

Grade 05: Birchbark House Language Task

All students must read, understand, and express their understanding of complex, grade-level texts. At the heart of being able to read and understand complex texts is the ability to automatically and fluently decode words and determine how they work together in sentences to produce meaning. Having “language sense” combined with other factors, such as having robust background knowledge and a wide vocabulary, are key determining factors in what makes a student able to read and understand complex texts.¹

The language tasks have been developed to support teachers in developing students’ language sense through repeated exploration of how key sentences from the texts of the ELA Guidebooks 2.0 units are put together to produce meaning. This approach reinforces students’ knowledge of language structures and how those structures produce meaning.²

Each language task is made of at least 20 language links. Each language link is designed to take around 10-15 minutes to conduct. The links can be used with the ELA Guidebooks 2.0 units as a beginning activity with a whole class of students or during targeted, small-group instruction or individual instruction with students who need additional support. Each language link contains text to display or project as a stimulus for student work, teacher directions, and student look-fors. The student look-fors include examples of accurate student responses; however they are not inclusive or exclusive of all possible responses.

The language links focus students on the study of mentor sentences from the unit texts. Mentor sentences were selected for their meaning and their structure. The mentor sentences focus on the main ideas or concepts of the unit texts and present opportunities for students to practice with the complex structures of their grade level. Students study each mentor sentence using the same five lesson protocol. The same five language links are then repeated with a new mentor sentence.

¹ Shanahan, T., Fisher, D., & Frey, N. (2012, March). The Challenge of Challenging Text. *Educational Leadership*, 69(6), 58-62. Retrieved from

<http://www.ascd.org/publications/educational-leadership/mar12/vol69/num06/The-Challenge-of-Challenging-Text.aspx>

² Fillmore, L. W., & Fillmore, C. J. (n.d.). What Does Text Complexity Mean for English Learners and Language Minority Students? Retrieved November 12, 2016, from

http://ell.stanford.edu/sites/default/files/pdf/academic-papers/06-LWF%20CJF%20Text%20Complexity%20FINAL_0.pdf

These language links focus on the study of 4 mentor sentences from the unit texts. Each language link should take around 10-15 minutes to conduct.

Each mentor sentence is used across five language links that each have a different purpose. The same five language links are then repeated with a new mentor sentence.

1. **What does this sentence mean?**
 - a. Purpose: Students make an initial interpretation of the mentor sentence's meaning.
2. **What do I notice about this sentence?**
 - a. Purpose: Students examine the meaning and structure of the mentor sentence.
3. **What do I know this sentence means?**
 - a. Purpose: Students demonstrate their understanding of the sentence's meaning.
4. **What is the structure of this sentence?**
 - a. Purpose: Students create a sentence frame based on the mentor sentence.
5. **Can I write a quality sentence?**
 - a. Purpose: Students emulate the structure of the mentor sentence in their own sentence.

Throughout this section, notes are provided to identify places of additional skills support for students based on previous grade-level standards. Be sure to keep track during these language links of places where students need additional skills support, and use time during small-group or individual instruction to target those skills.

The Birchbark House

Mentor Sentence 1: What does this sentence mean?

1. Display or project:

During the afternoon, Omakayas worked hard while her grandma watched keenly.

This sentence means...

2. Prompt students to copy the sentence.
3. Say: "Write and complete the sentence stem underneath the quotation."

Student Look-Fors:

- The sentence means that Omakayas worked hard as her grandma watched.

4. After several minutes, ask a few students to share how they paraphrased or interpreted the quotation. Prompt students to use the following stems to guide the conversation.
 - a. "Another way to say this sentence is..."
 - b. "I made meaning of this sentence by..."
 - c. "I looked at...."
 - d. "I noticed that..."

Note: If students have trouble forming their ideas, remind them that this is day 1 with the mentor sentence, and they will have other opportunities to develop understanding of the sentence over the next few language links.

5. Prompt students to revise or adjust their written responses based on what their peers shared.

The Birchbark House

Mentor Sentence 1: What do I notice about this sentence?

