SECOND EDITION

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3

READING AND CRITICAL-THINKING SKILLS

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PEGGY ANDERSON · SAM ROBINSON

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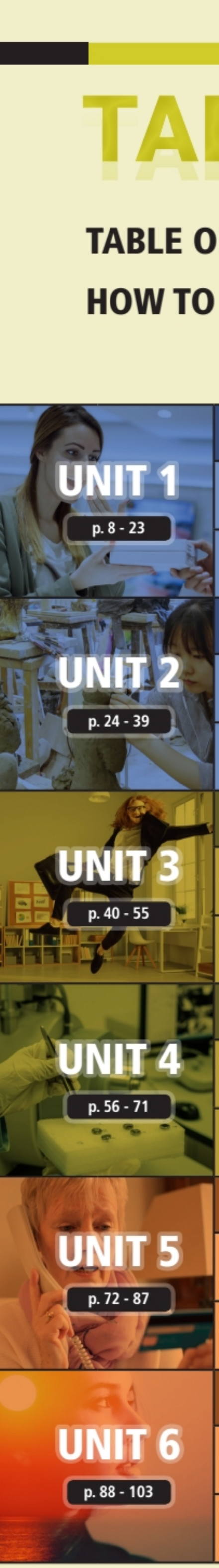
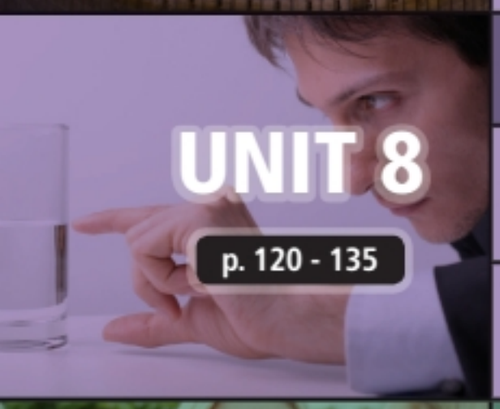
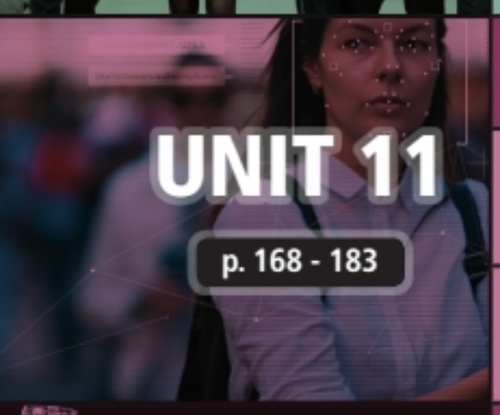
TABLE OF CONTENTS

TABLE OF CONTENTS ..... p. 2 - 3

HOW TO USE ..... p. 4 - 7



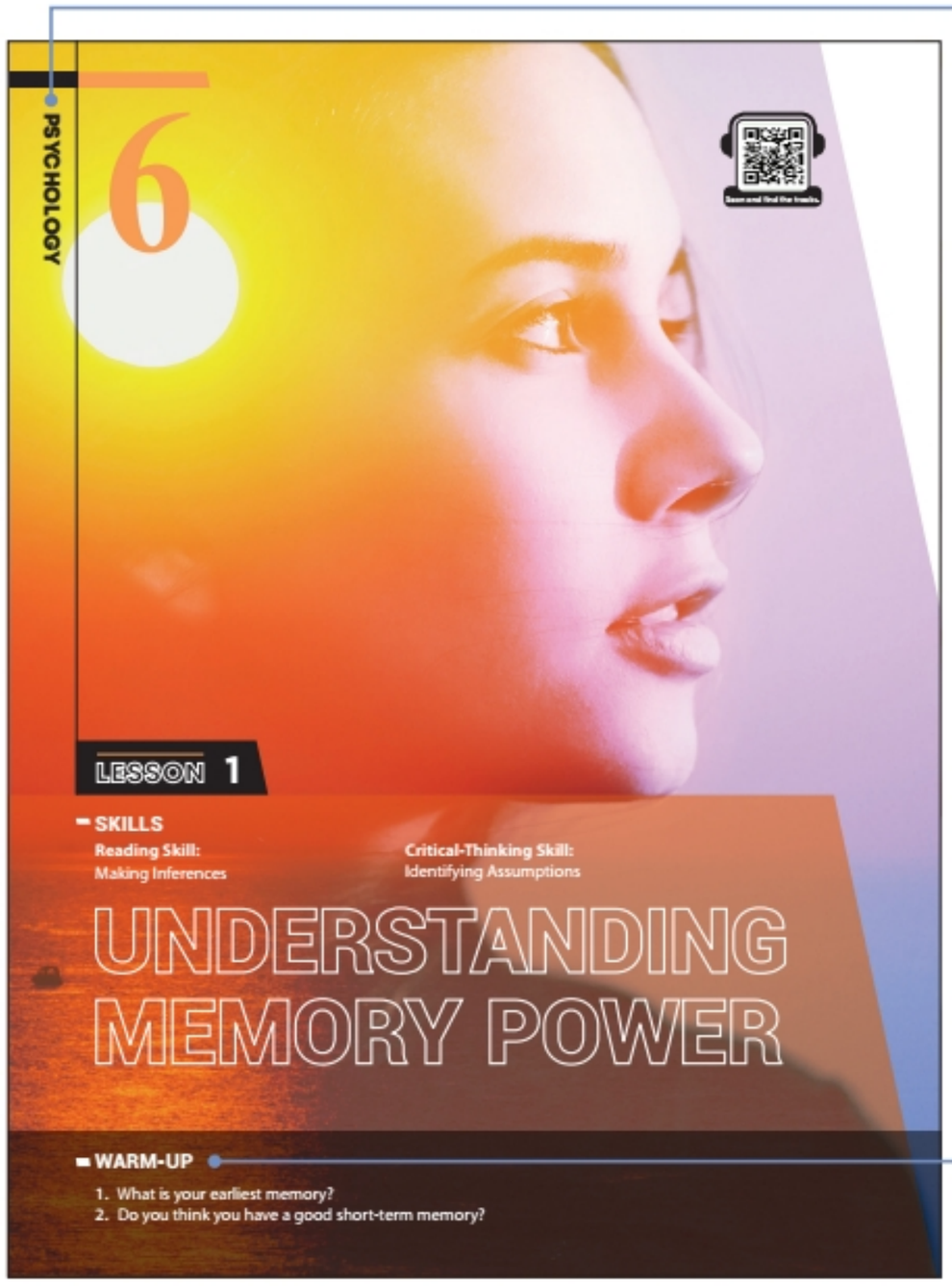
		Reading Skills	Critical-Thinking Skills
TECHNOLOGY			
Lesson 1	Early Adopters Fall Into a Costly Trap	Making Predictions	Detecting Arguments
Lesson 2	The Fun of Being an Early Adopter		
EDUCATION			
Lesson 1	The Benefits of a Creative Education	Identifying the Author's Point of View	Finding Fallacies
Lesson 2	Aiming High		
CAREERS			
Lesson 1	Kicking the Nine-to-Five	Determining Main Ideas and Details	Detecting Persuasive Language
Lesson 2	The Great Resignation		
ENGINEERING			
Lesson 1	Nanomaterials: Tiny Revolutions	Comparing and Contrasting	Detecting the Author's Purpose
Lesson 2	Where Are Our Autonomous Cars?		
CRIME			
Lesson 1	Making the Right Connections	Extracting and Recalling Information I	Distinguishing Overgeneralizations
Lesson 2	Prime Targets		
PSYCHOLOGY			
Lesson 1	Understanding Memory Power	Making Inferences	Identifying Assumptions
Lesson 2	Everyday Tips for Better Memory		

		Reading Skills	Critical-Thinking Skills
UNIT 7 p. 104 - 119	**ENERGY**		
	Lesson 1 Nuclear Power: A Twentieth-Century Error?	Understanding Cause and Effect	Identifying Cause and Effect
	Lesson 2 The French Model		
 UNIT 8 p. 120 - 135	**PSYCHOLOGY**		
	Lesson 1 Half-Empty and Half-Full	Clarifying Understanding	Detecting Irrelevant Points
	Lesson 2 Hooray for Pessimism!		
UNIT 9 p. 136 - 151	**LIFESTYLES**		
	Lesson 1 Staying Put	Making Connections	Understanding Key Terms
	Lesson 2 Multigenerational Homes		
UNIT 10 p. 152 - 167	**EDUCATION**		
	Lesson 1 Is Private Education Worth It?	Summarizing	Identifying Premises and Conclusions
	Lesson 2 Standardized Tests for a Non-Standardized World?		
 UNIT 11 p. 168 - 183	**INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY**		
	Lesson 1 Retail and the Individual	Extracting and Recalling Information II	Classifying Statements
	Lesson 2 Governmental Privacy Protections		
UNIT 12 p. 184 - 199	**URBAN PLANNING**		
	Lesson 1 The Future of Cities	Drawing Conclusions	Considering Objections
	Lesson 2 The Need for Green Spaces		

VOCABULARY ..... p. 200

HOW TO USE

UNIT OVERVIEW



SUBJECT

Reading topics are chosen for their relevance to students in the real world and are organized by academic subject.

