

Reading Made Easy

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 question and options, **underline** in each option the words that give it special meaning, and **look for synonyms or other associated words** in the passage, and underline them.

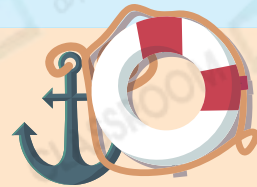
The word 'instead' suggests that Ang Lee, unlike most people, sees misfortunes differently.

The words 'based on' suggest that the story that the film *Life of Pi* explores is not original, but adapted or developed from a source, which is later revealed to be a novel of the same title.

Life of Pi—A Review

What comes to your mind when you are asked to think of misfortunes like a plane crash or a shipwreck? Many would come up with negative associations—death, despair, etc. The talented Taiwanese director Ang Lee, **instead**, portrays the power of positivity when one faces difficulties.

The film, *Life of Pi*, is **based on** Canadian writer Yann Martel's novel of the same title. The story kicks off with some extraordinary happenings to





Pi, the main character of the film, **which science cannot explain**, hence everybody's belief in the existence of God.

The shipwreck takes place when Pi, the teenage son of a zookeeper, is immigrating from India to Canada with his family, bringing along the zoo animals. As they encounter a thunderstorm which sinks their ship, Pi, as **the only human survivor**, shares a lifeboat with a tiger, a zebra, a hyena and an orangutan for 227 days. The film follows their journey of survival in the sea.

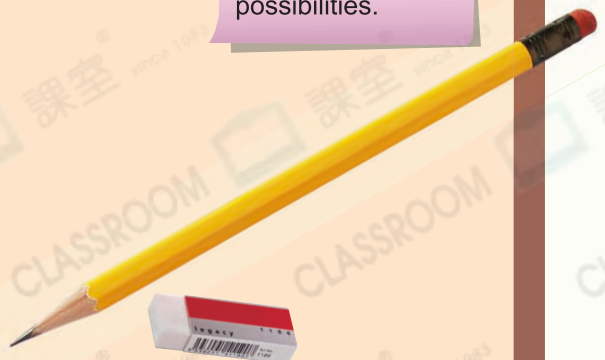
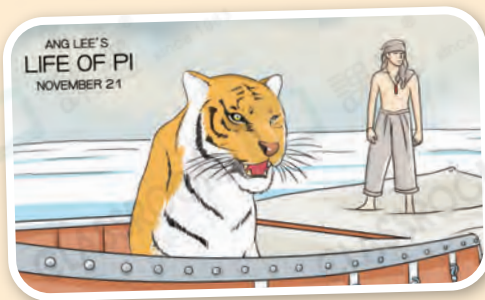
The 3D technology used in the film **brings the film to the next level**. It enables the audience to feel and understand how Pi feels as he projects human qualities on the animals to go through the hardships that he has with his companions while drifting in the endless Pacific Ocean. **Life is beyond imagination**, isn't it?

What Pi encounters in the story is supernatural.

Pi's family members die in the shipwreck.

Without the 3D technology, the audience might not be able to have such a deep experience of how Pi feels.

It suggests that sometimes bold thinking can bring about positive possibilities.



Targeted reading skill:

Distinguishing facts
from opinions



Teaching
video



A Quick Grasp

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

It is a fact that music piracy is a problem record companies encounter; the writer mentions the change he or she observed in the record companies' attitudes towards it.

This passage is a newspaper article. What is reported is supposed to be objective. In other words, reporters report only facts, rather than personal opinions. Factors that worsen the issue are mentioned later in the same paragraph.



CR News

28th May, 20xx

Illegal Distribution Threatens Music Industry

Record companies **have been trying very hard to control music piracy** since the technology to make copies of records became widely available.

In the past, **the record industry was not that anxious** about a certain amount of copying. For example, fans of different artists recorded the songs that they performed at open concerts and traded them among one another afterwards.

However, in recent years, **record companies have realised that piracy is an increasing threat**. Part



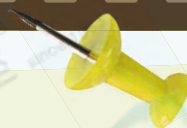
of the problem is that piracy is getting more and more serious. Computers and the internet have made it easier than ever for people to obtain music without paying for it. Additionally, the latest technology for storing and sending information on the web has worsened the problem.


‘It’s almost **impossible** to stop piracy over the internet,’ **commented** Satya Narayana Nadella, CEO of Microsoft, ‘because people can defeat any security measures.’

