting

1 Jarrod sighed as his bran flakes turned to mush in his cereal bowl. Outside, the morning sun illuminated russet and ruby leaves on the backyard trees. Jarrod barely glanced outside the window. He pushed away his bowl as the phone rang.

2 He half-heartedly listened to the conversation between the caller and his mother. However, Jarrod snapped to attention when he heard his mother mention his name and promise the caller that he would be ready on time. "Jarrod is really looking forward to this outing," his mother added. Jarrod groaned and buried his face in his hands.

He now knew that the caller was Mr. Armbruster, his science teacher, who had organized a field trip to the local wildlife preserve. The glorious morning was shaping up to be the perfect day for a hike, but Jarrod envisioned a better way to spend his Saturday.

For as long as he could remember, Jarrod visited Pop, his grandfather, every Saturday. Together they would repair the old farmhouse his grandparents shared. They would work in the garden and fix up machinery in his shop. Pop would share stories from his boyhood about growing up on the farm. They were better than any action adventure book Jarrod ever read.

The corners of Jarrod's mouth tugged down as he remembered when measured stories came to a halt. His father had gotten transferred that year, and the family had to move far away from Pop. Jarrod promised to share his own stories with Pop. He assured his grandfather that he would tell him all about his new home, school, and friends. But so far his had been sparse. He really missed his friends Jackson and Dwayne, and the thought of making new friends sent shudders down his spine.



and Details in Literature Text

**4 Independent Practice** Lesson 1

2 Read the chart.

The Text Says...	I Know...	So I Infer That...
Real estate development was causing the pawpaw tree to become critically endangered.	Trees are bulldozed when developers build condos and shopping malls.	

Which statement would fit best in the blank space in the chart?

A Insects have stopped pollinating the pawpaw trees.  
 B The flowers of the pawpaw aren't widely known.  
 C The pawpaw tree only grows in tropical climates.  
 D An environmental group is stopping the bulldozers.

3 What might Jarrod do the following Saturday?  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

4 What will Jarrod probably write to Pop in his next letter? Use at least two details from the text to support your answer.  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

## Reviews

Each unit concludes with a review to test all skills covered in the unit. It includes a mix of PSSA-type items in the same way as the Independent Practice section.

CC.1.3.6.A-C

### UNIT 1 REVIEW

## Key Ideas and Details in Literature Text

Read the poem. Then answer the questions.

### Autumn Fires

by Robert Louis Stevenson

In the other gardens  
And all up the vale,  
From the autumn bonfires  
See the smoke trail!

5 Pleasant summer over  
And all the summer flowers,  
The red fire blazes,  
The gray smoke towers.

10 Sing a song of seasons!  
Something bright in all!  
Flowers in the summer,  
Fires in the fall!

#### 1 Part A

What is the theme of this poem?

- A The colors of fall are as intense as the colors of summer.
- B Fall is the most dangerous season of all.
- C Fires are not a threat in the summer.
- D People celebrate all seasons with bonfires.

#### Part B

What imagery from the poem best supports the answer to Part A?

- A Red flowers bloom all up the vale.
- B Smoke blocks the view of the bonfires.
- C Flowers in the summer and fires in the fall.
- D Red fire blazes and gray smoke towers.

2 What sentence summarizes the third stanza of the poem?

- A The color red stars in every season.
- B There is beauty to admire in every season.
- C Dangers lurk in every season.
- D Artists find inspiration in autumn leaves.

3 What might the poet write about winter? Use details from the poem to support your answer.

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Read the story. Then answer the questions.

### Seasons

1 Marc and Vanessa grew up on the island of Oahu in Hawaii, just outside of Honolulu. Each day in all four seasons, the island's weather remained the same. The climate was warm and sunny, with a brief daily shower that kept everything green.

2 However, when Marc and Vanessa were in middle school, their father was transferred to the East Coast. The twins missed their friends, their school, their house, and, most of all, the wonderful warm climate of Oahu.

3 "I'm freezing!" Vanessa said to her mother one day in late September, as she layered on yet another sweater. "The kids at school should see me now. Already they laugh at how many layers of clothes I wear because, they claim, this is nothing. Nothing!"

4 As September segued into October, the leaves surrounding Vanessa's new home burst into flames of red, gold, and orange. Vanessa and Marc spent an entire weekend capturing the colorful display with their cameras. Then the twins printed the photographs and sent copies to their friends back in Hawaii.

5 "I'm jealous!" Vanessa's friend Lani wrote. "All the leaves here are

25 Oh! restlessly whirls the river;  
The rivulets run and the cataract drones:  
The spiders are flitting over the stones;  
Summer winds float and the cedar moans;  
And the eddies gleam and quiver.