WARM-UP

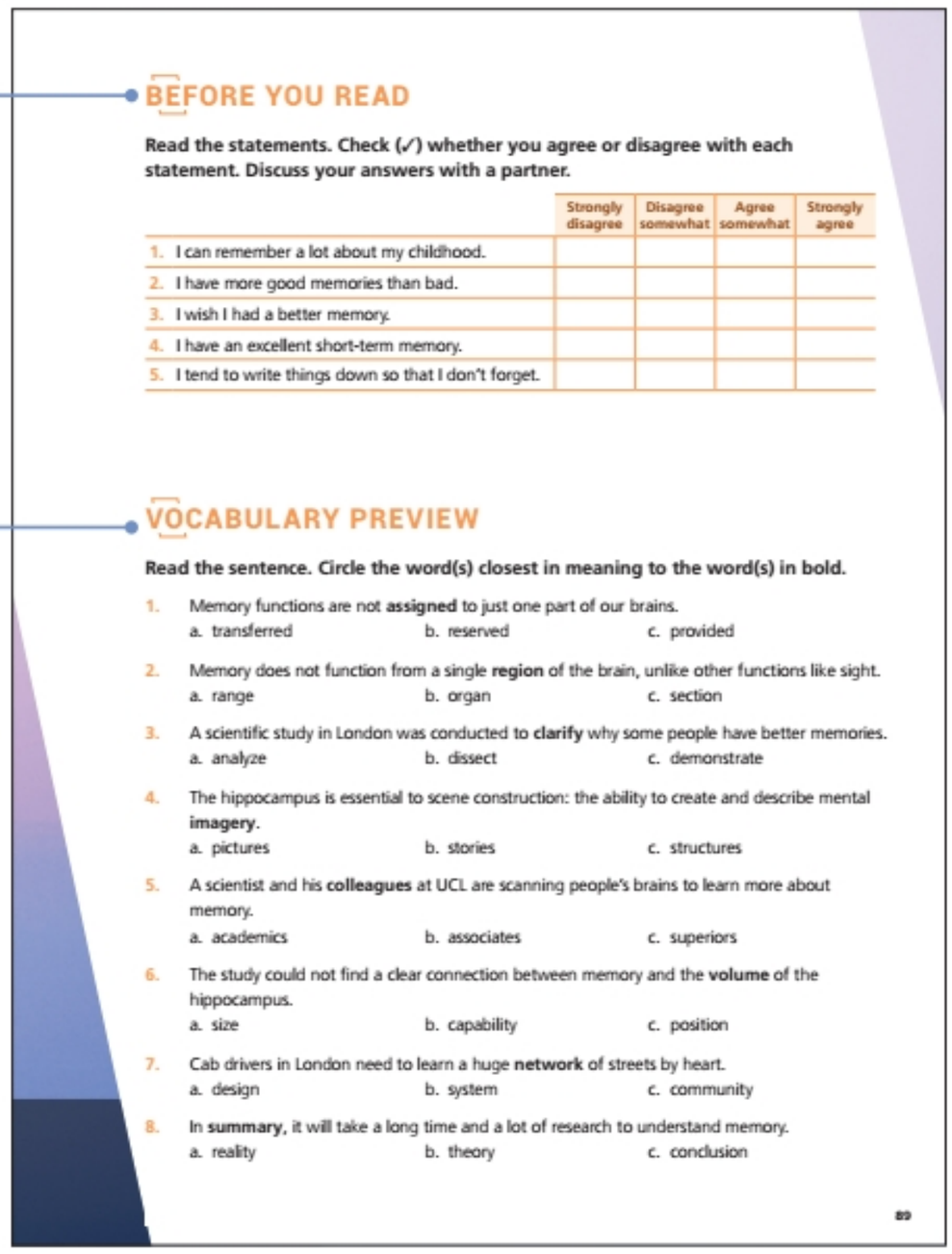
A short activity gives students an opportunity to predict the content of the passage to follow.

BEFORE YOU READ

Pre-reading exercises activate prior knowledge and relate the topic to students' own lives.

VOCABULARY PREVIEW

Paraphrased sentences from the reading passage present a preview of key academic target words from the Academic Word List (AWL) in context.



BEFORE YOU READ

Read the statements. Check (✓) whether you agree or disagree with each statement. Discuss your answers with a partner.

	Strongly disagree	Disagree somewhat	Agree somewhat	Strongly agree
1. I can remember a lot about my childhood.				
2. I have more good memories than bad.				
3. I wish I had a better memory.				
4. I have an excellent short-term memory.				
5. I tend to write things down so that I don't forget.				

VOCABULARY PREVIEW

Read the sentence. Circle the word(s) closest in meaning to the word(s) in bold.

1. Memory functions are not **assigned** to just one part of our brains.
   a. transferred b. reserved c. provided
2. Memory does not function from a single **region** of the brain, unlike other functions like sight.
   a. range b. organ c. section
3. A scientific study in London was conducted to **clarify** why some people have better memories.
   a. analyze b. dissect c. demonstrate
4. The hippocampus is essential to scene construction: the ability to create and describe mental **imagery**.
   a. pictures b. stories c. structures
5. A scientist and his **colleagues** at UCL are scanning people's brains to learn more about memory.
   a. academics b. associates c. superiors
6. The study could not find a clear connection between memory and the **volume** of the hippocampus.
   a. size b. capability c. position
7. Cab drivers in London need to learn a huge **network** of streets by heart.
   a. design b. system c. community
8. In **summary**, it will take a long time and a lot of research to understand memory.
   a. reality b. theory c. conclusion

89

READING & CRITICAL-THINKING SKILLS

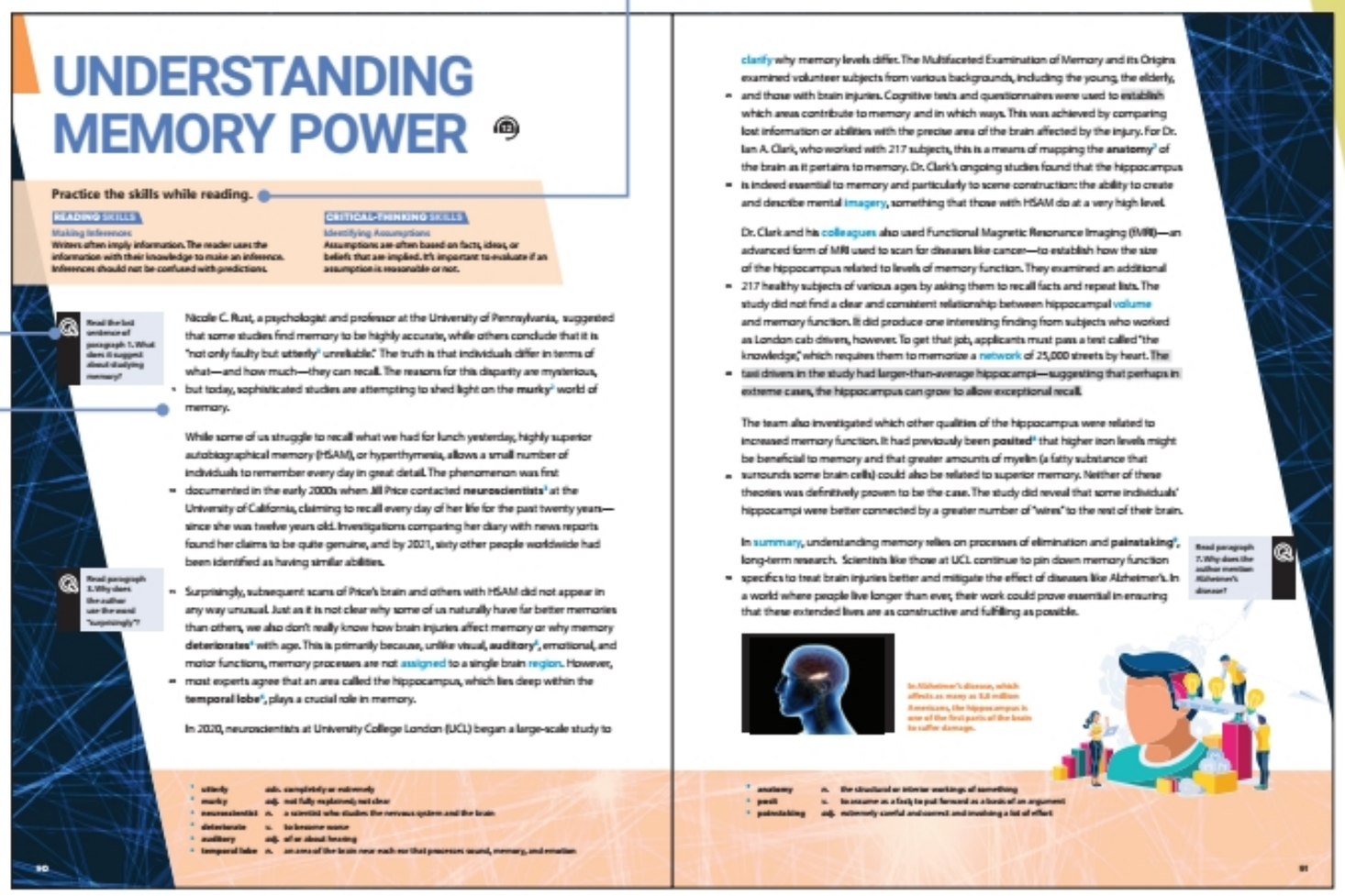
Reading and critical-thinking skills for each unit are previewed at the start of each lesson.