1. Display or project:

During the afternoon, Omakayas worked hard while her grandma watched keenly.

- What do you notice about this sentence?
- How does what you notice help you understand the sentence?

2. Direct students to write their answers to the two questions, recording what they notice about the sentence and how that contributes to their understanding.
3. Ask students to share their thoughts with a partner. Prompt them to use the following conversation stems to guide their initial conversations.
 - a. "I noticed...which means..."
 - b. "I knew...so I..."
4. Ask pairs to work together to describe how the sentence is put together. As needed, ask guiding questions to support students:
 - a. "What are the parts of this sentence?"
 - b. "Can we divide this sentence into two more more sentences?"
 - c. "What phrases or clauses do you notice? How do those help you understand this sentence?"
 - d. "Are there any conjunctions in this sentence? What do those conjunctions mean?"
 - e. "What punctuation do you notice? How does the punctuation help you understand the sentence?"
5. Call on 2-3 pairs to share with the class what they notice about the sentence and explain how those ideas contribute to their understanding of the sentence.
6. Prompt them to use the following conversation stems to guide their sharing with the class.
 - a. "We noticed...which means..."
 - b. "We knew...so we..."

As pairs share, mark the grammatical elements students notice on the sentence and record any additional comments or thoughts on the board or chart paper. These will be needed for the next language links. After each pair shares, ask another student to rephrase what the pair shared. Prompt students to use the following conversation stems to guide their rephrasing.

- a. "They noticed...which meant..."
- b. "They knew...so they..."

Student Look-Fors:

- Students may notice a wide variety of things about the sentence, including:
 - It starts with a prepositional phrase that answers the question “When did Omakayas work hard?”
 - There is a comma after the introductory phrase/element, which helps set off the first phrase from the rest of the sentence. It makes it stand out, so the information in that phrase must be important to the meaning of the sentence.
 - The independent clause is *During the afternoon, Omakayas worked hard.*
 - There is a dependent clause *while her grandma watched keenly.*
 - There is an independent clause.
 - This is a complex sentence because it include an independent clause and a dependent clause.

7. Ask students to reflect on their learning by completing one of the following sentence stems. Answers can be spoken or written.

- a. To understand this sentence, I had to _____.
- b. Noticing _____ helped me understand the sentence because _____.
- c. Knowing _____ comes in handy when determining the meaning of this sentence.

8. Note: If student responses do not resemble the student look-fors in this language link, conduct a brief mini-lesson to review or reinforce a grammar skill from an earlier grade found in this sentence, such as prepositional phrases or using conjunctions. Focus on a specific skill your students need.³
 It is acceptable for students not to understand the full meaning of the sentence on this day.

³ Access the [Grammar Guide](#) to determine the skills students should have coming into grade 5, the skills that need to be reinforced in grade 5, and the skills that need to be explicitly taught in grade 5.

The Birchbark House

Mentor Sentence 1: What do I know this sentence means?

1. Display or project:

During the afternoon, Omakayas worked hard while her grandma watched keenly.

This sentence means...

2. Prompt students to read what they wrote in the previous language link about the meaning of the sentence.
3. Say: "We have been analyzing this mentor sentence. Now we are going to look again at its meaning."
4. Display or project:

- **WHO/WHAT?**
- (Did/will) **DO WHAT?**
- **WHEN** did who do what?
- **WHERE** did who do what?
- **WHY** did who do what?
- **HOW** did who do what?

Summary Sentence: _____

5. Ask the following questions one at a time and prompt students to record their written responses.

WHO/WHAT?

Omakayas

Did/will **DO WHAT?**

worked hard

WHEN did who do what?

during the afternoon while her grandma watched

WHERE did who do what?

N/A

WHY did who do what?

N/A

HOW did who do what?

N/A

6. Say: "Write a summary of the sentence. Make sure to put the sentence into your own words."

Student Look-Fors:

- During the afternoon while her grandma watched, Omakayas worked hard.
7. After several minutes, ask a few students to share their statements with the class.
 8. Prompt students to revise or adjust their written responses based on what their classmates shared.