In response to this problem, music companies have **aggressively** gone after those who get music illegally from the internet. This has made music companies **unpopular** with the public, but they feel that it is necessary in order to protect their profits.

The quote is indicative of Microsoft CEO’s subjective opinion. The reporting verb ‘commented’ and the biased word ‘impossible’ show that what is spoken is only a personal comment.

It is a fact that music companies have gone after those who obtain music via illegal means, but ‘aggressively’ is a biased word, which might be indicative of the writer’s personal view. ‘Unpopular’ is also biased, a word which shows the writer’s personal thought.





Targeted reading skill:
Finding the meaning of
unknown words




Teaching
video




A Quick Grasp

To work out the meaning of an unknown word,

1. 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**.
2. **break down** the word into parts, look for **prefixes** and **suffixes**, and decide if the word is **positive**, **negative** or **neutral**.



Considering the value of beef, some people may regard 'three hundred US dollars' as too expensive, hence the meaning of the adjective 'extravagant'.



The relative clause that follows makes it clear that the word 'marbling' is used to refer to the fat in Kobe beef.



THE ROYAL BEEF

Three hundred US dollars for a pound of beef may sound too **extravagant** to many. The Tajima beef (mostly known as Kobe beef) comes from cows which are bred in the Hyogo Prefecture of Japan, whose capital city is Kobe. It is surely one of the best beefs meat lovers could taste.

Famous for its **marbling**, which refers to the white fat in the meat, Kobe beef, as reported by most people, has a buttery texture and tastes sweet. Some say it is a fantastic experience to feel the beef melting in your mouth.



It sounds illogical to say that the popularity of Kobe beef 'leads to' how the cattle are raised. It is how the cattle are raised that determines the texture of Kobe beef. Therefore, the phrasal verb 'lies in' means 'comes from'.

The sentence that follows mentions that the cattle are given beer, massaged and played music to. Therefore, 'raised' means not only 'kept' but 'taken care of'.

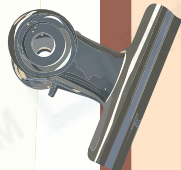
The secret of Kobe beef also **lies in** the way the cattle are **raised**. Cows may eat less in summer because of the high temperature and high humidity, so they are given beer to increase their appetite. They are also given massages each day, which help reduce stress and muscle **stiffness**. Sometimes they even listen to classical music! It is believed that these can improve the meat quality of the cows.

How can one enjoy such great meat? One of the best ways is dining at a teppanyaki restaurant, where a chef grills the meat on an iron plate. The meat cannot be cooked for too long, **or else** it will have a rough texture, **spoil**ing the royal meat.

Massages help loosen tight muscles. In other words, 'muscle stiffness' means 'muscle in the quality of being firm, hard, or unable to bend'.

'Or else' means 'something will happen if another thing does not'. In this case, it means that the meat's texture will turn rough if the cooking time is not well-controlled. 'Or else' can be replaced by the conjunction 'otherwise'.

Meat with a rough texture is undesirable. Therefore, we know that 'spoiling' is negative in meaning, which means 'ruining' or 'destroying'.



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**, **descriptions**, **statistics**, etc., that illustrates, defines, advances or proves 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**.

This topic sentence tells the main idea of the first paragraph.

Statistics are given as the supporting details.

Comparisons are made to support the main idea.

The Importance of Sleep for Health

Dr. George Jones

Sleep is important for our health. People spend roughly 33% of their lifetime asleep. With a good night's sleep, people feel refreshed and are better prepared to face new challenges the next day. However, a poor night's sleep tends to result in higher stress levels and a greater tendency to make mistakes. A person who does not have enough sleep finds it hard to



focus. Also, the lack of sleep slows down our metabolism and the rate at which our bodies burn fat.

Although having enough sleep is vital, some people ignore its importance. They have the misconception that an hour of sleep means an hour wasted, and they would rather have it spent on doing something else, such as watching entertainment shows after a busy day of work, overlooking the potential threats posed by sleep deprivation.

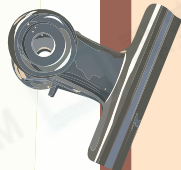
For adults, the hours of sleep suggested are 7 to 9 per day. To ensure quality sleep, people need comfy bedrooms with dim lights or no lights. It is better to put on loose pajamas as well. Maintaining a regular sleep cycle, that is waking up and going to bed at around the same time every day, would be effective in getting good sleep. Doing light exercises helps too since it reduces tension. Finally, smoking and drinking coffee should be avoided at night. Getting a good night's sleep is important for maintaining a healthy life and a clear mind.