GUIDING QUESTIONS

Questions in the margins help students monitor their comprehension of the structure and content of the passage.

MAIN READING

An engaging reading educates students on an academic topic of high interest.



UNDERSTANDING MEMORY POWER

Practice the skills while reading.

READING SKILLS
Making Inferences
Writers often imply information. The reader uses the information with their knowledge to make an inference. Inferences should not be confused with predictions.

CRITICAL-THINKING SKILLS
Identifying Assumptions
Assumptions are often based on facts, ideas, or beliefs that are implied. It's important to evaluate if an assumption is reasonable or not.

Read the last sentence of paragraph 1. What does it suggest about studying memory?

Nicole C. Rust, a psychologist and professor at the University of Pennsylvania, suggested that some studies find memory to be highly accurate, while others conclude that it is "not only faulty but utterly[1] unreliable." The truth is that individuals differ in terms of what—and how much—they can recall. The reasons for this disparity are mysterious, but today, sophisticated studies are attempting to shed light on the murky[2] world of memory.

While some of us struggle to recall what we had for lunch yesterday, highly superior autobiographical memory (HSAM), or hyperthymesia, allows a small number of individuals to remember every day in great detail. The phenomenon was first documented in the early 2000s when Jill Price contacted **neuroscientists**[3] at the University of California, claiming to recall every day of her life for the past twenty years—since she was twelve years old. Investigations comparing her diary with news reports found her claims to be quite genuine, and by 2021, sixty other people worldwide had been identified as having similar abilities.

Read paragraph 3. Why does the author use the word "surprisingly"?

Surprisingly, subsequent scans of Price's brain and others with HSAM did not appear in any way unusual. Just as it is not clear why some of us naturally have far better memories than others, we also don't really know how brain injuries affect memory or why memory **deteriorates**[4] with age. This is primarily because, unlike visual, **auditory**[5], emotional, and motor functions, memory processes are not **assigned** to a single brain **region**. However, most experts agree that an area called the hippocampus, which lies deep within the **temporal lobe**[6], plays a crucial role in memory.

In 2020, neuroscientists at University College London (UCL) began a large-scale study to **clarify** why memory levels differ. The Multifaceted Examination of Memory and its Origins examined volunteer subjects from various backgrounds, including the young, the elderly, and those with brain injuries. Cognitive tests and questionnaires were used to establish which areas contribute to memory and in which ways. This was achieved by comparing lost information or abilities with the precise area of the brain affected by the injury. For Dr. Ian A. Clark, who worked with 217 subjects, this is a means of mapping the **anatomy**[7] of the brain as it pertains to memory. Dr. Clark's ongoing studies found that the hippocampus is indeed essential to memory and particularly to scene construction: the ability to create and describe mental **imagery**, something that those with HSAM do at a very high level.

Dr. Clark and his **colleagues** also used Functional Magnetic Resonance Imaging (fMRI)—an advanced form of MRI used to scan for diseases like cancer—to establish how the size of the hippocampus related to levels of memory function. They examined an additional 217 healthy subjects of various ages by asking them to recall facts and repeat lists. The study did not find a clear and consistent relationship between hippocampal **volume** and memory function. It did produce one interesting finding from subjects who worked as London cab drivers, however. To get that job, applicants must pass a test called "the knowledge," which requires them to memorize a **network** of 25,000 streets by heart. The taxi drivers in the study had larger-than-average hippocampi—suggesting that perhaps in extreme cases, the hippocampus can grow to allow exceptional recall.

The team also investigated which other qualities of the hippocampus were related to increased memory function. It had previously been **posited**[8] that higher iron levels might be beneficial to memory and that greater amounts of myelin (a fatty substance that surrounds some brain cells) could also be related to superior memory. Neither of these theories was definitively proven to be the case. The study did reveal that some individuals' hippocampi were better connected by a greater number of "wires" to the rest of their brain.

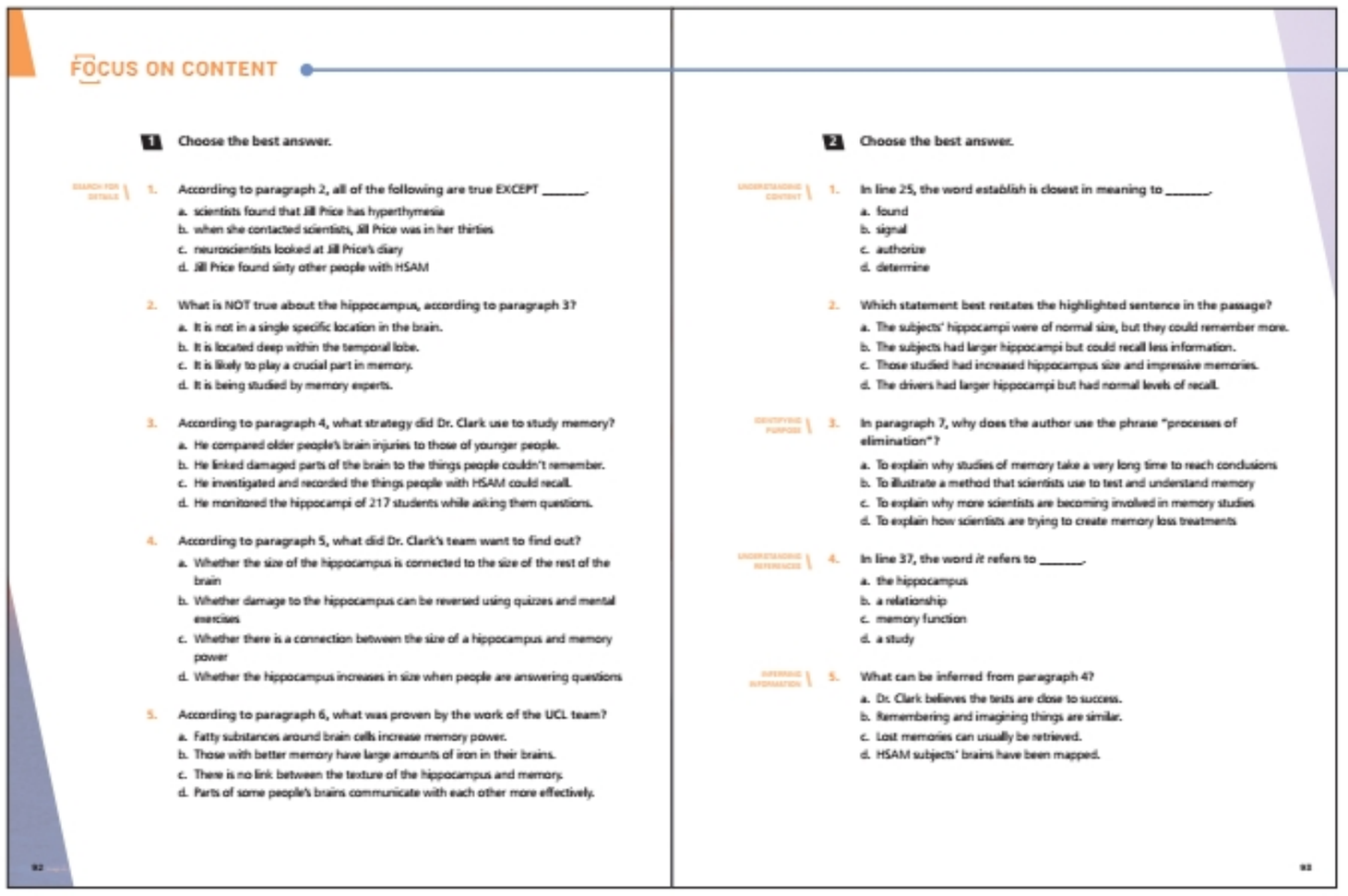
In **summary**, understanding memory relies on processes of elimination and **painstaking**[9], long-term research. Scientists like those at UCL continue to pin down memory function specifics to treat brain injuries better and mitigate the effect of diseases like Alzheimer's. In a world where people live longer than ever, their work could prove essential in ensuring that these extended lives are as constructive and fulfilling as possible.