The Birchbark House

Mentor Sentence 1: What is the structure of this sentence?

1. Display or project:

During the afternoon, Omakayas worked hard while her grandma watched keenly.

2. Say: "We have been working with the same mentor sentence to understand what it means. Now we will work together to take it apart so we can write our own quality sentences with a similar structure."
3. Ask: "What have we learned so far about this mentor sentence?" Conduct a brief discussion to review what was learned in the previous language links. Use the following questions to guide the discussion:
 - "What does this sentence mean?"
 - "What have you noticed about this sentence?"
 - "How is it put together?"

Student Look-Fors:

- This sentence means that Omakayas worked hard.
- Students might say they noticed an introductory phrase, a comma, or a conjunction.
- Students should understand that the parts of this sentence are introductory phrase + comma + independent clause + dependent clause + punctuation.
- They should understand that the introductory phrase answers the question "When did Omakayas work hard?"

4. Display or project:

After she returned, Omakayas quietly took up the deer bone from her mother's skin bag and worked on the moose hide without being asked.

5. Ask: "How is this sentence similar to the mentor sentence in the way that it is constructed?"

Student Look-Fors:

- Students should identify that the structures are similar--this example, like the mentor sentence, begins with an introductory phrase followed by a comma and then an independent clause.
- They should also identify that the introductory phrase answers the question "When?"

6. Ask: “How did Omakayas mother look at her while she worked? Why might her mother look at her that way?”

Student Look-fors:

- Students might say that Omakayas mother look at her surprised.
- Omakayas is young and does not often work.
- Her mother is surprised to see her working without being prompted.

7. Say: “Now let’s build a quality sentence about Omakayas watching Neemo using phrases and clauses.”

8. Write a quality sentence as a class imitating the structure of the mentor sentence. As needed, review the structure of the mentor sentence again and/or ask students to compare the class sentence to the mentor sentence.

Student Look-Fors:

- As Neewo weeped, Omakayas lifted him and help him in a sunny place.
- After her mother left, Omakayas decided to take Neewo out of the wrapping.

9. Say: “Now let’s construct frames to illustrate the structure of the mentor sentence. We will use these frames to write our own sentences and include the subordinating conjunctions below.”

10. Prompt students to identify other subordinating conjunctions which signal when an event occurred. Record those conjunctions. Then, as a class, create sentence frames that illustrate the structure of the mentor sentence. Reinforce any other grammatical elements or spelling students may need to produce a quality sentence.

Student Look-Fors:

- After _____, _____.
- Before _____, _____.
- During _____, _____.

11. Direct students to reflect on their learning. Ask: “How does breaking down this sentence into its parts support your understanding of the sentence?” Answers can be spoken or written.

The Birchbark House

Mentor Sentence 1: Can I write a quality sentence?

1. Display or project:

During the afternoon, Omakayas worked hard while her grandma watched keenly.

After _____,

Before _____,

During _____,

Explain the interactions between Omakayas and Angeline.

2. Say: “Now we are going to write our own quality sentences.” Remind students of the elements of a quality sentence discussed in previous language links as well as other model sentences.
3. Read aloud the prompt, “Explain the interactions between Omakayas and Angeline”
4. Ask students to work independently to write 1-2 quality sentences that answer the question and imitate the structure of the mentor sentence.
5. Remind students they should begin their sentences with prepositional phrases that answer “when.”
6. Encourage students to use the unit texts to ensure they have an accurate response.

Student Look-Fors:

- An exemplar should follow the sentence frame. For example:
 - During the summer, Omakayas was jealous of Angeline because she felt like she was treated differently.
 - After Omakayas worked, Angeline braided her hair with a ribbon.
- The introductory prepositional phrase should have a clear relationship with the clause that follows it. For example in the first look-for above, the introductory prepositional phrase explained when Omakayas was jealous.

Note: More complete sentence stems may be provided, as needed, as a method of additional support. For example, “During the summer, _____.”

