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Unit
1

Reading Skills



1-1 Subject Matter

1-2 Main Idea

1-3 Supporting Details

1-5 Cause and Effect

1-6 Clarifying Devices

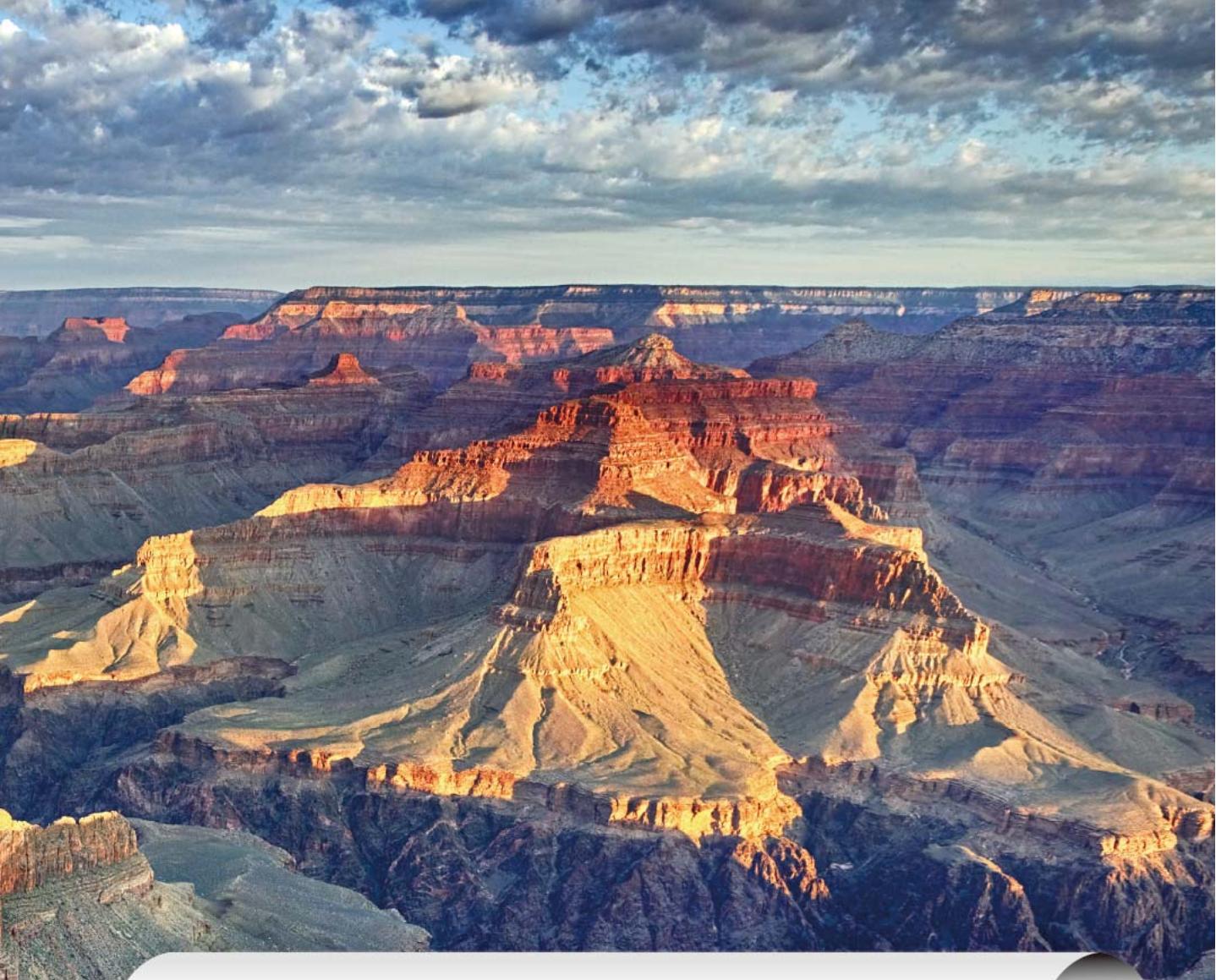
1-7 Making Inferences

1-8 Problems and Solutions

1-9 Fact or Opinion

1-10 Review Test

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Authors Purpose and Tone



There is a wealth of information out there, and it is accessible to anyone. The key to unlocking it is your reading skills. These skills help us absorb the facts that are buried in every magazine or newspaper article. That's not all. They also help us organize these facts so that we better comprehend them.

