How to Use Your Textbook

Getting to know a new textbook is like getting to know a new video game. In each case, you have to figure out how the game or book is structured, as well as its rules. Knowing how your book is structured, you can be successful from the start.


UNIT 1

Short Stories

Writers on Writing

Ursula K. Le Guin on Short Stories Ursula K. Le Guin has written hundreds of short stories and many books for adults, young adults, and children, including the Earthsea series and the Books of Earthsea. She is best known for her fantasy and science fiction writing, which explores ideas about culture, gender, race, and class.

"There have been short stories as long as there have been people. In the ages before we had writing, we told our stories aloud—animal fables, legends of gods and heroes, folk tales, joke tales, ghost stories. We still tell tall tales around a campfire and read bedtime stories aloud to little kids. The modern short story grew out of all those forms. Writers and readers love the short story because it can tell so much in so few words.

There are almost as many ways to write short stories as there are short stories. Some stories are very neat, with a tight, jack-in-the-box plot that pops a surprise out at the end. O. Henry was such a master of this kind of story that his name is still used to describe it. Many stories have no trick ending, but their plots are full of action and suspense. Other stories go along without very much happening and end quietly. A story that seems to have little action can still deeply involve your mind and emotions and imagination. What makes it a story is that *something happens*. It may happen through conflict or violence, or it may be a quiet discovery, something learned, or lost. But at the end of the story, *something has changed*.

If you want to write fiction, the short story is the best place to start. But 'short' isn't 'easy'! A story can start out almost anywhere, but it can't just stop anywhere. During a story, *something changes*. The writer needs to know beforehand: What's going to change as this story happens? Where is it all going to end up? And how is it going to get there? You don't have to know every detail beforehand, but you need to have the idea of it in your head. Then, knowing where you're going, you don't have to go in a big rush. You can take it easy, so long as you keep following your story to where it's headed. And always remember to bring the reader along with you!

A short story can be an adventure, or a warning, or a portrait, or a picture of a whole way of life, or a meditation about right and wrong, or a dream, or a nightmare. Many stories are written purely for entertainment and nothing more. Many are written to show people something fascinating or wonderful or terrible about our life on earth, to let us share the writer's deepest thoughts and feelings.

All storytellers use fiction to tell what they think is true. They have always done this, and always will, because often the only way to tell the truth, and to get people to listen to the truth, is to make it into a story."

Think as a Writer Le Guin writes that "often the only way to tell the truth, and to get people to listen to the truth, is to make it into a story." What truths can you teach through a story? What truths have you learned through a story?

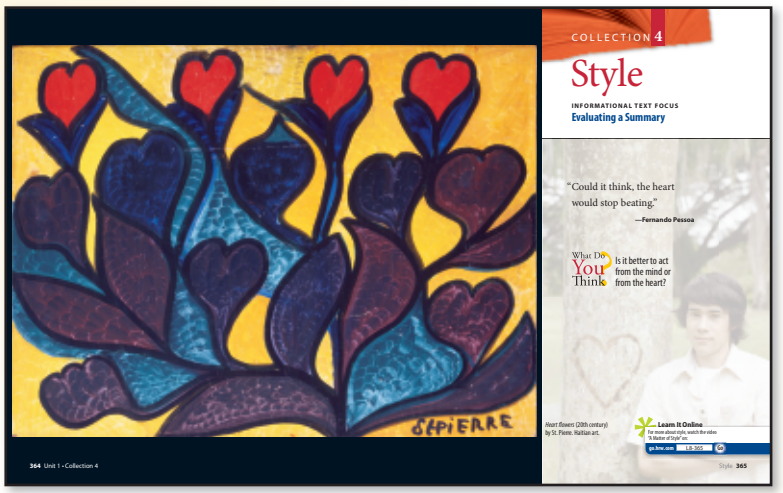
Writers on Writing 1

Writers on Writing

If you think about the authors of the selections in your book, you may think they are a rare breed like astronauts or underwater explorers. **Writers on Writing** introduces you to authors whose stories, poems, plays, or articles began with experiences that were transformed by their words.

Collection Opener

What is the focus of each collection, or section of the book? What does the image suggest about what the collection will cover? On the right, you'll see a bold heading that says "Plot and Setting" or "Character." These are the **literary skills** you will study in the collection. Also in bold type is the **Informational Text Focus** for the collection. These are the skills you use to read a newspaper or web site. Keep the **What Do You Think?** question in mind as you go through the collection. Your answers may even surprise you.





Literary Focus

Like a set of rules or a map, the **Literary Focus** shows you how literary elements work in stories and poems, helping you navigate through selections more easily. The Literary Focus will help you get to your destination—understanding and enjoying the selection.

