



NATIONAL  
GEOGRAPHIC  
LEARNING

READING FOR TODAY

# CONCEPTS

# 4

FOURTH EDITION

LORRAINE C. SMITH

NANCY NICI MARE

# READING FOR TODAY CONCEPTS 4

FOURTH EDITION

LORRAINE C. SMITH  
AND  
NANCY NICI MARE

English Language Institute  
Queens College  
The City University of New York

 NATIONAL  
GEOGRAPHIC  
LEARNING

Australia • Brazil • Mexico • Singapore • United Kingdom • United States

**Reading for Today 4: Concepts**

**Fourth Edition**

**Lorraine C. Smith and Nancy Nici Mare**

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# CONTENTS

Scope & Sequence v  
Preface viii  
Introduction x  
Acknowledgments xiv

## **UNIT 1** Living in Society 2

- CHAPTER 1** Learning through Video Games:  
Fact or Fiction? 4
- CHAPTER 2** The Birth-Order Myth 22
- CHAPTER 3** Highs and Lows in  
Self-Esteem 40



## **UNIT 2** Health and Wellness 58

- CHAPTER 4** Sugar: A Not-So-Sweet Story 60
- CHAPTER 5** Laughter Is the Best Medicine  
for Your Heart—Or Is It? 76
- CHAPTER 6** Traditional Medicine:  
A Non-Western Approach  
to Healing 92



## **UNIT 3** Science and Technology 110

- CHAPTER 7** Stopping the Spread of  
Superbugs 112
- CHAPTER 8** It's Time for a Conversation:  
Learning the Language of  
Dolphins 130
- CHAPTER 9** Space Science on Earth 148



**UNIT 4** Government and History 166

---

**CHAPTER 10** Antarctica: Whose Continent  
Is It Anyway? **168**

**CHAPTER 11** The Mystery of the Iceman **186**

**CHAPTER 12** The Federal System of  
Government **204**



Index of Key Words and Phrases 228

Skills Index 230

Credits 232

# SCOPE & SEQUENCE

Unit & Theme	Chapter & Title	Reading Skills	Vocabulary Skills	Critical Thinking Skills
<b>UNIT 1</b> <b>Living in Society</b> Page 2	<b>CHAPTER 1</b> Learning through Video Games: Fact or Fiction Page 4	Previewing a reading Recalling information Scanning for information Summarizing information <b>Reading Skill Focus:</b> Understanding charts	Understanding meaning from context <b>Word Forms:</b> Recognizing the suffix <i>-al</i> Identifying parts of speech: nouns and adjectives Understanding antonyms	Describing an idea for a game Identifying and explaining reasons Evaluating the benefits of video games Assessing the author's bias
	<b>CHAPTER 2</b> The Birth-Order Myth Page 22	Previewing a reading Recalling information Scanning for information Summarizing information <b>Reading Skill Focus:</b> Using headings to create an outline	Understanding meaning from context <b>Word Forms:</b> Understanding word forms: nouns and adjectives Recognizing the suffixes <i>-ance</i> and <i>-ence</i> Choosing the correct dictionary definition	Analyzing survey results Explaining opinions Discussing theories Explaining the author's tone
	<b>CHAPTER 3</b> Highs and Lows in Self-Esteem Page 40	Previewing a reading Recalling information Scanning for information Summarizing information <b>Reading Skill Focus:</b> Creating a flowchart	Understanding meaning from context <b>Word Forms:</b> Understanding word forms: nouns and verbs Recognizing the suffixes <i>-tion</i> and <i>-ion</i> Understanding synonyms	Discussing self-esteem in adolescence and old age Making analogies to describe your own stages of self-esteem Inferring the author's opinion
<b>UNIT 2</b> <b>Health and Wellness</b> Page 58	<b>CHAPTER 4</b> Sugar: A Not-So-Sweet Story Page 60	Previewing a reading Recalling information Scanning for information Summarizing information <b>Reading Skill Focus:</b> Understanding a timeline	Understanding meaning from context <b>Word Forms:</b> Identifying parts of speech: nouns and verbs Understanding phrasal verbs	Describing reasons Explaining answers Researching and preparing a presentation Determining the author's viewpoint