Read paragraph 7. Why does the author mention Alzheimer's disease?

In Alzheimer's disease, which affects as many as 5.8 million Americans, the hippocampus is one of the first parts of the brain to suffer damage.

- utterly adv. completely or extremely
- murky adj. not fully explained; not clear
- neuroscientist n. a scientist who studies the nervous system and the brain
- deteriorate v. to become worse
- auditory adj. of or about hearing
- temporal lobe n. an area of the brain near each ear that processes sound, memory, and emotion
- anatomy n. the structural or interior workings of something
- posit v. to assume as a fact; to put forward as a basis of an argument
- painstaking adj. extremely careful and exact and involving a lot of effort

90 91



FOCUS ON CONTENT

1 Choose the best answer.

SEARCH FOR DETAILS
1. According to paragraph 2, all of the following are true EXCEPT _____.
   a. scientists found that Jill Price has hyperthymesia
   b. when she contacted scientists, Jill Price was in her thirties
   c. neuroscientists looked at Jill Price's diary
   d. Jill Price found sixty other people with HSAM
2. What is NOT true about the hippocampus, according to paragraph 3?
   a. It is not in a single specific location in the brain.
   b. It is located deep within the temporal lobe.
   c. It is likely to play a crucial part in memory.
   d. It is being studied by memory experts.
3. According to paragraph 4, what strategy did Dr. Clark use to study memory?
   a. He compared older people's brain injuries to those of younger people.
   b. He linked damaged parts of the brain to the things people couldn't remember.
   c. He investigated and recorded the things people with HSAM could recall.
   d. He monitored the hippocampi of 217 students while asking them questions.
4. According to paragraph 5, what did Dr. Clark's team want to find out?
   a. Whether the size of the hippocampus is connected to the size of the rest of the brain
   b. Whether damage to the hippocampus can be reversed using quizzes and mental exercises
   c. Whether there is a connection between the size of a hippocampus and memory power
   d. Whether the hippocampus increases in size when people are answering questions
5. According to paragraph 6, what was proven by the work of the UCL team?
   a. Fatty substances around brain cells increase memory power.
   b. Those with better memory have large amounts of iron in their brains.
   c. There is no link between the texture of the hippocampus and memory.
   d. Parts of some people's brains communicate with each other more effectively.

92

2 Choose the best answer.

UNDERSTANDING CONTENT
1. In line 25, the word establish is closest in meaning to _____.
   a. found
   b. signal
   c. authorize
   d. determine
2. Which statement best restates the highlighted sentence in the passage?
   a. The subjects' hippocampi were of normal size, but they could remember more.
   b. The subjects had larger hippocampi but could recall less information.
   c. Those studied had increased hippocampus size and impressive memories.
   d. The drivers had larger hippocampi but had normal levels of recall.

IDENTIFYING PURPOSE
3. In paragraph 7, why does the author use the phrase "processes of elimination"?
   a. To explain why studies of memory take a very long time to reach conclusions
   b. To illustrate a method that scientists use to test and understand memory
   c. To explain why more scientists are becoming involved in memory studies
   d. To explain how scientists are trying to create memory loss treatments

UNDERSTANDING REFERENCES
4. In line 37, the word *it* refers to _____.
   a. the hippocampus
   b. a relationship
   c. memory function
   d. a study

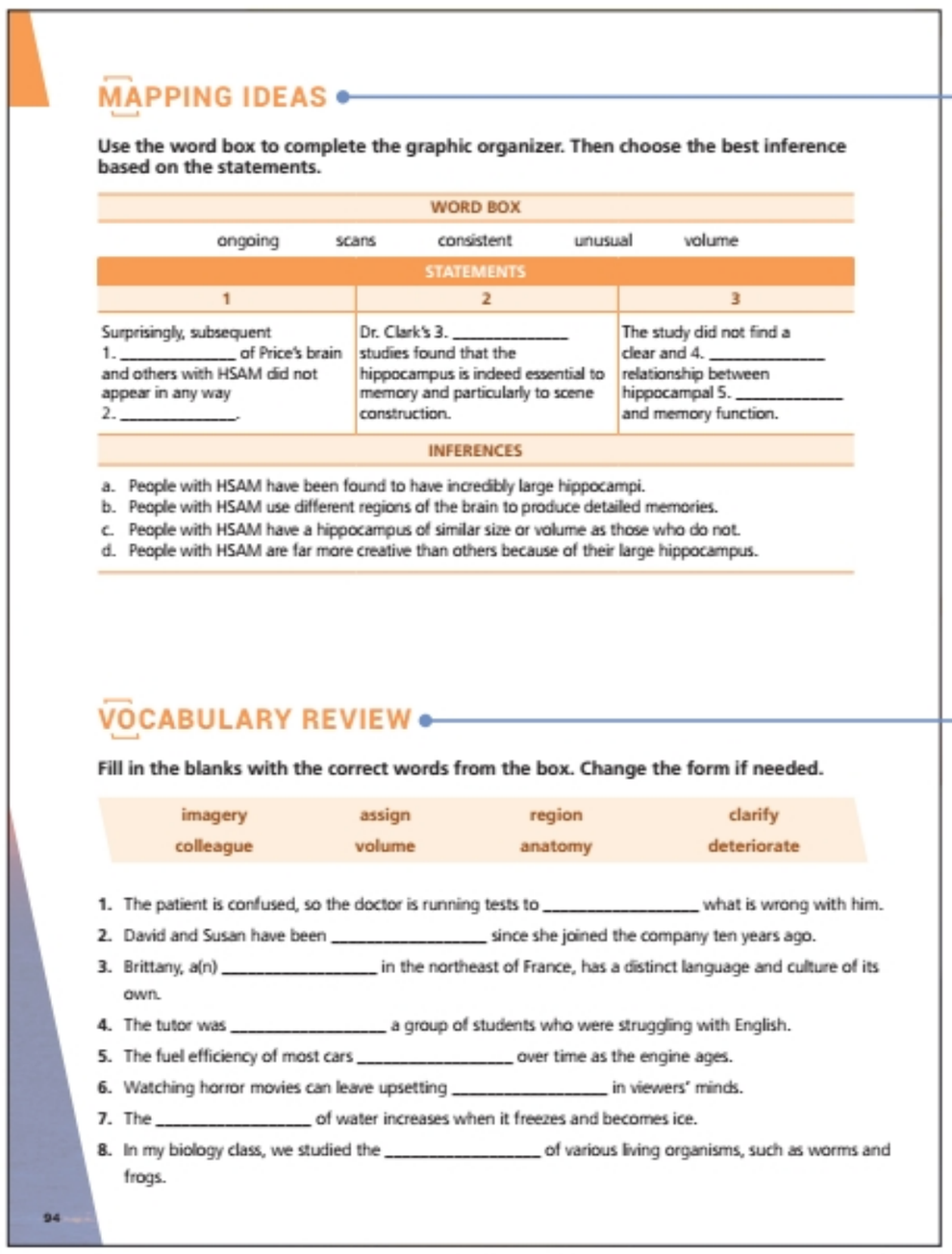
INFERRING INFORMATION
5. What can be inferred from paragraph 4?
   a. Dr. Clark believes the tests are close to success.
   b. Remembering and imagining things are similar.
   c. Lost memories can usually be retrieved.
   d. HSAM subjects' brains have been mapped.