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Think of it this way: reading skills don't just help us understand **what** an author writes, but **why** he or she writes it as well. This is what makes reading skills so valuable in every area of life, from elementary school to the world of business.

1-1 Subject Matter

The subject matter of a passage is simply what the passage describes. It is usually the answer to the question “what is this passage about?” If you’re ever confused about what the subject matter of an article is, try reading through the article again and taking note of what each paragraph is presenting.



1 Incredible India



1 India is located in Asia between the Middle East and China. It has a long and fascinating history. India is also quickly becoming a wealthy country thanks to its rapidly developing economy.

2 Over 6,000 years ago, the people living in the Indus River basin built up a unique and thriving civilization. It transformed the entire area into a center of trade and religion and allowed for hundreds of years of wealth and prosperity.

3 Some say that this Indus civilization was just as vibrant as ancient Mesopotamia or Egypt. Culturally, it produced many of the world's important religions such as Hinduism, Buddhism, and Sikhism.



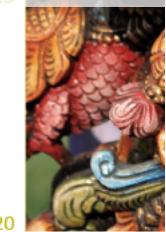
4 The golden age of the Indus civilization came to an end when the Aryans invaded in 1500 BC. This was first in a long line

of foreign invasions that included the Persians, Greeks, Mongols, and eventually European merchant vessels and 15 British colonialism.

5 In 1857, the people of India grew tired of foreign domination and rebelled against the British East India Company, a British monopoly that controlled most of India at the time. The rebellion ultimately failed.

« Indian woman

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As a result, Great Britain absorbed India as a formal colony of the British Empire.

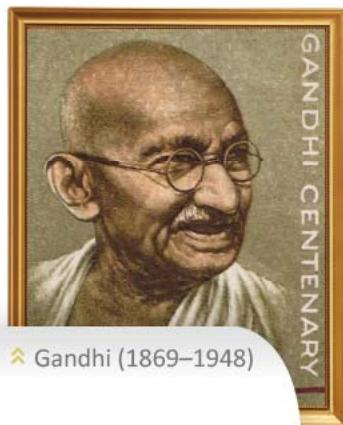
6 India would not remain a colony forever. During the first half of the 20th century, millions of Indians participated in a nationwide political movement led by Mahatma Gandhi. Gandhi organized peaceful demonstrations of civil disobedience that were aimed at resisting British rule. On August 15, 1947, India finally gained its independence, and on January 26, 1950, it became the Republic of India. 25

7 India has gone through many important economic changes and reforms. If you consider India's purchasing power, it is now the sixth largest economy in the world. It also has a youthful population that will continue to drive economic growth over the next decade. 30

8 Yet India is also grappling with some big problems, such as poverty, illiteracy, and malnutrition. Like many other Asian countries, 35 there is a growing wealth gap between people who live in the countryside and those who live in the city. These are some of the problems that future governments will need to tackle.

» Amber Fort in Jaipur, Rajasthan, India

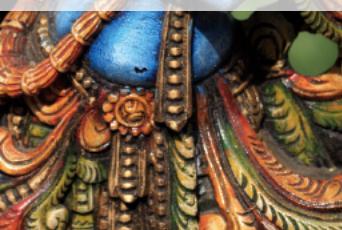
▼ Hinduism can be traced back to Iron Age India.



Questions

1. Another good title for this passage might be _____.
 - a. India: The Once and Future Power
 - b. India: The Peaceful Country
 - c. India: The Oldest Country on Earth
 - d. India: The Economic Powerhouse
 2. This passage focuses on a(n) _____.
 - a. military
 - b. technology
 - c. civilization
 - d. economy
 3. The final paragraph is mostly concerned with India's _____.
 - a. history
 - b. problems
 - c. language
 - d. military
- The fifth and sixth paragraphs are mainly about _____.
 - a. the history of Britain in Asia
 - b. the rise and fall of British colonialism in India
 - c. life in India under the Mongols
 - d. Mahatma Gandhi
5. The seventh paragraph focuses on India's _____.
 - a. leaders
 - b. people
 - c. cuisine
 - d. economy