30 O sun, shine hot, shine long and abide  
In the glory and power of thy summer tide  
On the swift longing face of the river.

7 What effect does the shining sun have on the poet?

- A It invigorates and stimulates him.
- B It makes him nostalgic for winter.
- C It fills him with anger.
- D It causes noisy confusion.

8 How might the poet feel about ice forming on the river? Use details from the poem to support your answer.

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9 How would you summarize the poet's main point in this poem? Use details from the poem to support your answer.

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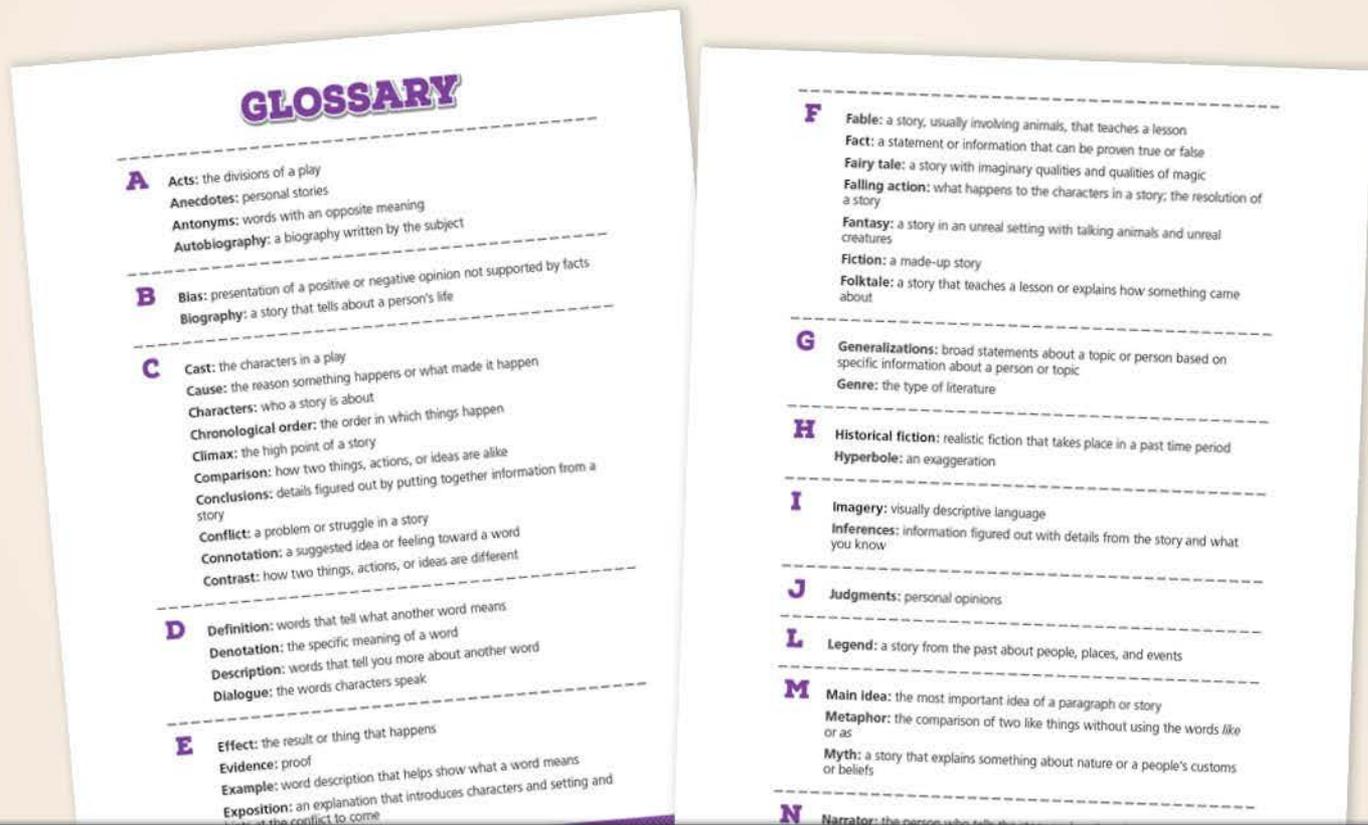
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# Glossary

A glossary includes words and terms that appear in boldface throughout the book, along with their definitions.