93

FOCUS ON CONTENT

Questions of various types help students assess their comprehension of the reading's key details, vocabulary, purpose, and more.

HOW TO USE



MAPPING IDEAS

Use the word box to complete the graphic organizer. Then choose the best inference based on the statements.

WORD BOX				
ongoing	scans	consistent	unusual	volume

STATEMENTS		
1	2	3
Surprisingly, subsequent 1. _____ of Price's brain and others with HSAM did not appear in any way 2. _____.	Dr. Clark's 3. _____ studies found that the hippocampus is indeed essential to memory and particularly to scene construction.	The study did not find a clear and 4. _____ relationship between hippocampal 5. _____ and memory function.

INFERENCES

a. People with HSAM have been found to have incredibly large hippocampi.
b. People with HSAM use different regions of the brain to produce detailed memories.
c. People with HSAM have a hippocampus of similar size or volume as those who do not.
d. People with HSAM are far more creative than others because of their large hippocampus.

VOCABULARY REVIEW

Fill in the blanks with the correct words from the box. Change the form if needed.

imagery	assign	region	clarify
colleague	volume	anatomy	deteriorate

1. The patient is confused, so the doctor is running tests to _____ what is wrong with him.
2. David and Susan have been _____ since she joined the company ten years ago.
3. Brittany, a(n) _____ in the northeast of France, has a distinct language and culture of its own.
4. The tutor was _____ a group of students who were struggling with English.
5. The fuel efficiency of most cars _____ over time as the engine ages.
6. Watching horror movies can leave upsetting _____ in viewers' minds.
7. The _____ of water increases when it freezes and becomes ice.
8. In my biology class, we studied the _____ of various living organisms, such as worms and frogs.

94

MAPPING IDEAS

Graphic organizers help students gain familiarity with note-taking and common text organizations.

VOCABULARY REVIEW

A fill-in-the-blank exercise reinforces the target AWL and other challenging vocabulary learned in the reading.

CRITICAL-THINKING SKILL

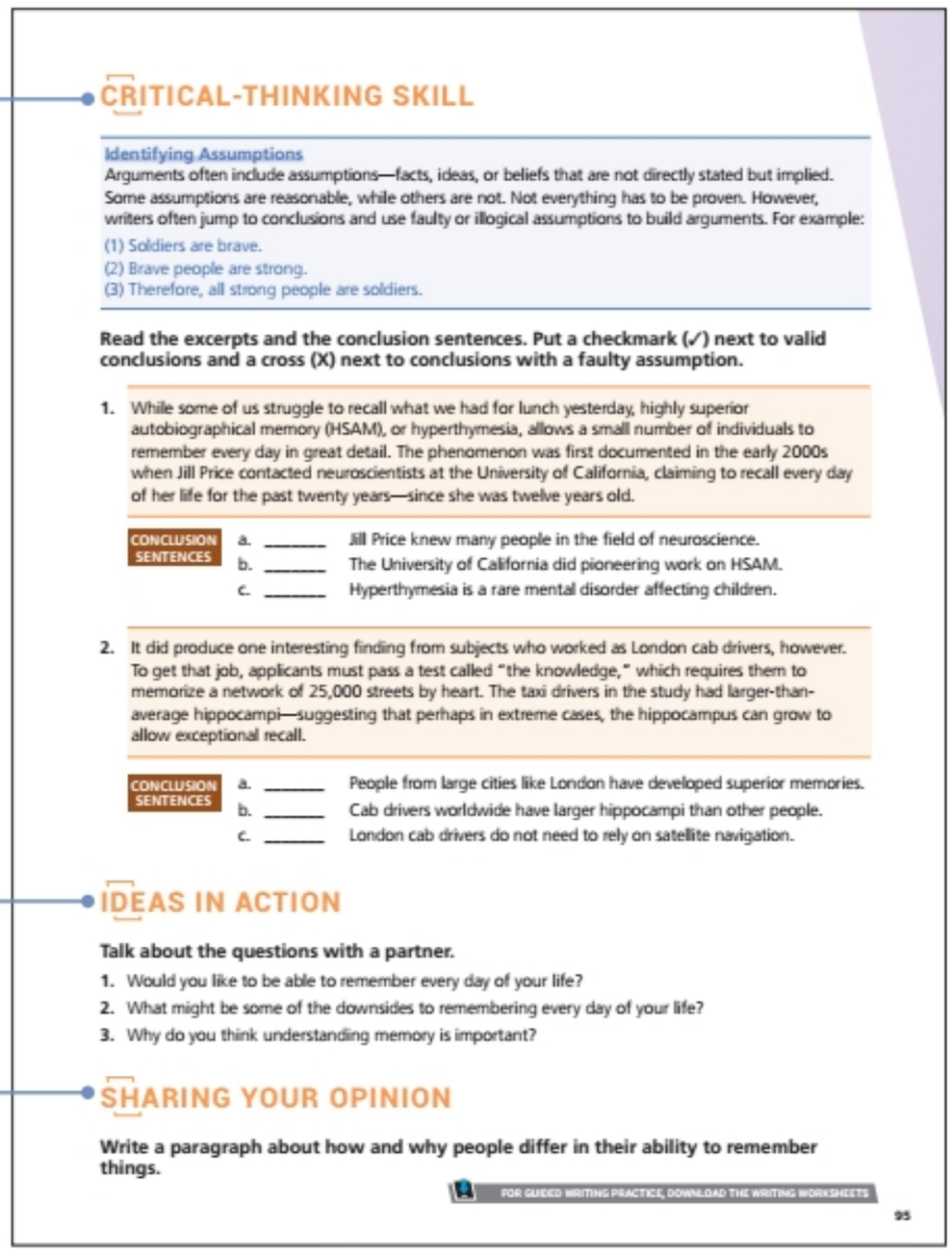
Easy-to-understand lessons introduce the fundamentals of critical thinking, from recognizing and assessing arguments to understanding premises and conclusions.

IDEAS IN ACTION

The reading serves as the takeoff point for discussion and gives students the opportunity to talk about the reading in relation to their own lives.

SHARING YOUR OPINION

A writing prompt gives students the opportunity to use the skills they learned to communicate in written form. Free downloadable worksheets that outline how to respond to the prompt are available for teachers and students.



CRITICAL-THINKING SKILL

Identifying Assumptions
Arguments often include assumptions—facts, ideas, or beliefs that are not directly stated but implied. Some assumptions are reasonable, while others are not. Not everything has to be proven. However, writers often jump to conclusions and use faulty or illogical assumptions to build arguments. For example:
(1) Soldiers are brave.
(2) Brave people are strong.
(3) Therefore, all strong people are soldiers.

Read the excerpts and the conclusion sentences. Put a checkmark (✓) next to valid conclusions and a cross (X) next to conclusions with a faulty assumption.

1. While some of us struggle to recall what we had for lunch yesterday, highly superior autobiographical memory (HSAM), or hyperthymesia, allows a small number of individuals to remember every day in great detail. The phenomenon was first documented in the early 2000s when Jill Price contacted neuroscientists at the University of California, claiming to recall every day of her life for the past twenty years—since she was twelve years old.

CONCLUSION SENTENCES
a. _____ Jill Price knew many people in the field of neuroscience.
b. _____ The University of California did pioneering work on HSAM.
c. _____ Hyperthymesia is a rare mental disorder affecting children.

2. It did produce one interesting finding from subjects who worked as London cab drivers, however. To get that job, applicants must pass a test called "the knowledge," which requires them to memorize a network of 25,000 streets by heart. The taxi drivers in the study had larger-than-average hippocampi—suggesting that perhaps in extreme cases, the hippocampus can grow to allow exceptional recall.

CONCLUSION SENTENCES
a. _____ People from large cities like London have developed superior memories.
b. _____ Cab drivers worldwide have larger hippocampi than other people.
c. _____ London cab drivers do not need to rely on satellite navigation.

IDEAS IN ACTION

Talk about the questions with a partner.