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Unit 1 閱讀技巧

文章的字裡行間充滿許多唾手可得的知識，而涉獵關鍵就在於閱讀技巧。閱讀技巧能幫助我們吸收報章雜誌所透露的事實資訊，還能協助我們加以歸納整理，以便能更有效地理解資訊內容。

這樣想吧：閱讀技巧不只讓我們了解作者所寫的內容，也讓我們了解其撰寫原因。這就是為什麼不論是從小學、乃至於到商務職場等各個人生活階段中，閱讀技巧都如此舉足輕重的原因。

1-1 明辨主題

文章的主題就是所謂的大意，通常能讓我們了解文章內容的大方向。如果你對某文章的主題感到不解，請試著再讀一遍，並且針對每段內文重點做筆記。

1. 不可思議的印度

P. 014

印度位於中東與中國之間的亞洲地帶，擁有悠久迷人的歷史。也因其迅速發展的經濟狀態，印度竄升為豐饒國家。

超過六千年前，印度河盆地的居民孕育出欣欣向榮的獨特文明。此文明讓該地區搖身一變，成為貿易與宗教中樞，並且享盡幾百年來的富庶安逸生活。

有人說，印度河文明的榮景可媲美古美索不達米亞或古埃及。以文化的角度而言，印度河文明是許多世界重要宗教的發源地，如印度教、佛教與錫克教。

不過，當亞利安人於西元前 1500 年入侵印度

© COSMOS CULTURE LTD 之後亦發生多次外族入侵事件，包括波斯人、希臘人、蒙古人，最後是歐洲商船與英國的殖民統治。

1857 年，印度人民開始厭倦外族統治，奮而起身反抗當時獨佔印度的英國東印度公司。然而抗爭行動最終失敗，大不列顛也因此正式將印度納入大英帝國殖民地的版圖。

但是印度不甘永遠淪為殖民地。20 世紀上半葉，上百萬名印度人參與甘地所帶領的全國政治運動。甘地組織了公民不服從的和平抗爭運動，表達反抗英國統治的訴求。1947 年 8 月 15 日，印度終於獨立，並於 1950 年 1 月 26 日正式更名為印度共和國。

印度歷經許多重要的經濟變遷與改革。如果你對印度的購買力有疑慮，印度現在可謂全球規模第六大的經濟體。且年輕的人口結構，亦能於未來十年持續推動印度的經濟成長率。

然而，印度尚有貧窮、文盲與營養不良等棘手問題待處理。與其他亞洲國家一樣，城鄉之間的人民貧富差距日益懸殊，這都是政府將來需要好好正視的問題。

2. 布雷點字法

P. 016

失明的人並不代表失去閱讀的能力，只要學習不同的閱讀方式即可。

視障者可藉由指腹觸摸頁面上多組微小凸點的方式來閱讀。這些凸點代表不同的字母，構成像我們一般人所用的字母表。這種書寫系統即稱為「布雷點字法」。

布雷點字法的歷史淵源十分有趣。大約西元 1800 年時，法國土官巴比爾創造了點字系統，讓士兵即使在暗夜裡也能讀取訊息。這是因為拿破崙希望軍隊能在行跡不敗露的前提下，於黑暗環境之中通訊。但是這種「夜書」系統過於複雜而難以上手，因此不得不遭到軍方拒用。

多年後，巴比爾在巴黎的國立啟明學校認識了布雷。布雷四歲的時候即失明，他當下體認到巴比爾系統的重要潛力與其主要缺點。他開始著手簡化該系統，布雷點字系統就此而生。

在布雷點字法裡，每個布雷點字「字母」（或稱點字格）均由一個至多可填滿六凸點的長方形所組成（並以各點為凸點與否做變化）。此六凸點長方形的排列方式為每列兩點，每行三點。左行凸點由上到下的編號分別為 1、2、3，右行凸點由上到下的編號分別為 4、5、6，共有 64 種不同組合。