This topic sentence tells the main idea of the second paragraph.

What follows explains why some people choose not to sleep despite knowing its importance, and describes what these people do instead of going to bed.

A number of ways of achieving a good night's sleep are suggested.

The main idea of a paragraph, that is the topic sentence, does not necessarily appear at the beginning. The main idea of the third paragraph appears at the end of it.



Targeted reading skill:
Identifying main ideas
and the purpose of the text



Teaching
video



A Quick Grasp
Strategy

1. Each **text type** has its own **features** and **purpose** to serve.
2. Here are some common text types and their typical purposes:

| | |
|--------------------|--|
| Newsletter | To inform / describe |
| Pamphlet | To inform / describe / promote |
| Encyclopedia entry | To provide information |
| Manual | To instruct |
| Letter | To inform / complain / explain / describe / advise *The purpose of a letter is usually stated clearly in the first paragraph. |

This expository essay aims to inform and to explain concepts related to the topic 'typhoons'.

Paragraph 1 briefly defines what a typhoon is.

Paragraph 2 explains how a typhoon is formed.

Typhoons

A typhoon is a natural disaster. It is a violent tropical cyclone with wind speeds of 74 miles per hour or higher. Hurricanes are the same type of storms as typhoons, but they are called different names as they occur in different parts of the world. The cyclones in the Pacific Ocean around Hawaii and Asia are called typhoons, while those in the eastern coastline along the United States and Central America are called hurricanes.

Typhoons occur when warm air mixes with cold air and forms winds. In the tropical oceans, when winds blow from high pressure areas

The explanation continues.

towards low pressure areas, and the winds become a storm. When the storm begins to spin around a centre called an 'eye' and intensifies, a typhoon forms.

A typhoon can bring about a lot of problems. Heavy rain can lead to flooding and mudslides in many places. Mountain towns are usually the most severely affected: trees are knocked down, buildings are flattened; houses are flooded; bridges are destroyed. In an instant, hundreds of thousands of people lose their families and homes.

To deal with the aftermath of typhoons, relief efforts are made by local firefighters or soldiers. Besides, helicopters are used to help rescue trapped people. Other countries also send supplies, equipment and workers to help in the devastated areas. In addition, temporary shelters are put up, and some governments offer home repair assistance grants to those who lose their homes.

Every year, the damage wreaked by tropical cyclones can result in losses of hundreds of millions of dollars and numerous lives. The destruction is so enormous that we should spare no effort in taking all preventive measures possible.




Paragraph 3 informs readers of problems brought about by a typhoon. A number of examples are given as supporting details.

Paragraph 4 informs readers of several measures that are usually taken to deal with the aftermath of typhoons.

This sentence summarizes the passage and serves as a word of caution to readers.






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, which can be **explicitly stated** or left unstated but **implied**.
2. The use of **adjectives** may reveal whether he or she has a **positive**, **negative** or **neutral** attitude towards the subject.



The writer shares the same view with Jerry Lau, who thinks that humans should bear responsibility for animal extinction.

Dear Editor,

I am writing in response to Jerry Lau's letter dated 11th July, 20XX suggesting that 'Human beings should be held responsible for the extinction of animals'. I totally agree with his stance and would like to express my opinions.

Many forests in the world have been logged because land and resources are scarce as a result of the ever-expanding world population. Deforestation destroys animals' habitats and puts them on the verge of extinction. In Hong Kong, there have been news reports about the sudden presence of boars wandering in the city. The reason for

The writer continues to present her stance using subjective words like 'obvious' and 'critically'.

it is **obvious**—their habitat has been **raided**.
Therefore, with deforestation going on in many different regions, **it is not difficult to understand why** more and more animals in other parts of the world are losing their habitats, and are **critically** endangered.

In addition, **many species have become extinct owing to man's vanity**. It is common to see posts on the Internet showing **horrible** photos of animals that are gasping their last breaths, including sharks with their fins cut, elephants with their tusks removed, as well as tigers being poached for their skins. Besides the great pain, they are vulnerable to extinction as their populations are declining.