# SCOPE & SEQUENCE

Unit & Theme	Chapter & Title	Reading Skills	Vocabulary Skills	Critical Thinking Skills
	<b>CHAPTER 5</b> Laughter Is the Best Medicine for Your Heart—Or Is It? Page 76	Previewing a reading Scanning for information Recalling information Summarizing information <b>Reading Skill Focus:</b> Organizing information in a chart	Understanding meaning from context <b>Word Forms:</b> Recognizing the suffix <i>-ity</i> Understanding phrasal verbs	Discussing and comparing reasons Taking and discussing a class survey Inferring the author's viewpoint on others' opinions
	<b>CHAPTER 6</b> Traditional Medicine: A Non-Western Approach to Healing Page 92	Previewing a reading Scanning for information Recalling information Summarizing information <b>Reading Skill Focus:</b> Using a Venn diagram	Understanding meaning from context <b>Word Forms:</b> Recognizing the suffix <i>-al</i> Choosing the correct dictionary definition	Discussing and comparing reasons Giving examples to support answers Explaining the author's bias
<b>UNIT 3</b> <b>Science and Technology</b> Page 110	<b>CHAPTER 7</b> Stopping the Spread of Superbugs Page 112	Previewing a reading Scanning for information Recalling information Summarizing information <b>Reading Skill Focus:</b> Understanding graphics	Understanding meaning from context <b>Word Forms:</b> Recognizing the suffixes <i>-tion</i> and <i>-ion</i> Using common expressions and idioms	Discussing antibiotics Giving examples and sharing ideas Determining the author's purpose
	<b>CHAPTER 8</b> It's Time for a Conversation: Learning the Language of Dolphins Page 130	Previewing a reading Scanning for information Recalling information Summarizing information <b>Reading Skill Focus:</b> Creating an outline	Understanding meaning from context <b>Word Forms:</b> Recognizing the suffix <i>-ly</i> Understanding synonyms	Discussing advantages and disadvantages Giving reasons for why you agree or disagree Assessing the author's tone

# SCOPE & SEQUENCE

Unit & Theme	Chapter & Title	Reading Skills	Vocabulary Skills	Critical Thinking Skills
	<b>CHAPTER 9</b> Space Science on Earth Page 148	Previewing a reading Scanning for information Recalling information Summarizing information <b>Reading Skill Focus:</b> Using headings to create an outline	Understanding meaning from context <b>Word Forms:</b> Recognizing the suffix <i>-ful</i> Understanding synonyms	Discussing and giving examples Discussing the benefits of technology Giving reasons for opinions Establishing the author's purpose
<b>UNIT 4</b> <b>Government and History</b> Page 166	<b>CHAPTER 10</b> Antarctica: Whose Continent Is It Anyway? Page 168	Previewing a reading Scanning for information Recalling information Summarizing information <b>Reading Skill Focus:</b> Using headings to create an outline	Understanding meaning from context <b>Word Forms:</b> Recognizing the suffixes <i>-ion</i> and <i>-tion</i> Understanding synonyms	Discussing possible outcomes of the melting of Antarctica's ice caps Listing reasons why Antarctica is important Writing a set of guidelines for the protection of Antarctica Assessing the author's bias
	<b>CHAPTER 11</b> The Mystery of the Iceman Page 186	Previewing a reading Scanning for information Recalling information Summarizing information <b>Reading Skill Focus:</b> Creating an information chart	Understanding meaning from context <b>Word Forms:</b> Identifying parts of speech: nouns and verbs Understanding useful phrases	Giving opinions Researching one of the ages of mankind and writing a description Assessing the author's tone and opinion
	<b>CHAPTER 12</b> The Federal System of Government Page 204	Previewing a reading Scanning for information Recalling information Summarizing information <b>Reading Skill Focus:</b> Using headings to create an outline	Understanding meaning from context <b>Word Forms:</b> Recognizing the suffix <i>-ment</i> Understanding collocations	Drawing inferences from text Discussing the individuality of the 50 states Determining the author's purpose

# PREFACE

*Concepts for Today, Fourth Edition*, is a reading skills text intended for high-intermediate, college-bound students of English-as-a-second- or foreign-language. The passages in this book are original articles drawn from a range of publications, thus allowing students the opportunity to read authentic materials from a wide variety of sources. As they engage with the materials in each chapter of this book, students develop the kinds of extensive and intensive reading skills they will need to achieve academic success in English.