The Birchbark House

Mentor Sentence 2: What does this sentence mean?

1. Display or project:

They hear the chimookoman's ax ring in the woods, and they should be gone before the tree falls.

This sentence means...

2. Prompt students to copy the sentence.
3. Say: "Write and complete the sentence stem underneath the quotation."

Student Look-Fors:

- The sentence means that the chimookoman is cutting down the forest and pushing the Native Americans off of their land.

4. After several minutes, ask a few students to share how they paraphrased or interpreted the quotation. Prompt students to use the following stems to guide the conversation.
 - a. "Another way to say this sentence is..."
 - b. "I made meaning of this sentence by..."
 - c. "I looked at..."
 - d. "I noticed that..."

Note: If students have trouble forming their ideas, remind them that this is day 1 with the mentor sentence, and they will have other opportunities to develop understanding of the sentence over the next few language links.

5. Prompt students to revise or adjust their written responses based on what their peers shared.

The Birchbark House

Mentor Sentence 2: What do I notice about this sentence?

1. Display or project:

They hear the chimookoman's ax ring in the woods, and they should be gone before the tree falls.

- What do you notice about this sentence?
- How does what you notice help you understand the sentence?

2. Direct students to write their answers to the two questions, recording what they notice about the sentence and how that contributes to their understanding.
3. Ask students to share their thoughts with a partner. Prompt them to use the following conversation stems to guide their initial conversations.
 - a. "I noticed...which means..."
 - b. "I knew...so I..."
4. Ask pairs to work together to describe how the sentence is put together. As needed, ask guiding questions to support students:
 - a. "What are the parts of this sentence?"
 - b. "Can we divide this sentence into two or more sentences? What do we have to remove or change?"
 - c. "What phrases or clauses do you notice? How do those help you understand this sentence?"
 - d. "Are there any conjunctions in this sentence? What do those conjunctions mean?"
 - e. "What punctuation do you notice? How does the punctuation help you understand the sentence?"
5. Call on 2-3 pairs to share with the class what they notice about the sentence and explain how those ideas contribute to their understanding of the sentence.
6. Prompt them to use the following conversation stems to guide their sharing with the class.
 - a. "We noticed...which means..."
 - b. "We knew...so we..."

As pairs share, mark the grammatical elements students notice on the sentence and record any additional comments or thoughts on the board or chart paper. These will be needed for the next language links. After each pair shares, ask another student to rephrase what the pair shared. Prompt students to use the following conversation stems to guide their rephrasing.

- c. "They noticed...which meant..."
- d. "They knew...so they..."

Student Look-Fors:

- Students may notice a wide variety of things about the sentence, including:
 - This sentence explains what happens as the chimookoman cut down the trees to make settlements.
 - There are two complete sentences joined by a conjunction, *and*. *And* joins two ideas together. In this sentence, *and* joins the two principles together.
 - “*They hear the chimookoman’s ax ring in the woods*” and “*they should be gone before the tree falls*” could stand alone as complete sentences.
 - There is a comma before *and*.
 - “*Before the tree falls*” is a phrase that tells when the Native Americans should be gone.
 - This is a compound-complex sentence because it contains two independent clauses and one dependent clause.

7. Ask students to reflect on their learning by completing one of the following sentence stems. Answers can be spoken or written.

- a. To understand this sentence, I had to _____.
- b. Noticing _____ helped me understand the sentence because _____.
- c. Knowing _____ comes in handy when determining the meaning of this sentence.

8. Note: If student responses do not resemble the student look-fors in this language link, conduct a brief mini-lesson to review or reinforce a grammar skill from an earlier grade found in this sentence, such as writing simple, compound, or complex sentences, or how and when to use punctuation with conjunctions. Focus on a specific skill your students need.⁴ It is acceptable for students not to understand the full meaning of the sentence on this day.

⁴ Access the [Grammar Guide](#) to determine the skills students should have coming into grade 5, the skills that need to be reinforced in grade 5, and the skills that need to be explicitly taught in grade 5.

