

Reading Made Easy

Targeted reading skill:
Locating specific information

Teaching
video



A Quick Grasp

To locate information, pay attention to:

1. **headings and subheadings**, i.e. brief summaries of the paragraphs, which give us a sense of what they are about in general.
2. **exact wording** or **synonyms** that are relevant to the keyword(s) in the questions or options.
3. detailed information including **amounts**, **statistic figures**, **years**, **dates and time**, etc. and **quotes** that give clues about one's opinion on a topic.

The word 'welcome' in the heading suggests that the content is to be read by newcomers. In this context, the newcomers are the S.1 students of Long River College, who will be introduced to school clubs.

Welcome to Long River College!

In the coming months, you may be busy with your studies. Joining a school club is a good way to relax. It's important to strike a balance between work and play!



This subheading presents the key concepts included in the following content—kinds of school clubs available for students.

Which one should I join?

If you like **staying indoors**, you can join the **Reading Club**, **Art Club** or **Chess Club** to take part in the activities you like. Students who are not fond of **arts subjects** can choose to join the **Science Club**. You can do interesting research and join insightful workshops organised by our teachers.

Detailed information, such as examples of school clubs for students who like staying indoors, is given.

Detailed information, such as examples of sports-related school clubs for students who are fond of outdoor activities and extreme sports, is given.



For those who prefer **going outdoors**, there is a variety of **sports teams**. You will have a chance to play sports that are uncommon in Hong Kong, such as **hockey**, **netball** and **baseball**. There are also clubs for extreme sports like **rock climbing** and **mountain biking**. You will definitely have great fun with your teammates!

Likewise, this subheading reveals what is covered in the following content—the way of proposing new school clubs.

What if there is not a school club that I am interested in?

We welcome proposals for new school clubs. If you have any ideas, please send your proposal to the school office. **For further information**, please visit www.longrivercollege.edu.hk/so!

In a leaflet, ways to seek additional information are often given at the end of it. It is because there is rarely enough space for a leaflet to include every single detail that the writer of the leaflet wants to provide for the readers.

Apart from website addresses, phone numbers, business hours and business addresses are commonly seen at the end of any leaflet, especially a commercial one.



Targeted reading skill: Pronoun referencing



Teaching
video



A Quick Grasp

1. To find out what **a pronoun** (whether personal he/we; or demonstrative, like this/those) **refers** to, look for it in the **previous sentence** or in what **comes before** the pronoun in the **same sentence**.
2. The word which the pronoun refers to is not necessarily a **noun**. It can also be a **gerund**, a **phrase**, or a **clause**.


'It' refers to the fact that we won't be aware of how much we love somebody until they are gone. It is something that the writer realised upon her grandpa's death.

In the previous sentence, the writer talks about grandparents and grandchildren. Considering that the writer herself is a grandchild as well, it can be inferred that 'us' refers to the writer herself and her siblings or fellow cousins, all of whom are the grandchildren of her late grandpa.

First Year without Grandpa

We won't be aware of how much we love somebody until they are gone. I never understood **it** until Grandpa passed away.


My grandpa had several grandchildren—one grandson and three granddaughters. Many stubbornly conservative Chinese grandparents favour grandsons over granddaughters, but Grandpa was different. He loved **us** all. When we learnt that he had been diagnosed with cancer, all of us were so depressed. We couldn't bear to lose him.



Note that the words 'remaining days' suggest that the writer's grandpa knew that he would not live long after he had been diagnosed with cancer.




However, the unexpected thing that struck us was that **he** didn't seem to be afraid of death. On the contrary, he lived his **remaining days** positively. **He** still went to the park and did Tai Chi every morning. **He** also cooked for us sometimes if **he** wasn't too tired. I could strongly feel that **he** still clung to his usual routine as he didn't want us to feel sorry for or worry about him.




This paragraph is about the writer's grandpa and the way he spent his days after he had been diagnosed with cancer. As a result, 'he', which has appeared repeatedly throughout the paragraph, refers to the writer's grandpa.

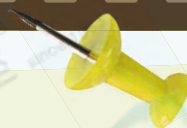
I still remember the scene by **his deathbed**. He smiled gently, and reminded **us** to live happily and healthily. When he slowly closed his eyes, tears ran non-stop down my cheeks. He will always be in my heart, my kind Grandpa.



'His' refers to the writer's grandpa's. By 'his deathbed', the writer means that his grandpa was about to die on a bed.