布雷點字法亦因應不同語言而有所調整。舉例而言，希臘文點字法就與中文點字法不盡相同。

視障者同樣能透過布雷點字法來書寫文字。多數視障者使用一種特殊的「柏金斯點字機」（Perkins Brailler），此打字機能將布雷點字打在紙張上。現在市面上也有配備布雷點字符號的電腦鍵盤。

布雷點字法由拿破崙戰爭使用的軍事技術所演化而來，竟然改善了全球無數視障者的生活，著實令人驚奇。

3. 細說閃電 P.018

「閃電」就是暴風雨時，雲層中所出現的銀白色閃光。有時候，一道雷霆閃電就這麼從天而降擊中地面。打雷通常會伴隨閃電現象，形成令人目瞪口呆的自然聲光美景。

幾千年以來，人類即對閃電著迷不已。古希臘人深信，閃電代表天神宙斯發怒。西元 1752 年，人們對於閃電原理有了更清晰且更科學的了解。因為就在這一年，富蘭克林透過一支鑰匙、一面風箏，以及一場狂風暴雨，證明了閃電實際上是一種電學現象。

至此之後，科學家發現閃電其實是靜電的放電現象。當雲層中的小水滴互相摩擦碰撞，就會累積靜電。當靜電累積至某種程度，就會試著往低電量的地表移動。而靜電位移的結果，即為我們所看到的閃電。

雲間閃電是最常見的類型，有時從遠方就可觀察得到。雲地閃電是第二種常見的類型，對人類生命財產的威脅最鉅。還有球狀閃電、正極閃電等其他閃電類型，以及最詭異的「地對雲閃電」。

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閃電的溫度可高達攝氏 29,000 度以上，甚至超越太陽的熱度。閃電亦可能不斷襲擊同一個地點。光是一場暴風雨，高樓大廈與其他高聳建築結構就可能被閃電襲擊數次。這就是為何在雷電交加的風雨中，絕對不能站在大樹下的原因。最好的方式是待在車內，因為金屬能保護人身安全，或是到空曠區域平躺於地面。

近 20 年來，美國每年大約有 36 人因閃電雷擊而亡。閃電與龍捲風和颶風等天災一樣危險。雖然遭到雷擊的機率極小，但我們寧願防患未然，也不要終生遺憾。

4. 通貨膨脹 P.020

吉姆拿出他辛苦攢了數月並埋在後院的十元美金。經過了 40 年，他決定讓這筆錢重見天日，拿來買些好東西。但問題是，到了 2018 年，他的十元美金連幫孫子買個 iPhone 手機殼都不夠。

這到底是怎麼一回事呢？原因就在於物價越演越烈，而吉姆的錢卻仍維持原價值，他忘了考量通貨膨脹此因素。

當經濟體中的商品和服務價格攀升，就會產生「通貨膨脹」的問題。通膨通常是一種負面的經濟力量，因為物價上漲會為家庭生計帶來壓力。政府與中央銀行會盡量將通膨率維持在 3% 以下，藉此盡力控制通膨現象。

若干經濟因素會導致通膨問題，例如某國貨幣供應量大幅增加。印鈔數量過多時，貨幣價值就會下跌，物價因而上漲。當某商品供不應求，也可能產生通膨問題。另一個引發通貨膨脹的原因，就是商品或服務的零件或原料成本增加。舉例而言，由於農場牽引機需以石油驅動，因此油價上漲也會導致食物價格攀升。

當人民對其貨幣價值喪失信心時，有時會產生失控的通貨膨脹現象。這就是所謂的「惡性通貨膨脹」。雖然此名詞有多種不同定義，但多數經濟學家均認同，當某國每月通膨率超過 50% 的時候，就會出現惡性通貨膨脹問題。因為在通膨率如此高的情況下，貨幣每個月都在減少一半的價值。

惡性通貨膨脹大肆摧毀一國經濟的例子，歷史上比比皆是。1947 年，中國面額最大的紙鈔是 1 萬元。到了 1949 年，政府甚至發行了面額 5 億的紙鈔。1920 年代的德國、法國大革命期間的法國，以及 1980 年代期間的阿根廷，也遭遇過類似的通膨危機。而辛巴威政府自 2008 年以來，即一直在力抗不見起色的惡性通膨危機。