*Concepts for Today, Fourth Edition*, is one in a series of five reading skills texts. The complete series has been designed to meet the needs of students from the beginning to the advanced levels and includes the following:

- |  |                   |
|--|-------------------|
| • <i>Reading for Today 1: Themes for Today</i>   | beginning         |
| • <i>Reading for Today 2: Insights for Today</i> | high-beginning    |
| • <i>Reading for Today 3: Issues for Today</i>   | intermediate      |
| • <i>Reading for Today 4: Concepts for Today</i> | high-intermediate |
| • <i>Reading for Today 5: Topics for Today</i>   | advanced          |

*Concepts for Today, Fourth Edition*, consists of four thematic units. Each unit contains three chapters that deal with related subjects. However, for maximum flexibility in the classroom, each chapter is independent, entirely separate in content from the other two chapters contained in that unit. Organizing the chapters into thematic units provides for a natural recycling of content-specific vocabulary and concepts, and discipline-specific sentence structure and rhetorical patterns. It should be noted that although all three chapters in each unit are linked by theme, they can as easily be taught individually as in concert with one another.

All of the chapters provide students with essential practice in the types of reading skills they will need in an academic environment. This practice requires students not only to read text, but also to examine information from various forms of charts, illustrations, and photographs. Furthermore, students are given the opportunity to speak and write about their own experiences, countries, and cultures in English and to compare these experiences and ideas with those of people from the United States and other countries.

The initial exercise preceding each reading encourages the students to think about the ideas, facts, and vocabulary that will be presented in the passage. Discussing unit and chapter illustrations in class helps students visualize what they are going to read about and gives them cues for the new vocabulary they will encounter. The exercises

that follow the reading passage are intended to develop and improve reading proficiency, including the ability to learn new vocabulary from context and to develop comprehension of English sentence structure, and study skills such as note-taking and proper dictionary use. The follow-up activities give students the opportunity to master useful vocabulary encountered in the articles through discussion and group work and lead the students to a comprehension of main ideas and specific information.

## New to the Fourth Edition

*Concepts for Today, Fourth Edition*, maintains the effective approach of the third edition with several significant improvements. This enhanced edition takes a more in-depth approach to vocabulary development and application by consistently introducing, practicing, and assessing vocabulary in context, while teaching valuable vocabulary-building skills that are recycled throughout the series.

The fourth edition of *Concepts for Today* contains six completely new chapters: *Learning through Video Games: Fact or Fiction*, *Sugar: A Not-So-Sweet Story*, *Traditional Medicine: A Non-Western Approach to Healing*, *Stopping the Spread of Superbugs*, *It's Time for a Conversation: Learning the Language of Dolphins*, and *Space Science on Earth*. In addition, the original remaining chapters have been updated to include current information.

There are several changes as well in the approach to learning vocabulary and acquiring specific reading skills in the new edition, and new exercises have been added. The first exercise is the original *Word Forms* exercise, which has been revised to include the context of the readings. A second new exercise, *Vocabulary Skills*, emphasizes various vocabulary skills, for example, dictionary skills, antonyms, synonyms, phrasal verbs, content-specific vocabulary, useful phrases, and collocations. A third new exercise, *Vocabulary in Context*, gives students additional practice in language from the chapter in a new context. A new *Reading Skill* section focuses on a specific reading skill, for example, understanding graphs, illustrations, and graphics, and creating charts, flowcharts, timelines, and Venn diagrams. Also new to the fourth edition is a *Critical Thinking* section, which includes questions about an author's purpose, tone, and bias. The activities in this section encourage students to use the information and vocabulary from the reading passages both orally and in writing, and to think beyond the reading passage and form their own opinions. In addition, the fourth edition includes new photos, graphs, and charts, all of which are designed to enhance students' comprehension of the readings. Finally, there is a crossword puzzle at the end of each chapter to reinforce vocabulary in that particular reading.

These revisions and enhancements to *Concepts for Today, Fourth Edition*, have been designed to help students improve their reading skills and develop confidence as they work through the text. At the same time, the fourth edition is structured so that teachers can observe students steadily progressing toward skillful, independent reading.