Analyzing Visuals

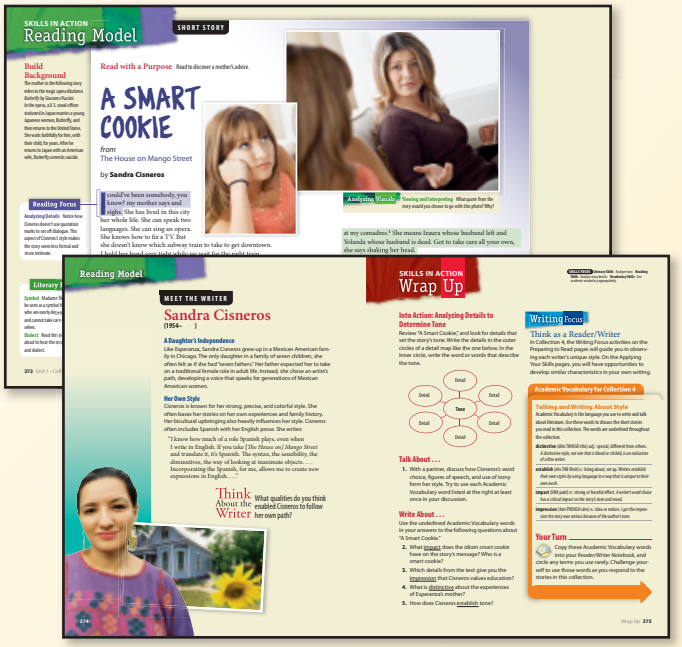
Visuals are all around you: murals on buildings, magazine ads, or video-game graphics. Because you see images daily, you probably know quite a bit about analyzing them. **Analyzing Visuals** helps you apply these skills to understand the literary elements that drive the selections.

Reading Focus

Your mind is working all the time as you read, even if you're not aware of it. Still, all readers, even very good ones, sometimes don't understand what they've read. **Reading Focus** gives you the skills to help you improve your reading.

Reading Model

You tend to do things more quickly and easily if you have a model to follow. The **Reading Model** shows you the literary and reading skills that you will practice in the collection so that you can learn them more quickly and easily.

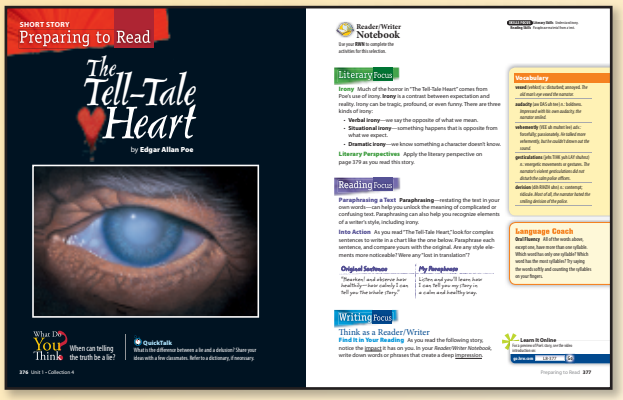


Wrap Up

Think of **Wrap Up** as a bridge that gives you a chance to practice the skills on which the collection will focus. It also introduces you to the **Academic Vocabulary** you will study in the collection: the language of school, business, and standardized tests. To be successful in school, you'll need to understand and use its language.

How to Use Your Textbook

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Literary Selection Pages

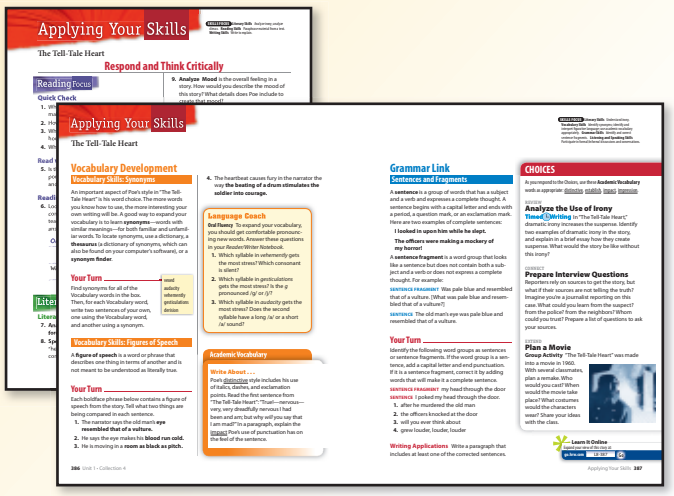
Preparing to Read

If you have ever done something complicated, you know that things go more smoothly with some preparation. It's the same with reading. The **Preparing to Read** page gives you a boost by presenting the literary, reading, and writing skills you'll learn about and use as you read the selection. The list of **Vocabulary** words gives the words you need to know for reading both the selection and beyond the selection. **Language Coach** explains the inner workings of English—like looking at the inside of a clock.