To conclude, human beings are the **culprit** of any species' extinction. It's time for businesses to put aside their vanity and to stop economic activities that cause harm to animals' habitats. In my opinion, they have to be reduced without delay before more species go extinct.

Yours faithfully,
Joanna Wong



The writer regards 'man's vanity' as the reason for animal extinction. This disapproving term helps the writer to reiterate her stance.

The writer describes the photos of dying animals as 'horrible', which reveals the writer's negative view on poaching.

'Culprit' is a strongly biased word. The writer uses this word to convey the idea that humans are to be blamed.



Targeted reading skill: Pronoun referencing



Teaching
video



A Quick Grasp

1. To find out what **a pronoun** (whether personal, like he or we; or demonstrative, like this or 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**.

'These' refers to people dressed up in special costumes, and waiters and waitresses in cafés who dressed up as the maids in comics and anime.

'It' refers to cosplay.

'At that time' refers to the 1990s.

COS-TUME FOR ROLE-PLAY

By Reika Miyuko

Have you ever been to an event where people were all dressed in special costumes? Have you ever been to a café where the waiters and waitresses dressed like the maids in comics and anime? **These** are telling examples of cosplay.

The term 'cosplay' combines the word 'costume' with the word 'play'. **It** became a popular trend in the 1990s in Japan. **At that time**, fashionable teenagers went to parties or special events wearing costumes of characters they liked in cartoons, animated films or video games.



Note that the reference should be specific. 'They' refers specifically to the fashionable Japanese teenagers in the 1990s.

Gradually, **they** also began to dress like the heroes or heroines in science fiction films or popular Hollywood films, and even the members of the bands they adored.

Japan is not the only place where cosplay has gained popularity. People in North America and Europe also like to participate in cosplay events. However, **their cosplay culture** is different from **that** of the Japanese. First, the cosplayers are generally older and they often dress up as more mature characters. Second, many of **them** like to cosplay as science fiction characters, though sometimes they also cosplay as animated film characters.

Cosplay is now a very popular trend in Taiwan as well. Most of the **cosplayers there** make use of their creativity to make their own costumes. The hand-made costumes are striking. Therefore, in events such as the release of new comic books, cosplayers are often in the spotlight. They are photographers' favourite models. Cosplay has become such a hit that there are numerous cosplay clubs in Taiwan. Are you interested in joining **one**?

'Their cosplay culture' refers to the cosplay culture that people in North America and Europe have developed.

'That' refers to the cosplay culture in the same sentence.

'Them' refers to the cosplayers in North America and Europe.

'Cosplayers there' refers to the cosplayers in Taiwan.

'One' refers to a cosplay club.



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 question or options.
3. detailed information including **amounts, statistic figures, years, dates and time, quotes** etc.

The heading reveals that the advertisement is targeted at pet owners.

This aims to promote the pet hotel.

Subheadings help you locate relevant specific information more easily.

Detailed information, including prices and room types, is presented clearly in point form.

In an advertisement, it is common to see contact details including phone number, address, e-mail address, etc. at the end.

The **Best** Pet Hotel We care for your pets!

We truly understand that you see your pets as members of your family, and you worry that no one can lend you a helping hand when you have to travel or be suddenly hospitalised, and your neighbours, relatives or close friends are not ready or available to help take care of them. **No worries, you can count on us, The Best Pet Hotel!**

What do we offer?

The Best Pet Hotel provides pets, including but not limited to cats and dogs, with spacious rooms and excellent facilities. In a regular room, air-conditioning is available. Each room comes with an LED TV, a bed and several stuffed animals. To make your pets feel at home, you can prepare the blankets or toys which your pets hold dearly onto before they check in. We assure you that the environment is clean, safe and comfortable for our little guests to stay in.

What can your pets eat and do?

You can bring along food you have prepared for your pets. Alternatively, we will offer a variety of tasty and healthy food for your pets to choose from if you place the order beforehand. Dogs will be walked twice a day for the sake of their health. We check the rooms every hour to ensure that the pets are in good physical condition. Additionally, we brush, shampoo and trim pets upon request.

How much does it cost?

Prices vary according to the size of the room and services provided.

Regular room: \$350 per day

Luxury room: \$580 per day

For more details of other services, please refer to our website www.thebestpethotel.com.hk or call **2123-4567**.

Address: 26B Greeny Street, Kowloon, Hong Kong