The Birchbark House

Mentor Sentence 2: What do I know this sentence means?

1. Display or project:

They hear the chimookoman's ax ring in the woods, and they should be gone before the tree falls.

This sentence means...

2. Prompt students to read what they wrote in the previous language link about the meaning of the sentence.
3. Say: "We have been analyzing this mentor sentence. Now we are going to look again at its meaning."
4. Display or project:

- **WHO/WHAT?**
- (Did/will) **DO WHAT?**
- **WHEN** did who do what?
- **WHERE** did who do what?
- **WHY** did who do what?
- **HOW** did who do what?

Summary Sentence: _____

5. Ask the following questions one at a time and prompt students to record their written responses.

WHO/WHAT?	they	they
(Did/will) DO WHAT?	hear	should be gone
WHEN did who do what?	N/A	before the tree falls
WHERE did who do what?	in the woods	N/A
WHY did who do what?	N/A	
HOW did who do what?	N/A	

6. Encourage students to expand their summary sentence. Prompt them to use information from the unit texts to

answer questions not provided in the original sentence.

WHO/WHAT?

(Did/will) **DO WHAT?**

WHEN did who do what?

WHERE did who do what?

WHY did who do what?

HOW did who do what?

they

hear

N/A

in the woods

to settle

N/A

they

should be gone

before the tree falls

N/A

N/A

N/A

7. Say: "Write a summary of the sentence underneath the quotation. Make sure to put the sentence into your own words."

Student Look-Fors:

- The chimookoman continued to cut down trees in the woods as they settled land, forcing the Native Americans to move further and further west.

8. After several minutes, ask a few students to share their statements with the class.
9. Prompt students to revise or adjust their written responses based on what their classmates shared.

The Birchbark House

Mentor Sentence 2: What is the structure of this sentence?

1. Display or project:

They hear the chimookoman's ax ring in the woods, and they should be gone before the tree falls.

2. Say: "We have been working with the same mentor sentence to understand what it means. Now we will work together to take it apart so we can write our own quality sentences with a similar structure."
3. Ask: "What have we learned so far about this mentor sentence?" Conduct a brief discussion to review what was learned in the previous language links. Use the following questions to guide the discussion:
 - a. "What does this sentence mean?"
 - b. "What have you noticed about this sentence?"
 - c. "How is it put together?"

Student Look-Fors:

- This sentence explains what happens as the chimookoman cut down the trees to make settlements.
- Students might say they noticed phrases, commas, or conjunctions.
- There are two complete sentences joined by a conjunction, *and*. *And* joins two ideas together. In this sentence, *and* joins the two principles together.
- There is a comma before *and*.
- "*Before the tree falls*" is a phrase that tells when the Native Americans should be gone.
- This is a compound-complex sentence because it contains two independent clauses and one dependent clause.
- Students should understand that the parts of this sentence are independent clause + comma + coordinating conjunction + independent clause + subordinating conjunction + dependent clause + period.
- Students should understand that each independent clause has an independent idea that could stand alone. The subordinating conjunction helps the reader to connect the ideas.

4. Ask: "What word in this sentence connects two complete sentences?"

Student Look-Fors:

- Students should understand that *and* connects two complete sentences "*They hear the chimookoman's ax ring in the woods*" and "*they should be gone before the tree falls.*"

5. Ask: "Where else is there a conjunction that connects words, phrases, or clauses in this sentence? What does it mean?"

Student Look-Fors:

- The other conjunction is *before*. *Before* is a subordinating conjunction that tells when the Native Americans should be gone.

- Say: "Remember, conjunctions connect words, phrases, or clauses in a sentence and signal different relationships between ideas. Sometimes conjunctions add on ideas and sometimes conjunctions signal a change or contrast in ideas. They show how ideas relate in a sentence, so as we read, we better understand what a writer means. When we write, we use conjunctions to expand our sentences and make sure our meaning is clear to the reader."
- Display or project:

Omakayas stood with Nokomis in the path, and Nokomis said "Listen to them" because the voices were like a guide.