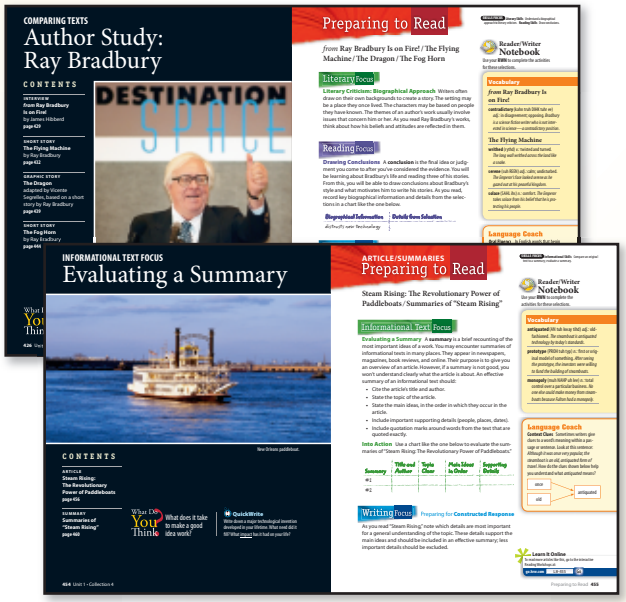
Selection

Meet the Writer gives you all kinds of interesting tidbits about the authors who wrote the selections in this book. **Build Background** provides information you sometimes need when a selection deals with unfamiliar times, places, and situations. **Preview the Selection** presents the selection's main character, like a movie trailer that hints at what is to come. **Read with a Purpose** helps you set a goal for your reading. It helps you answer the question, "What's the point of this selection?"



Applying Your Skills

If you have a special talent or hobby, you know that you have to practice to master it. In **Applying Your Skills,** you will apply the reading, literary, vocabulary, and language skills from the Preparing to Read page that you practiced as you read the selection. This gives you a chance to check on how you are mastering these skills.



Comparing Texts

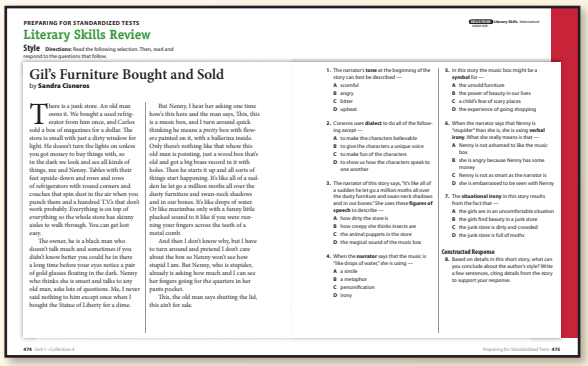
You probably compare people, places, and things all the time, such as a favorite singer's new songs with her previous album. In **Comparing Texts,** you will compare different works—sometimes by the same author, sometimes by different authors—that have something in common.

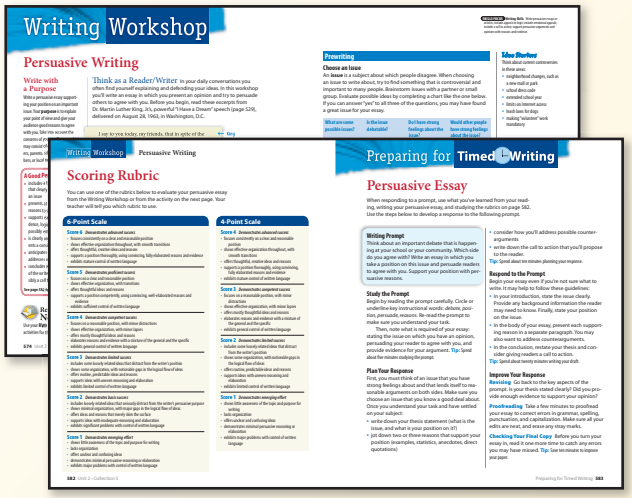
Informational Text Focus

If you've ever read a web site or followed a technical manual, you've been reading informational text. The skills you use in this type of reading are different than the ones you use for literary text. **Informational Text Focus** helps you gain the skills that will enable you to be a more successful reader in daily life and on standardized tests.

Preparing for Standardized Tests

Do you dread test-taking time? Do you struggle over reading the passage and then choosing the correct answer? **Preparing for Standardized Tests** can reduce your "guesses" and give you the practice you need to feel more confident during testing.





Writing Workshop

Does a blank piece of paper send shivers up your spine? **The Writing Workshop** will help you tackle the page. It takes you step-by-step through developing an effective piece of writing. Models, annotations, graphic organizers, and charts take the "What now?" out of writing for different purposes and audiences.

Preparing for Timed Writing

What's your idea of a nightmare? Maybe it's trying to respond to a writing prompt. **Preparing for Timed Writing** helps you practice for on-demand, or timed, writing so that you can realize your dreams of success.