Like the 'us' in paragraph 2, the 'us' here does not have a noun or pronoun in the same paragraph to refer to. However, it can be inferred too. Based on the context, it most probably refers to the writer herself and her siblings or cousins, her other relatives possibly included.



Targeted reading skill:

Finding the meaning of unknown words



Teaching video



Strategy

A Quick Grasp

To find out the meaning of the unknown words,

1. look for **contextual clues**
2. read the sentences or lines that come before and after an unknown word, then **replace** the **unknown word** with each option to see which one can **keep the meaning logical and intact**.
3. **break down** the words into parts, look for **prefixes** and **suffixes**, and decide if the word is **positive**, **negative** or **neutral**.

'Appealing' comes from the verb 'appeal', which means 'to interest or attract'. Here, the writer means that, compared to other tourist attractions, Stonehenge is the most attractive or interesting one to her.

In the same paragraph, it is mentioned that each stone of Stonehenge is up to five metres tall. Therefore, it can be imagined that a person may look particularly small or short when standing to a huge stone. A 'dwarf' is 'an imagined tiny creature in children's stories'. The writer uses this word as a simile to express how huge the stones are.

Dear Cathy,

My parents and I reached England three days ago. Finally, my jet lag has gone away. We've visited several tourist attractions so far. Among them, Stonehenge is the most **appealing** one to me and I'm going to tell you more about it!

Stonehenge is located in the south of England. It is a mysterious collection of huge stones, each of which is up to five metres tall and weighs about 25 tons. Those stones were arranged close together in a circular pattern. When I stood next to it, I was like a **dwarf**!



I know you're very curious about Stonehenge so let me tell you some of its possible purposes. Some people believe that **ancient** scientists **used it** to study events of the sun and the stars, while some think that it was where religious ceremonies were held. What do you think?

Because of the **numerous** mysteries and stories about Stonehenge, it has become one of the most famous tourist spots in the UK. Annually, thousands of visitors from all over the world pay a visit to this well-preserved natural **phenomenon**.

When you visit England in the future, don't miss out on this wonder! I'm sure you will be amazed! See you soon in Hong Kong!

Best,
Pamela



'Ancient' means 'very old'. Here, the writer is trying to explain what Stonehenge was used for in a long time ago. She points out that, according to some people, scientists in early times used Stonehenge to learn more about the sun and the stars.

The suffix '-ous' is used to form adjectives that refer to a quality or condition. 'Numerous' means 'existing in large numbers'. What the writer expresses here is that there are a lot of unknown, unsolved and strange stories surrounding Stonehenge.

'Phenomenon' here means 'something that is extremely remarkable'.



Targeted reading skill:

Identifying cohesive devices to study the link between ideas



Teaching video



A Quick Grasp

1. Cohesive devices are also known as **linking words**.
2. They are used to **link up words** in a sentence, **sentences** in a paragraph, and **paragraphs** in the whole passage.
3. They not only explain the **relationship** between ideas, but also give **clues** about the meaning of unknown words or phrases.


The conjunction 'or' is used to connect the two kinds of travel agencies that tricked students: those that did not exist and those that had already gone bankrupt.

'In view of' is a phrase meaning 'because of'. It is used as a cohesive device to relate a reason to a result. Here the writer explains that the school has issued this notice to students because the problem of overseas study tour frauds is still causing trouble and loss to students.

Long River College Notice

Over the past few years, there has been a worrying number of students who fell victim to overseas study tour frauds. In most cases, it was found that the travel agencies involved either did not exist **or** had already gone bankrupt.

In view of the seriousness of the problem, the school would like to inform students again of some common traps **and** tips on avoiding them. If you have joined, **or** intend to join a study tour, you may refer to the blacklist of questionable travel agencies ([click here](#)) for your reference and note the following:



Functioning as a cohesive device, the conjunction 'whether' is commonly used in reporting questions and expressing doubts. Students are advised to address these four points before joining a study tour.


- ◆ **whether** the travel agency has a valid licence number
- ◆ **whether** there is any customer feedback about the travel agency on the Internet
- ◆ **whether** the study tour packages are reasonably priced
- ◆ **whether** insurance is included as part of the deal

Before leaving Hong Kong, remember to:


- ◆ leave a copy of your passport **and** information about your travel agency with your parents
- ◆ check the emergency numbers and helplines in your destination
- ◆ bring along prepaid credit cards instead of too much cash

Should you have any enquiries about study tours in general **or** about joining one, please feel free to consult Mr Benedict Jones **or** Ms Yip Yan Yi.