Fishtail went to the priest's school, and he read the chimookoman's tracks so that they could not be cheated.

- Ask: "How are these sentences similar to the mentor sentence?"

Student Look-Fors:

- Students should identify that the structures are similar--these examples, like the mentor sentence, are compound-complex sentences.
- Students should explain that the function of the conjunction in the sentences is to show how the ideas on each side of the conjunction connect.

- Say: "Now let's build a quality sentence about the visitors using conjunctions."
- Write a quality sentence as a class imitating the structure of the mentor sentence. As needed, review the structure of the mentor sentence again and/or ask students to compare the class sentence to the mentor sentence.

Student Look-Fors:

- People stopped in at any time, and these visitors required constant attention since they were sick.
- There were visitors who came to discuss travel routes west, but they did not stay for long because they were busy preparing for the move.

- Say: "Now let's build a sentence frame to illustrate the structure of the mentor sentence. We will use these frames to write our own sentences."
- Display an anchor chart, or provide students with a list, of coordinating and subordinating conjunctions and

MENTOR SENTENCES

guide students to identify the relationships they signal. Then, as a class, create sentence frames that illustrate the structure of the mentor sentence. Reinforce any other grammatical elements or spelling students may need to produce a quality sentence.

Student Look-Fors:

- _____, and _____ as _____
 but since
 so unless
 or that
 because
 until
 when

What relationships do these conjunctions signal?

Cause and effect	Sequence	Under certain conditions	Comparison (Addition)	Contrast
so as because that since	after until when	unless that or	and as	but

- Direct students to reflect on their learning. Ask: “How does breaking down this sentence into its parts support your understanding of the sentence?” Answers can be spoken or written.

The Birchbark House

Mentor Sentence 2: Can I write a quality sentence?

1. Display or project:

They hear the chimookoman's ax ring in the woods, and they should be gone before the tree falls.

_____, and _____ as _____.

but since

so unless

or that

because

until

when

Describe what happened when "the visitor" came to Omakayas' home.

2. Say, "Now we are going to write our own quality sentences." Remind students of the elements of a quality sentence discussed in previous language links as well as other model sentences.

Note: As needed, provide additional support to students by assigning a coordinating and subordinating conjunction to students and/or provide them with a sentence frame, such as

_____, but _____ because _____.

3. Read the prompt aloud, "Describe what happened when "the visitor" came to Omakayas' home."
4. Ask students to work independently to write 1-2 quality sentences that answer the question and imitate the structure of the mentor sentence.
5. Remind students to select a coordinating and subordinating conjunction to signal the appropriate connection of ideas in their sentences.
6. Encourage students to refer to unit texts to ensure their responses are correct.

MENTOR SENTENCES

Student Look-Fors:

- A visitor entered, and he was staying for the night because his crew had just dragged furs from the mainland.
- The visitor was confused, and he had fever since he had smallpox.
- The visitor had smallpox, but no one knew when he came in that night.

The Birchbark House

Mentor Sentence 3: What does this sentence mean?

1. Display or project:

Watching carefully for signs of the sickness, everyone was worried about the disease.

This sentence means...

2. Prompt students to copy the sentence.
3. Say: "Write and complete the sentence stem underneath the quotation."

Student Look-Fors:

- The sentence means that everyone was worried that they would catch the disease because of the visitor.

4. After several minutes, ask a few students to share how they paraphrased or interpreted the quotation. Prompt students to use the following stems to guide the conversation.
 - a. "Another way to say this sentence is..."
 - b. "I made meaning of this sentence by..."
 - c. "I looked at..."
 - d. "I noticed that..."

Note: If students have trouble forming their ideas, remind them that this is day 1 with the mentor sentence, and they will have other opportunities to develop understanding of the sentence over the next few language links.

5. Prompt students to revise or adjust their written responses based on what their peers shared.

The Birchbark House

Mentor Sentence 3: What do I notice about this sentence?

1. Display or project:

Watching carefully for signs of the sickness, everyone was worried about the disease.

- What do you notice about this sentence?
- How does what you notice help you understand the sentence?