# INTRODUCTION

## How to Use This Book

Every chapter in this book consists of the following:

- *Prereading*
- *Reading*
- *Fact Finding*
- *Reading Analysis*
- *Vocabulary Skills*
- *Vocabulary in Context*
- *Reading Skill*
- *Information Recall*
- *Topics for Discussion and Writing*
- *Critical Thinking*
- *Crossword Puzzle*

The format of the chapters in the book is consistent. Although each chapter can be done entirely in class, some exercises may be assigned for homework. This, of course, depends on the individual teacher's preference, as well as the availability of class time. Each chapter consists of the following sections:

### **Prereading**

The *Prereading* activity is designed to stimulate student interest and provide preliminary vocabulary for the passage itself. The importance of prereading should not be underestimated. Studies have shown the positive effect of prereading in motivating student interest, activating background knowledge, and enhancing reading comprehension. Time should be spent describing and discussing both unit and chapter photographs and illustrations as well as discussing the title and the prereading questions. Furthermore, students should try to relate the topic to their own experiences and try to predict what they are going to read about.

### **Reading**

As students read the passage for the first time, they should be encouraged to read *ideas*. In English, ideas are in groups of words in sentences and in paragraphs, not in individual words.

## Fact Finding

After the first reading, students will read the true/false statements, then go back to the passage and scan for the information that will clarify whether each statement is true or false. If the statement is false, students will rewrite the statement so that it becomes true. This activity can be done individually or in groups or pairs.

## Reading Analysis

Students will read each question and answer it. This exercise deals with vocabulary from context, transition words, punctuation clues, sentence structure, sentence comprehension, and pronoun referents. The teacher should review personal and relative pronouns before doing this section. This exercise may be assigned for homework, or it may be done in class individually or in groups, giving the students the opportunity to discuss their reasons for their answers.

## Vocabulary Skills

This section consists of two parts. The first part focuses on recognizing word forms. As an introduction to this exercise, it is recommended that teachers first review parts of speech, especially verbs, nouns, adjectives, and adverbs. Teachers should point out the position of each word form in a sentence. Students will develop a sense for which part of speech is missing in a given sentence. Teachers should also point out clues to verb form and number, and whether an idea is affirmative or negative. Each section has its own instructions, depending on the particular pattern that is being introduced. For example, in the section containing words that take *-tion* in the noun form, teachers can explain that in the exercise students will look at the verb and noun forms of these words. Teachers can use the examples in the directions for each chapter's *Recognizing Word Forms* section to see that the students understand the exercise. All of the sentences in this exercise are content specific, which not only helps reinforce the vocabulary, but also helps check the students' comprehension of the passage. This activity is very effective when done in pairs because students can discuss their answers. After students have a working knowledge of this type of exercise, it can be assigned for homework. The focus of Part 2 of the *Vocabulary Skills* section varies. The purpose of this section is to provide students with a range of ways to learn and practice new vocabulary, and make logical connections by working with words that are commonly paired or that are related to a particular topic. The exercises in this section focus on a variety of important vocabulary-related topics, such as antonyms, synonyms, phrasal verbs, content-specific vocabulary, collocations, and dictionary usage.

## Vocabulary in Context

This is a fill-in exercise designed as a review of the vocabulary items covered in the *Reading Analysis* and/or the previous *Vocabulary Skills* exercises. In this exercise, the target words are used in new contexts, giving the students the opportunity for additional practice. It can be assigned for homework as a review or done in class as group work.

## Reading Skill

Each chapter includes a new *Reading Skill* section, which provides instruction and practice with a specific reading skill, such as understanding line or bar graphs, or creating a flowchart, an outline, or a Venn diagram. This section is very effective when done in pairs or small groups. The exercises in these sections may also be done individually, but group work gives the students an opportunity to discuss their work.

## Information Recall

This section requires students to review the passage again, in some cases along with the previous *Reading Skill* exercise, and answer questions that test the students' overall comprehension of the chapter. In addition, students must also write a short summary of the passage using no more than five sentences. In early chapters, the first sentence is given as a guide.

## Topics for Discussion and Writing

This section provides ideas or questions for students to think about and work on alone, in pairs, or in small groups. Students are encouraged to use the information and vocabulary from the passages both orally and in their writing. The writing assignments may be done entirely in class, started in class and finished at home, or done entirely for homework. The last activity in this section is a journal-writing assignment that provides students with an opportunity to reflect on the topic of the chapter and respond to it in some personal way. Students should be encouraged to keep a journal and to write in it regularly. The students' journal writing may be purely personal, or students may choose to have the teacher read their entries. If the teacher reads the entries, the journals should be considered a free-writing activity and should be responded to rather than corrected.