Ms Alice Chan
Principal




The conjunction 'and' makes it clear that student should leave not only copies of their passports, but also information about their travel agencies with their parents.



'Should' here is used to mean 'if'. It is used as a cohesive device to connect a possible condition with what one can do under that possible condition. To put it in another way, if students have questions about study tours, they can seek help from Mr Benedict Jones or Ms Yip Yan Yi.





Targeted reading skill:

Identifying the writer's attitude




Teaching video




A Quick Grasp


1. **Views and attitudes** are the writer's general feelings and opinions about a subject. The writer may choose to **clearly state** his or her feelings and opinions or to **imply** them.
2. The use of **adjectives** may reveal whether his or her view and attitude on the subject is **positive**, **negative** or **neutral**.



It is the writer's view that chocolate has been one of the most popular foods around the world.



In the writer's opinion, chocolate can be tempting because of its sweet and slightly bitter taste.



The writer here points out one potential disadvantage of chocolate consumption, which is that chocolate can be addictive.

Chocolate: Good or Bad?

Chocolate has been one of the most **popular** types of food around the world for centuries. As chocolate causes our brains to release endorphins (chemicals that relieve pain and boost happiness), it is believed that eating chocolate may help reduce the perception of pain and bring emotional comfort. Together with its sweet and slightly bitter taste, sometimes **it is really hard to resist**. Interestingly, **it can be a habit-forming substance** that makes you think of it all the time!



According to a survey, most chocolate addicts are likely to be in a negative mood when they have not consumed the snack for a while. In worse scenarios, they may even feel anxious and find it difficult to concentrate on tasks that require close attention, such as reading newspapers. This may sound exaggerated, but it has been confirmed by scientific research that the caffeine in chocolate may cause addiction.

Every rose has its thorn. While chocolate can be a source of emotional relief and happiness, it can sometimes be an addictive drug. Therefore, those who have a sweet tooth should consume chocolate with caution!

The writer explains chocolate addiction in greater detail in an objective way. Note that what the writer states is supported by unbiased evidence, such as scientific research.

In this short summary, the writer concludes the article by highlighting both the bright side and dark side of chocolate consumption. At the very end of the article, the writer advises those who are fond of sweet food to avoid eating too much chocolate. As a result, it is fair to say that the writer holds a neutral view on chocolate.



Targeted reading skill:
Identifying main ideas and supporting details



Teaching
video



A Quick Grasp

1. The **key ideas** in a paragraph are captured in a **topic sentence**, which may generally appear at the beginning, in the middle or at the end of a paragraph.
2. **Supporting details** are supposed to be additional information, such as **comparisons, reasons, descriptions, statistics**, etc. They help illustrate, define, develop or prove the key ideas in the paragraph.
3. In cases where a topic sentence is **absent**, readers have to figure out the main idea of a paragraph by **understanding what is implied** through the supporting details.

Time to stop drinking bottled water

The opening line of the paragraph points out that environmental protection has been a serious matter for a long time. It implies that there are still environmental problems which remain unsolved.

Protecting the environment has been a matter of serious concern all over the world in recent decades. It is not difficult to find posters and slogans which promote ways of protecting our environment, such as buying sustainable products and bringing along our own bags. Still, there's one thing which is always neglected—plastic bottles.

This line is the topic sentence of the paragraph. It indicates that plastic bottles have long been neglected, while there have been a lot of materials promoting environmental protection.





Both the opening and ending sentences are the topic sentences of the paragraph. The key idea they express is that the huge number of plastic bottles sent to landfills is a great burden to landfills around the world.

Each year, billions of plastic water bottles are used. This happens because people prefer buying plastic bottled water to carrying their own reusable bottles with them. It is understandable since people can simply throw their empty water bottles in bins when they finish drinking from them.

Although these single-use water bottles bring us convenience, they are in fact a massive burden to landfills around the world.

Most of these non-reusable plastic bottles would typically sit in landfills for centuries, as each of them would take at least 450 years to decompose. If these bottles are thrown into rivers or oceans, they can pose deadly threats to marine life. Every year, a great number of fish and seabirds die because of plastic waste, which they may sometimes mistake for food.


To help protect the environment and animals, remind yourself of an easy task before you go out: bring your own water bottle with you! Let's eliminate our reliance on plastic water bottles before they occupy our home one day.

Posted by Anna Wong at 10:48 pm

After pointing out the issue, the writer explains why people like to buy plastic bottled water. The writer's explanation serves as a supporting detail to further develop the paragraph's main idea.