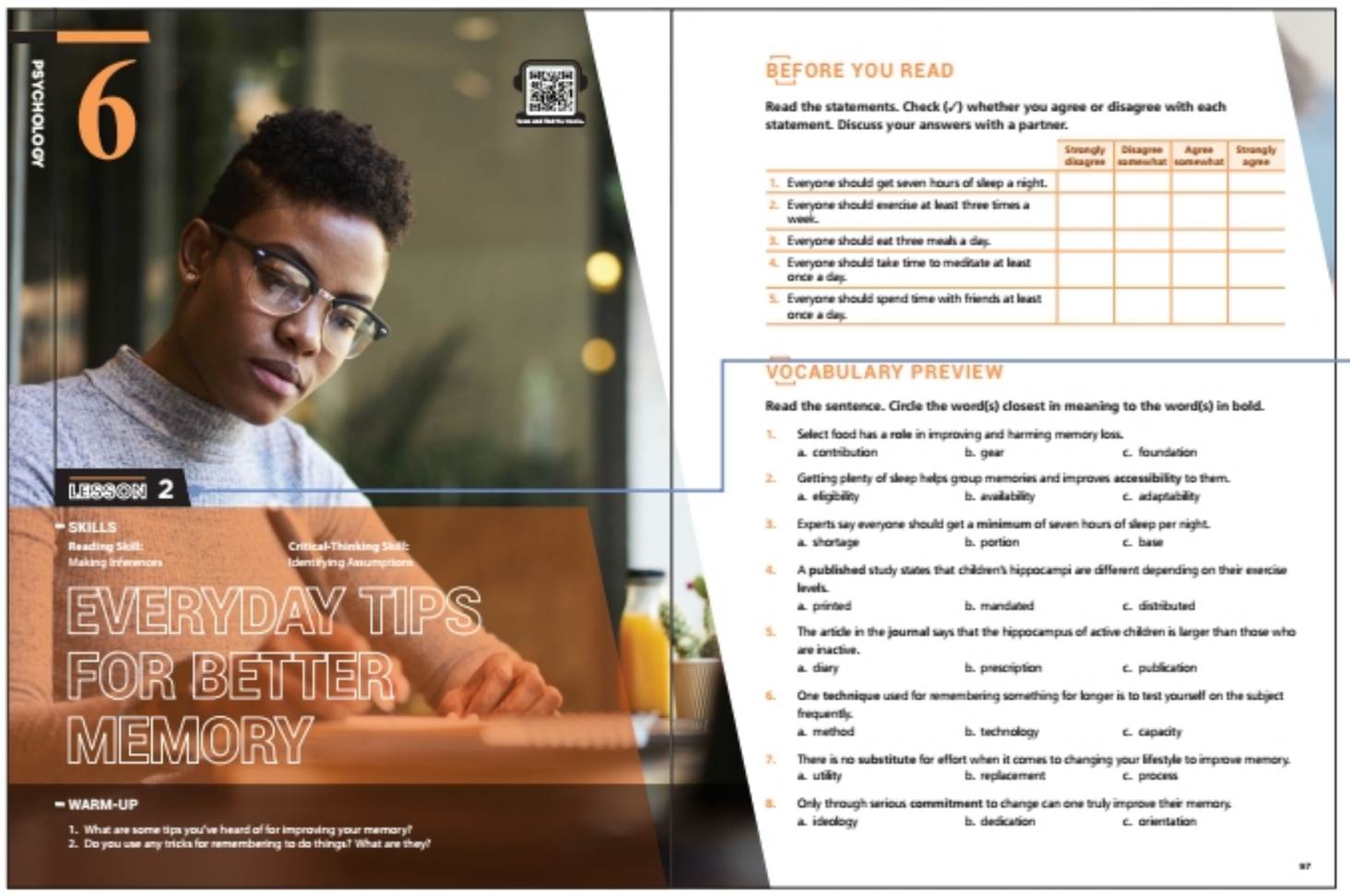
1. Would you like to be able to remember every day of your life?
2. What might be some of the downsides to remembering every day of your life?
3. Why do you think understanding memory is important?

SHARING YOUR OPINION

Write a paragraph about how and why people differ in their ability to remember things.

FOR GUIDED WRITING PRACTICE, DOWNLOAD THE WRITING WORKSHEETS

95


PSYCHOLOGY

6

LESSON 2

SKILLS

Reading Skill: Making Inferences

Critical-Thinking Skill: Identifying Assumptions

EVERYDAY TIPS FOR BETTER MEMORY

WARM-UP

1. What are some tips you've heard of for improving your memory?
2. Do you use any tricks for remembering to do things? What are they?

BEFORE YOU READ

Read the statements. Check (✓) whether you agree or disagree with each statement. Discuss your answers with a partner.

	Strongly disagree	Disagree somewhat	Agree somewhat	Strongly agree
1. Everyone should get seven hours of sleep a night.				
2. Everyone should exercise at least three times a week.				
3. Everyone should eat three meals a day.				
4. Everyone should take time to meditate at least once a day.				
5. Everyone should spend time with friends at least once a day.				

VOCABULARY PREVIEW

Read the sentence. Circle the word(s) closest in meaning to the word(s) in bold.

1. Select food has a **role** in improving and harming memory loss.
   a. contribution b. gear c. foundation
2. Getting plenty of sleep helps group memories and improves **accessibility** to them.
   a. eligibility b. availability c. adaptability
3. Experts say everyone should get a **minimum** of seven hours of sleep per night.
   a. shortage b. portion c. base
4. A **published** study states that children's hippocampi are different depending on their exercise levels.
   a. printed b. mandated c. distributed
5. The article in the **journal** says that the hippocampus of active children is larger than those who are inactive.
   a. diary b. prescription c. publication
6. One **technique** used for remembering something for longer is to test yourself on the subject frequently.
   a. method b. technology c. capacity
7. There is no **substitute** for effort when it comes to changing your lifestyle to improve memory.
   a. utility b. replacement c. process
8. Only through serious **commitment** to change can one truly improve their memory.
   a. ideology b. dedication c. orientation

97

LESSON 2

A second, carefully leveled reading presents a different perspective on the same topic.

DOWNLOADABLE RESOURCES

Get the most out of *On Point*, *Second Edition* with our free supplemental resources. Visit www.compasspub.com/OnPoint2e3 for downloadable word lists, progress tests, teacher's guides, and writing worksheets.

UNIT 5 SOCIOLOGY

Lesson 1: How Do We Choose Our Friends?

Read the prompt: Write a paragraph about the conditions necessary for a real, long-lasting friendship.

I GENERATE IDEAS

Consider the following questions as you think about the conditions for real, long-lasting friendships.

1. What are the are the most important qualities for a friend to have?
2. What do you have to do to maintain long-term relationships?
3. What do you hope to get out of a friendship?

II OUTLINE

Complete the outline using ideas from above or other ideas.

Topic sentence: When I think about the conditions necessary for a real, long-lasting friendship, I think about _____

Main Idea 1 (qualities of a friend) _____

Supporting Detail 1: _____

Supporting Detail 2: _____

Main Idea 2 (maintaining friendships) _____

Supporting Detail 1: _____

Supporting Detail 2: _____

Conclusion (what you get out of friendship) _____

III WRITE

Use the outline to write your paragraph.

GENERATE IDEAS

A scaffolded idea-generation exercise enables students to build on the arguments they developed in the Sharing Your Opinion section of the lesson.

OUTLINE

An outline exercise allows students to create a rough structure for the short writing exercise that follows.

WRITE

A writing exercise gives students freer practice using the vocabulary and ideas they learned in the lesson.

TECHNOLOGY

1

Scan and find the tracks.

LESSON 1

SKILLS

Reading Skill:
Making Predictions

Critical-Thinking Skill:
Detecting Arguments

EARLY ADOPTERS FALL INTO A COSTLY TRAP

WARM-UP

1. Do you think it is worth it to buy the latest technologies when they are released? Why or why not?
2. What are some things you consider when buying a new device?

BEFORE YOU READ

Rank the features you consider when purchasing a new product from 1 (most important to you) to 6 (least important to you). Discuss your rankings with a partner.

_____ Design

_____ Brand

_____ Exclusivity (limited edition, etc.)

_____ New features

_____ Cost

_____ Available accessories

VOCABULARY PREVIEW

Read the sentences. Circle the words closest in meaning to the words in bold.

1. People **underestimate** the cost of buying a new device.
   a. underappreciate b. overrate c. undervalue

2. Stay away from any technology that is in **uncharted** territory.
   a. unsafe b. unexplored c. unavailable

3. Not buying the latest products saves you from devices that could **erode** your privacy or are doomed to fail.
   a. neglect b. destroy c. ignore

4. In the early 2000s, there were two **options** for high-definition video players.
   a. preferences b. opportunities c. alternatives

5. Buyers remained **neutral** and chose not to buy either product until much later.
   a. positive b. uncommitted c. consistent

6. The **implications** of voice recognition technology in terms of privacy are not yet clear.
   a. consequences b. errors c. presumptions

7. The **tension** between consumers and tech companies is high.
   a. strain b. demand c. restraint

8. Early adopters often buy expensive gadgets with technology that has not **matured** yet.
   a. developed b. experienced c. functioned

EARLY ADOPTERS FALL INTO A COSTLY TRAP

02

Practice the skills while reading.