## Critical Thinking

This section contains various activities appropriate to the information in the passages. Some activities are designed for pair and small group work. Students are encouraged to use the information and vocabulary from the passages both orally and in writing. The critical thinking questions and activities provide students with an opportunity to think about some aspect of the chapter topic and to share their own thoughts and opinions about it. Additionally, students are asked to consider and discuss the author's purpose, tone, and/or bias. The goal of this section is for students to go beyond the reading itself and to form their own ideas and opinions on aspects of the topic. Teachers may also use these questions and activities as homework or in-class assignments. The activities in the *Critical Thinking* sections help students interact with the real world, as many exercises require students to go outside the classroom to collect specific information.

## Crossword Puzzle

The *Crossword Puzzle* in each chapter is based on the vocabulary addressed in that chapter. Students can go over the puzzle orally if pronunciation practice with letters is needed. Teachers can have the students spell out their answers in addition to pronouncing the words themselves. Students invariably enjoy doing crossword puzzles. They are a fun way to reinforce the vocabulary presented in the various exercises in each chapter. Crossword puzzles also require students to pay attention to correct spelling. If the teacher prefers, students can do the *Crossword Puzzle* on their own or with a partner in their free time, or after they have completed an in-class assignment and are waiting for the rest of their classmates to finish.

## Index of Key Words and Phrases

The *Index of Key Words and Phrases* is at the back of the book. This section contains words and phrases from all the chapters for easy reference. This index can help students locate words they need or wish to review. The words that are part of the Academic Word List are indicated with an icon.

## Skills Index

The *Skills Index* lists the different skills presented and/or practiced in the book.

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L.C.S and N.N.M.

**Dedication:**

*To our parents: Peg and Smitty; Anthony and Antoinette*

## UNIT 1

# Living in Society



Students using technology in  
the modern classroom

- 
1. How do children learn? What types of technology might help them learn better?
  2. How are families different today than they were in the past?
  3. Are you a happy person? What makes you happy? Do you think happiness is genetic?



## Prereading

---

1. Did you ever use video games in school? Do you think they are useful in the classroom? Why or why not?
2. Do you think children can learn from computer games, or do you think they do not help learning? If so, why do you think so? If not, why not?
3. Read the title of this article, and look at the photo. Where are these children? What do you think they are doing? Why?

## Reading



Read the passage carefully. Then complete the exercises that follow.

CD 1  
TR 2

# Learning through Video Games: Fact or Fiction?

Video games are a major part of children's lives today, and they spend hours playing them. However, parents and teachers alike question the educational value of video games at home and in the classroom. Even more importantly, can playing video games, specifically violent ones, actually be harmful to children? This chapter  
5 presents two articles with different perspectives on the topic.

### The First Perspective: Gaming to Learn

#### Do educational computer and video games lead to real learning gains?

by Amy Novotney, *American Psychological Association*

Many of today's K–12 students are spending their class time—and a lot of it—exploring science and writing sentences through the website BrainPOP. The website allows kids to watch movies, complete quizzes, and play games covering hundreds of topics within math, science, social studies, English, technology, art,  
10 music, and health.

BrainPOP is just one of hundreds of educational game websites in a billion-dollar industry that is growing in popularity. Nearly 60 percent of teachers now use digital games at least weekly in teaching, with 18 percent using them daily, according to a nationwide survey of 488 K–12 teachers conducted by researchers  
15 at New York University and the University of Michigan. But despite the growing popularity of such games, research has yet to determine whether they really help children learn.

Over the past 20 years, scientists have conducted nine major reviews of research on the effectiveness of educational computer and video games. Overall, they've  
20 found that the research on games is highly diverse, disorganized, and unfocused. Douglas Clark, Ph.D., professor of the learning sciences education at Vanderbilt University says, "The research shows that games as a medium can be effective, but not always. Design is really what matters. Nobody assumes that all lectures, labs, or books are good simply because of their medium." Jan Plass, Ph.D., a professor in  
25 NYU's Steinhardt School of Culture, Education and Human Development and one of the study's lead authors, agrees. "We found that well-designed games can motivate students to learn less popular subjects, such as math, and that game-based learning can actually get students interested in the subject matter."

30 Psychologists are also studying a learning game for college students. A series  
of studies were conducted by psychologist Art Graesser, Ph.D., of the Institute  
for Intelligent Systems at the University of Memphis, and his colleagues, who  
developed the game. They reported improvements in critical thinking skills among  
students at three different types of higher education institutions—a community  
college, a state university, and a private college. “Every part of the game was backed  
35 by one or more principles of learning,” says Graesser. “That’s different from a lot of  
commercial games that often try to improve motivation but not learning. We really  
tried to do both.”