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**Unit 1: Key Ideas and Details in Literature Text**  
PAGES 8-16 Lesson 1: Supporting Inferences with Evidence

Introduction

Visual Clues	What I Know	Inference
Bear and cub	Mother bears protect their cubs.	
Thunderclouds	Thunderclouds mean a thunder and lightning storm will soon follow.	
Hiker		

Focused Instruction, Think About It

- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_

Focused Instruction

1 A B C D

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Guided Practice

1 A B C D

2 \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

3 \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Independent Practice

1 A B C D

2 A B C D

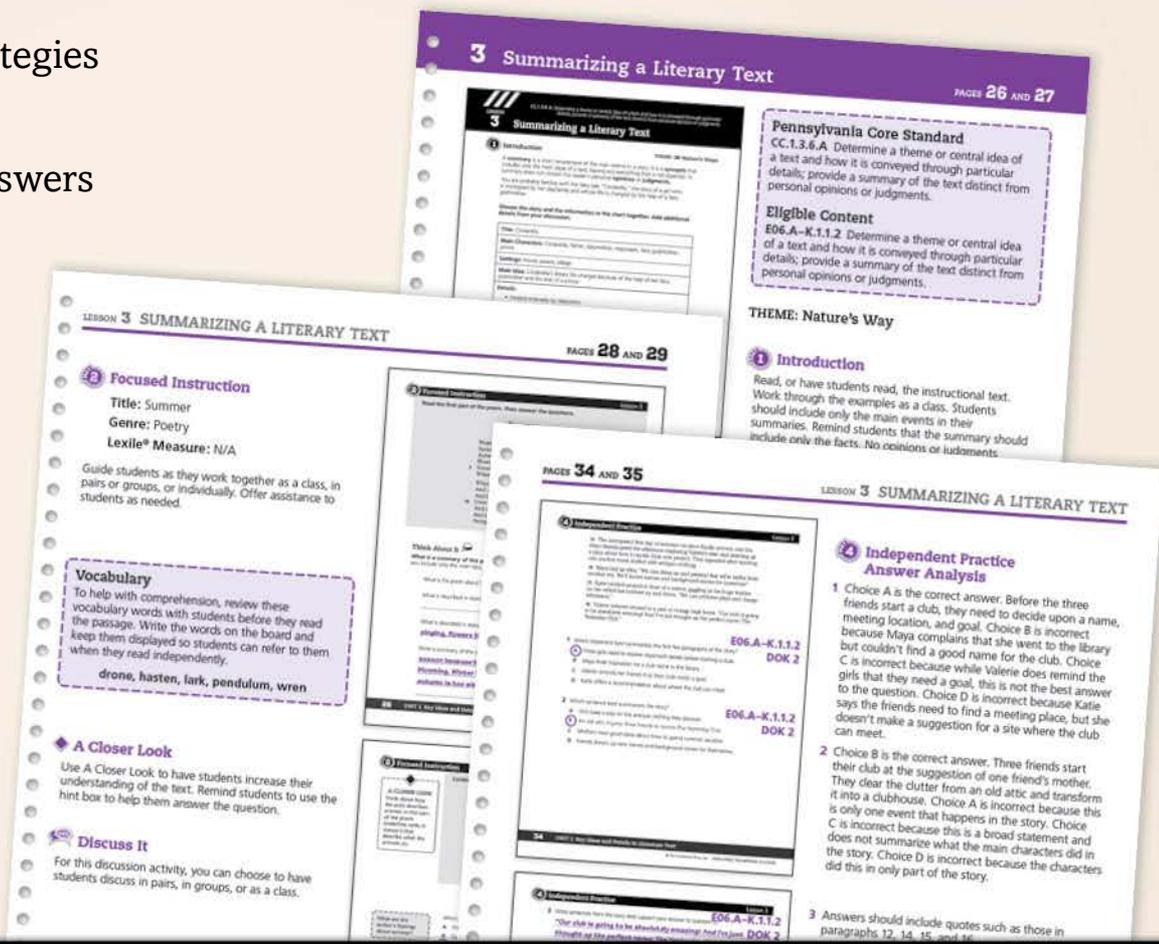
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## Teaching Support

Annotated teacher's editions include:

- Suggestions for use/teaching strategies
- Genres
- Annotated student pages with answers
- Answer analysis
- Eligible Content or PA Core Standards correlations
- Depth of Knowledge (DOK) levels
- Speaking/listening, writing, and media/research activities
- Tier 2 and Tier 3 vocabulary
- ELL support



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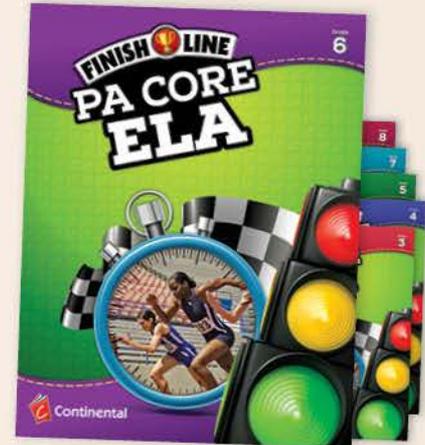


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