READING SKILL

Making Predictions

Readers can make predictions about a text by looking for clues in the title, the introduction paragraph, and the first and last sentences in a paragraph.

CRITICAL-THINKING SKILL

Detecting Arguments

An argument is an attempt to prove that something is true. To find an argument, you must identify the premises and the conclusion that follows.

Read the title and paragraph 1 and circle what you think the passage will be about.

a. Early adopters are wasting their money on bad products.
b. Early adopters make things expensive for everyone.

It's undeniable: being among the first to try out a new piece of technology is cool. When you're the sole member of your social circle with the latest hot **gadget**[1], people stare in fascination, seeing you as the holder of powerful and secret knowledge—at least until the next big thing comes along. People tend to underestimate the costs of this temporary coolness, which they end up paying for in more ways than one. So take it from me and don't fall into the early adopter trap by joining the first wave of consumers who invest in the latest uncharted territory in technology. Instead, if you just wait and see, you will save money and avoid being stuck with **defective**[2], possibly **doomed**[3] technology that could even erode your privacy.

Read paragraphs 2 and 3 and underline the part that explains how tech companies make money from early adopters.

Early adoption is a bad investment, to put it **bluntly**[4]. First, the earliest versions of products are not only expensive, they are the most expensive that those devices will ever be. Companies presumably charge more to recover the cost of development and production as fast as possible, and they know that there are serious tech-lovers who will pay a great deal to be early adopters. Once the revenues from early adopters' purchases are safely in their hands, they can cut the price and shift to the next marketing phase: selling the product to everyone else. This tactic is why the cost of the original iPhone dropped about $200 only eight months after its release. Prices of gadgets most often fall shortly after release, and they are likely to continue falling. For instance, many new TV models drop significantly in price as little as ten days after hitting the market. Furthermore, electronics rapidly **depreciate**[5] because they become **obsolete**[6] so quickly; the resale price of a used cell phone or laptop can drop by fifty percent within just a few months.

1 **gadget** *n.* a device; a useful machine
2 **defective** *adj.* not working properly
3 **doomed** *adj.* facing certain failure or death
4 **bluntly** *adv.* briefly and directly
5 **depreciate** *v.* to become lower in value
6 **obsolete** *adj.* outdated and no longer in use

Those who are first to leap into a new technology not only risk wasting money, they might also lose time on something that will never catch on with the general public.

In 2006, two competing **options** for high-definition video entered the market: HD DVDs and Blu-ray discs. Both seemed promising, and both required special devices called players, costing hundreds of US dollars. Cautious consumers decided to stay **neutral**, realizing that one or the other would probably end up dominating, and refrained from buying either product. But a few eager consumers **took a gamble**[7], and those who regrettably bought an HD DVD player quickly found themselves stuck with a virtually worthless machine. In the struggle for high-definition video dominance, Blu-ray was much more technologically advanced than HD DVD and could store up to seven times the amount of information. Sales dropped steadily for HD DVD players, and by early 2008, support for the product was discontinued entirely. Many new products face a similar fate; early adopters are then stuck with pricey gadgets that do nothing but sit on their shelves **collecting dust**[8].

Even worse, your new device might have functions that you don't know about and would likely not approve of if you did. In 2013, Amazon Echo introduced the world to a digital assistant named Alexa, who is supposed to become active only when you say "her" name. However, voice-recognition technology is still imperfect. These devices often activate without users' permission and record what they hear (though this fact is not acknowledged in the packaging or marketing). The privacy **implications** remain unclear but are causing **tension** between developers and consumers. As tech reporter Adam Estes told the *Guardian* in 2019 in a discussion of digital assistants, "I hate to be dramatic, but I don't think we're ever going to feel safe from their data-collection practices."

Read paragraph 4 and think of reasons why a product like Alexa could be dangerous.

Early adopters do something most others are reluctant to do: buy overpriced technology before it has **matured** for the **dubious**[9] rewards of being the first and enjoying a short-term increase in status. These **trailblazers**[10] help the rest of us through their willingness to spend the extra money and work out the problems with a new product. So if you know any early adopters, thank them, and then congratulate yourself on not being one of them.

Read paragraph 5 and then circle the statement the author would agree with most.

a. There are no benefits to being an early adopter.
b. Early adopters help companies improve their products.

7 **take a gamble** *idiom* to take a risk
8 **collect dust** *idiom* to remain unused
9 **dubious** *adj.* of doubtful worth or quality
10 **trailblazer** *n.* someone who does something new that others follow; a pioneer

FOCUS ON CONTENT

1 Choose the best answer.

SEARCHING FOR DETAILS

1. According to paragraph 1, what advantage do early adopters have?
   a. They enjoy extra privileges from the company that makes the product.
   b. They have reduced privacy concerns because of newer technologies.
   c. They don't end up with defective devices or doomed products.
   d. They gain the attention of others within their social circle.

2. According to paragraph 2, what is true about newly released devices?
   a. They are poorly designed.
   b. They quickly decline in price.
   c. They are marketed to everyone.
   d. They bring in very little revenue.

3. According to paragraph 3, why did Blu-ray succeed over HD DVDs?
   a. It was more user-friendly.
   b. It was less expensive.
   c. It had more storage space.
   d. It sold to more early adopters.

4. According to paragraph 3, which is NOT true of Blu-ray and HD DVD?
   a. Blu-ray and HD DVD appeared in the same year.
   b. The two types of disc required different players.
   c. Both types of disc offered high-quality video.
   d. There are still several Blu-ray and HD DVD makers.

5. According to paragraph 4, what is true about the tech reporter Adam Estes?
   a. He believes the tension between developers and consumers will persist.
   b. He thinks people are being too dramatic in regard to their privacy concerns.
   c. He believes voice-recognition technology will improve and prevent privacy leaks.
   d. He thinks that digital assistants' functions must be limited to maintain users' privacy.

2 Choose the best answer.

UNDERSTANDING CONTENT

1. Which statement best restates the highlighted sentence in the passage?

a. Early adopters leap into new technologies that the general public typically cannot afford.
b. Early adopters enjoy new products for longer because the general public is slow to adopt.
c. Early adopters may waste money and time on products that won't be around very long.
d. Early adopters invest a lot of time and money in new products for limited benefits.

2. In line 44, the word *dramatic* is closest in meaning to _____.

a. exaggerated
b. considerable
c. artificial
d. thrilling

IDENTIFYING PURPOSE

3. In paragraph 2, why does the author mention that iPhone dropped in price eight months after launching?

a. To demonstrate the bargains that early adopters can get
b. To show that device prices take a long time to go down
c. To show how early adopters waste money by buying early
d. To explain why the first iPhone was so popular at the time

UNDERSTANDING REFERENCES

4. In line 15, the word *they* refers to _____.

a. tech-lovers
b. companies
c. revenues
d. purchases

INFERRING INFORMATION

5. What can be inferred about early adopters from paragraph 5?

a. They take pride in buying overpriced goods because it's helpful to others.
b. They see themselves as experts in technology and with new devices.
c. They enjoy the status given to early adopters more than the product.
d. They are more likely to make risky purchasing decisions than others.

MAPPING IDEAS

Read the outline and match the best predictions about the contents of the paragraphs to complete the graphic organizer.

EARLY ADOPTERS FALL INTO A COSTLY TRAP		
	TOPIC SENTENCES	**PREDICTIONS**
Paragraph 1	People tend to underestimate the costs of [early adoption's] temporary coolness, which they end up paying for in more ways than one.	**1.** _____
Paragraph 2	Early adoption is a bad investment, to put it bluntly.	**2.** _____
Paragraph 3	Those who are first to leap into a new technology not only risk wasting money, they might also lose time on something that will never catch on with the general public.	**3.** _____
Paragraph 4	Even worse, your new device might have functions that you don't know about and would likely not approve of if you did.	**4.** _____
Conclusion: Early adopters do something most others are reluctant to do: take on overpriced technology before it has matured, for the dubious rewards of being the first and enjoying a short-term increase in status.		

PREDICTIONS

a. The author will describe how companies access personal information without permission.
b. The author will describe how buying early can mean wasting money on bad products.
c. The author will describe a product that ended up collecting dust on a shelf.
d. The author will describe people's reasons for early adoption and its flaws.