### **The Second Perspective: Review finds video game play may provide learning, health, and social benefits**

by Lisa Bowen, *American Psychological Association*

Playing video games, including violent games, may boost children’s learning,  
health, and social skills, according to a review of research in *American Psychologist*.  
40 The study comes out as debate continues among psychologists and other health  
professionals regarding the effects of violent media on youth.

While one view maintains that playing video games is intellectually lazy, such play  
actually may strengthen a range of cognitive skills such as spatial navigation, reasoning,  
memory, and perception, according to several studies reviewed in the article.

45 Playing video games may also help children develop problem-solving skills. The  
more adolescents reported playing strategic video games, the more they improved in  
problem solving and school grades the following year. Children’s creativity was also  
enhanced by playing any kind of video game, including violent games, but not when  
the children used other forms of technology, such as a computer or cell phone, other  
50 research revealed.

Simple games that are easy to access and can be played quickly can improve  
players’ moods, promote relaxation, and ward off anxiety, the study said. “If playing  
video games simply makes people happier, this seems to be a fundamental emotional  
benefit to consider,” said Isabela Granic, Ph.D., of Radboud University Nijmegen in  
55 the Netherlands.

The authors also highlighted the possibility that video games are effective tools  
for learning resilience, or flexibility, in the face of failure. By learning to cope with  
ongoing failures in games, the authors suggest that children build emotional resilience  
they can rely upon in their everyday lives.

60 Another stereotype the research challenges is the socially isolated gamer. More  
than 70 percent of gamers play with a friend. Multiplayer games become virtual  
social communities, where decisions need to be made quickly about whom to trust or  
reject and how to lead a group, the authors said. People who play video games that  
encourage cooperation, even if the games are violent, are more likely to be helpful

65 to others while gaming than those who play the same games competitively, a recent study found.

Perhaps a compromise between the two perspectives is to have adults monitor or screen video games before allowing younger children to play them. Another helpful strategy is to limit how much time children are allowed to play the games each day.

70 Finally, adults, especially parents, can discuss the video games with their children and explain why some games are better to play than others.



## Fact Finding

---

Read the passage again. Then read the following statements. Check (✓) whether each statement is True or False. If a statement is false, rewrite it so that it is true. Then go back to the passage and find the line that supports your answer.

1. \_\_\_\_ True \_\_\_\_ False Most research shows that playing video games helps children learn.

---

2. \_\_\_\_ True \_\_\_\_ False A majority of K-12 teachers use video games in the classroom.

---

3. \_\_\_\_ True \_\_\_\_ False All video games motivate students to learn less popular subjects.

---

4. \_\_\_\_ True \_\_\_\_ False Some video games can improve critical thinking skills in college students.

---

5. \_\_\_\_ True \_\_\_\_ False Playing violent video games decreases children's ability to learn.

---

6. \_\_\_\_ True \_\_\_\_ False Most video gamers play video games alone.

---

7. \_\_\_\_ True \_\_\_\_ False Parents and teachers should pay attention to which games the children are playing.

---

# Reading Analysis

---

Read each question carefully. Circle the letter or the number of the correct answer, or write your answer in the space provided.

1. Read lines 2–4.
  - a. **Alike** means
    1. the same.
    2. both.
    3. always.
  - b. **Specifically** means
    1. sometimes.
    2. mostly.
    3. especially.
2. In the question that introduces the first perspective, **learning gains** means
  - a. improvements in learning.
  - b. better teachers.
  - c. more time playing video games.
3. Read lines 6–7. **K–12** students are
  - a. in elementary school.
  - b. in high school.
  - c. in kindergarten.
  - d. all of the above.
4. Read lines 11–12. **A billion-dollar industry** is
  - a. a business that spends a lot of money.
  - b. a business that makes a lot of money.
  - c. a new kind of business.
5. Read lines 15–17.
  - a. **Despite** means
    1. because of.
    2. although.
    3. as a result of.
  - b. **But despite the growing popularity of such games, research has yet to determine whether they really help children learn.**  
This sentence means
    1. research has determined that video games really help children learn.
    2. research has not determined if video games really help children learn.
    3. research has determined that video games don't really help children learn.