There is not a topic sentence in this paragraph. However, what the writer implies through the points is that plastic bottles not only cause environmental worries to humans, but also bring about dangers to marine animals.

Similar to the previous paragraph, this paragraph conveys its main idea without a topic sentence. Its main idea is that we can help protect the environment by simply bringing along our own water bottles when we go out.



Targeted reading skill:


Recognising keywords in a sentence

Teaching
video




A Quick Grasp

1. **Keywords** are words or phrases that convey important ideas or define ideas related to a particular topic.
2. To find the keywords, **skim** the questions and options, **underline** in each option the words that give it the special meaning, and **look for synonyms** or **other relevant words** in the passage, and underline them.



The word 'both' emphasises that each of the following two parties, namely businesses and customers, has a role to play in environmental protection.




The writer agrees 'entirely' with Mr Wong's points, rather than 'partially'. Sometimes another adverb would be used in questions and options, and then the meaning would be greatly different from the meaning expressed in the passage.

Dear Editor,

I am writing in response to the article by Dennis Wong published on 17th March, in which Mr Wong said that **both** businesses and customers can **play their own part** in environmental protection. I agree **entirely** with his points and would like to elaborate on how it can be achieved.

First, businesses can consider cutting down on the use of extra decorative packaging. **For example,** **many lifestyle stores**, stores that sell clothing, housewares, stationery and gifts, usually wrap purchased items in wrapping paper.



Note the words 'For example'. Lifestyle stores are mentioned as examples. They are not the only stores that use extra decorative packaging materials.



The adjective 'wasteful' is not a positive word. It can be inferred that the writer is not in favour of the use of extra decorative wrapping materials.

However, very often, wrapping paper is immediately thrown away after it is torn from the present. It is a fairly **wasteful** act. I believe reducing the use of these supplementary materials is a big step to saving forests and protecting our environment.

Second, customers **can** say no to free plastic cutlery or free plastic bags when buying takeaways and shopping. Similar to wrapping paper, those disposable giveaways are not designed for repeated use, so they can easily become unusable. In my opinion, metal cutlery and nylon shopping bags are customers' good friends. They are **eco-friendly, durable and can be washed and cleaned**. If the majority of customers follow these practices, I am **certain** that the problem of plastic waste will be greatly eased.

All in all, environmental protection is something for which **all of us** are responsible, and we should make **a concerted effort** to conserve our environment before it is too late to do so.

Yours faithfully,
Louise Leung

Note that modal verbs express different degrees of obligation and possibility. The writer uses 'can', rather than 'must', to show what is possible.

These words illustrate why shopping bags are 'customers' good friends' in the writer's opinion.

The adjective 'certain' is an important word here as it shows that the writer is confident in her belief.

Again, the writer emphasises that environmental protection is not a problem that matters to just some people, but everyone.



Targeted reading skill: Distinguishing facts from opinions



Teaching
video



A Quick Grasp

1. **Facts** are pieces of information that must be **true**. They are usually supported by or based on **reliable sources**, such as **studies**, **research** and **observations**.
2. **Opinions** are a particular person's or group's judgements on a subject, which can be **true or false**. They are usually based on **personal feelings**, **unexamined beliefs** or **faulty generalisations from experiences**.



Free all bears right now!

Very often, information that deals with scientific knowledge is based on research and observations, hence factual.

These adjectives show the writer's judgements on bear bile farming and those who take part in it.



Every year, a large number of bears are killed for their bile. **Bile** is a greenish brown liquid with a bitter taste produced by the liver to help with the digestion of fats. It is claimed that bear bile can treat a variety of medical conditions such as stomachache and sore eyes.

After North Korea developed the technique to extract bile with a thin tube in the 1980s, bear bile farms quickly mushroomed in China in the 1990s. Since then, the hunting and caging of bears has never stopped. Kept in small cages, they receive poor care and often suffer from sores and constant infections. Because of the high demand, the price of bear bile is quite high. Therefore, **wicked** people keep carrying out this **cruel** activity. Today, more than 10,000 bears are kept in bear farms in China. Those bears spend their whole lives in cages and great pain is all they have.

It is really **selfish** of those **heartless** people to make profits using such **cruel** methods. In fact, there are many medicines that can replace the use of bear bile. Nowadays, animal rights activists are working continuously to free the bears from cruelty, urging the governments to ban bear bile farming and the general public not to buy any bear bile products.