VOCABULARY REVIEW

Fill in the blanks with the correct words from the box. Change the form if needed.

erode	**implication**	**mature**	**bluntly**
neutral	**tension**	**obsolete**	**underestimate**

1. The restaurant ran out of food because they _____ how many customers would show up.
2. When strangers are forced together, it's normal for some _____ to develop.
3. Telling lies _____ trust between friends, which may take time to rebuild.
4. Even though it became _____ decades ago, Janine still likes her old typewriter.
5. I'm _____ about who wins this game since I'm not a fan of either team.
6. When the law was passed, many who supported it didn't understand its negative _____.
7. Olivia doesn't mean to be rude; she just has a habit of saying things very _____.
8. Although his early writings were a bit awkward, his writing style has _____.

CRITICAL-THINKING SKILL

Detecting Arguments

An argument is an attempt to prove that something is true. Simple arguments use one or more statements (called premises) to build a conclusion. For example:

(1) Research shows that people who exercise daily have a lower risk of heart disease.
(2) I want to reduce my risk of heart disease.
(3) Therefore, I should exercise daily.

1 Read the excerpt. Evaluate it with a partner and answer the question.

> Early adoption is a bad investment, to put it bluntly. [. . .] Prices of gadgets most often fall shortly after release, and they are likely to continue falling. For instance, many new TV models drop significantly in price as little as ten days after hitting the market. Furthermore, electronics rapidly depreciate because they become obsolete so quickly; the resale price of a used cell phone or laptop can drop by fifty percent within just a few months.

DETECTING ARGUMENTS

Based on the information in the excerpt, circle the most logical conclusion that could be drawn.

a. The value of electronic devices depreciates when they're not popular.
b. Early adopters are more likely to lose money by selling obsolete devices.
c. It makes sense to wait before buying a "new" technological device.
d. Shoppers refuse to buy new products because they'll soon be obsolete.

2 Write a short summary that includes two or three premises that support the conclusion you circled.

_____

_____

IDEAS IN ACTION

Talk about the questions with a partner.

1. How are early adopters viewed in your circle of friends?
2. Have you ever purchased a new product when it was first released? Describe the experience.
3. Describe an expensive and trendy product you want. Why do you want it so badly?

SHARING YOUR OPINION

Write a paragraph about whether you think being an early adopter is worth it or not. Give multiple reasons.

FOR GUIDED WRITING PRACTICE, DOWNLOAD THE WRITING WORKSHEETS

TECHNOLOGY

1

Scan and find the tracks.

LESSON 2

SKILLS

Reading Skill:
Making Predictions

Critical-Thinking Skill:
Detecting Arguments

THE FUN OF BEING AN EARLY ADOPTER

WARM-UP

1. How important is it to you to be considered cool?
2. Have you ever taught someone how to use a certain technology? What was it?

BEFORE YOU READ

Rank the people you trust most when it comes to large purchasing decisions from 1 (most trustworthy) to 6 (least trustworthy). Discuss your rankings with a partner.

_____ Friends

_____ Bloggers

_____ Family

_____ Twitter

_____ Social-media influencers

_____ Product reviewers on purchasing sites (like Amazon)

VOCABULARY PREVIEW

Read the sentences. Circle the words closest in meaning to the words in bold.

1. The **select** minority of people who try new technology first are called early adopters.
   a. exclusive b. primary c. chosen

2. The **majority** of people usually wait until a technology has been proven.
   a. assembly b. entirety c. bulk

3. Having the latest devices gives the impression of having technological **expertise**.
   a. insight b. proficiency c. vision

4. Early adopters that try new technologies **relevant** to their jobs can find them useful for developing their careers.
   a. permissable b. tolerable c. suitable

5. Being more knowledgeable about tech that's related to your **occupation** can be an advantage.
   a. profession b. title c. education

6. Early adopters are often **consulted** by colleagues about technology.
   a. referred to b. expected to c. pointed to

7. Companies allow early adopters to have a say in **forthcoming** products.
   a. pending b. approaching c. available

8. Early adopters are participants in an experiment, but they are **voluntary** participants.
   a. widespread b. independent c. willing

THE FUN OF BEING AN EARLY ADOPTER

03

Practice the skills while reading.

READING SKILL
Making Predictions
Readers can make predictions about a text by looking for clues in the title, the introduction paragraph, and the first and last sentences in a paragraph.

CRITICAL-THINKING SKILL
Detecting Arguments
An argument is an attempt to prove that something is true. To find an argument, you must identify the premises and the conclusion that follows.

Read paragraph 1. Which is more likely to be discussed about early adopters?
a. How they often pursue degrees in engineering
b. How they benefit the tech industry

If you are not an early adopter, you almost certainly know someone who is. She was the first person in your group of friends to own a foldable smartphone, and she couldn't wait to show you what it could do. He was the one who talked excitedly about 5G services revolutionizing people's lives and allowing for things like cloud-based gaming services. Early adopters are that select minority of users who adopt new technology in its earliest days: before it is widely used or even thoroughly tested. According to one widely cited piece of research, early adopters are defined as the first thirteen percent or so of people who begin using a device, game, social network, or other new product. While the majority of us sit back and wait for an innovation to prove itself, early adopters jump right in. By doing so, they get the pleasure of exploring a new **frontier**[1], enhanced prestige, and even power within the tech industry.

Read paragraph 2. Does your attitude toward new technology fit Jimmy Selix's description of early adopters? Discuss.

For many people, trying to figure out a new piece of technology is a slightly scary undertaking, but it's a favorite way for early adopters to spend their time. They get a deep sense of satisfaction from learning and playing with new technology. They love to throw away the user's guide and experiment. Jimmy Selix, who blogs about being an early adopter, says that people like him would look at something new and say to themselves, "This is going to . . ." or "I can use this for . . ." or "What if I . . . ?" The first users of a product are **pioneers**[2] who discover new ways of using technologies, sometimes in ways that even their original creators couldn't foresee.

Read paragraph 3 and underline the part the author names as a "superficial" reason for being an early adopter.

Perhaps even more fun than becoming the master of new technology is sharing that mastery with others and enjoying the respect that goes along with it. When it comes to having the newest electronic device, a superficial concern with economic status is surely a motive for many early adopters. After all, most first-generation devices are expensive. But a desire for status as a tech **whiz**[3] is more **defensible**[4] and useful. As one early buyer

1 **frontier** *n.* a new area of study or activity
2 **pioneer** *n.* a person who opens up a new line of thought or activity; a trailblazer
3 **whiz** *n.* a person who is very clever or skillful
4 **defensible** *adj.* able to be supported during an argument

of the first-generation iPad explained, "It gives you an air of **expertise** in technological matters to have the latest gadget." Also, when the device's price does drop, many of the early adopter's friends, family, and social media contacts will want one, too—and guess who will happily give them help and advice? Early adopters are more knowledgeable about technology than most, and they are **justly**[5] proud of that. A reputation as an expert in new technologies has other benefits as well. Always being up-to-date on the latest program or IT service **relevant** to your **occupation**—and being the person that all your colleagues **consult** when they have a tech question—does not hurt your career.

Plus, as the earliest and **savviest**[6] consumers of new technology, early adopters **wield**[7] a great deal of power in the industry. The most obvious way they exercise this power is by pointing out bugs and other defects to the makers of the new product, who then quickly fix them. But more than that, social media has given early adopters a **forum**[8] to discuss new products and make a name for themselves as shapers of public opinion. "Companies are now starting to realize that . . . early adopters are more than just geeks with a passion but also a great way to spread their brand and products," writes Selix. As a result, the first purchasers of a product are often rewarded with discounts, free accessories, or other incentives for good reviews. They also sometimes have a say in **forthcoming** products.

Early adopters realize that they are, in a sense, **voluntary** **guinea pigs**[9], but they are OK with that. For them, figuring out a new tablet, game, or app has its own charm: it allows them to learn something new and employ their creativity; it improves their status as experts in technology within their social circles, and it gives them influence with tech companies that **crave**[10] their input and approval. Increasingly, technology is the driver of change in the world. Who wouldn't want to be one of the people in the driver's seat?

Read paragraph 4. What does it mainly discuss regarding early adopters?

a. Their role as tech executives
b. Their influence on each other
c. Their relationship with tech companies

5 **justly** *adv.* deservedly; rightly
6 **savvy** *adj.* clever; knowledgeable about something
7 **wield** *v.* to have and use
8 **forum** *n.* a place, meeting, or medium where ideas and views can be exchanged
9 **guinea pig** *n.* a person or thing used as a subject for experiment
10 **crave** *v.* to want or desire something