2. Direct students to write their answers to the two questions, recording what they notice about the sentence and how that contributes to their understanding.
3. Ask students to share their thoughts with a partner. Prompt them to use the following conversation stems to guide their initial conversations.
 - a. "I noticed...which means..."
 - b. "I knew...so I..."
4. Ask pairs to work together to describe how the sentence is put together. As needed, ask guiding questions to support students:
 - a. "What are the parts of this sentence?"
 - b. "Can we divide this sentence into two more more sentences?"
 - c. "What phrases or clauses do you notice? How do those help you understand this sentence?"
 - d. "What punctuation do you notice? How does the punctuation help you understand the sentence?"
5. Call on 2-3 pairs to share with the class what they notice about the sentence and explain how those ideas contribute to their understanding of the sentence.
6. Prompt them to use the following conversation stems to guide their sharing with the class.
 - a. "We noticed...which means..."
 - b. "We knew...so we..."

As pairs share, mark the grammatical elements students notice on the sentence and record any additional comments or thoughts on the board or chart paper. These will be needed for the next language links. After each pair shares, ask another student to rephrase what the pair shared. Prompt students to use the following conversation stems to guide their rephrasing.

- a. "They noticed...which meant..."
- b. "They knew...so they..."

Student Look-Fors:

- Students may notice a wide variety of things about the sentence, including:
 - Students may notice that this sentence starts with a phrase that describes everyone. They might identify it as a participial phrase.
 - There is a comma after the introductory phrase/element, which helps set off the first phrase from the rest of the sentence. It makes it stand out, so the information in that phrase must be important to the meaning of the sentence.
 - There is a long independent clause with lots of parts to it.
 - The independent clause is *everyone was worried about the disease*.
 - *About the disease* is a phrase that tells why everyone was worried.

7. Ask students to reflect on their learning by completing one of the following sentence stems. Answers can be spoken or written.

- a. To understand this sentence, I had to _____.
- b. Noticing _____ helped me understand the sentence because _____.
- c. Knowing _____ comes in handy when determining the meaning of this sentence.

8. Note: If student responses do not resemble the student look-fors in this language link, conduct a brief mini-lesson to review or reinforce a grammar skill from an earlier grade found in this sentence, such as prepositional phrases or using conjunctions. Focus on a specific skill your students need.⁵

It is acceptable for students not to understand the full meaning of the sentence on this day.

⁵ Access the [Grammar Guide](#) to determine the skills students should have coming into grade 5, the skills that need to be reinforced in grade 5, and the skills that need to be explicitly taught in grade 5.

The Birchbark House

Mentor Sentence 3: What do I know this sentence means?

1. Display or project:

Watching carefully for signs of the sickness, everyone was worried about the disease.

This sentence means...

2. Prompt students to read what they wrote in the previous language link about the meaning of the sentence.
3. Say: "We have been analyzing this mentor sentence. Now we are going to look again at its meaning."
4. Display or project:

- **WHO/WHAT?**
- (Did/will) **DO WHAT?**
- **WHEN** did who do what?
- **WHERE** did who do what?
- **WHY** did who do what?
- **HOW** did who do what?

Summary Sentence: _____

5. Ask the following questions one at a time and prompt students to record their written responses. Prompt students to use information from the sentence, as well as the text *The Birchbark House* to answer the questions.

WHO/WHAT?

everyone

Did/will **DO WHAT?**

was worried

WHEN did who do what?

after the visitor died

WHERE did who do what?

in the lodge

WHY did who do what?

they were afraid the visitor left illness behind

HOW did who do what?

N/A

6. Say: "Write a summary of the sentence. Make sure to put the sentence into your own words."

Student Look-Fors:

- After the visitor died, everyone in the lodge was worried that he left illness behind.
7. After several minutes, ask a few students to share their statements with the class.
 8. Prompt students to revise or adjust their written responses based on what their classmates shared.

The Birchbark House

Mentor Sentence 3: What is the structure of this sentence?

1. Display or project:

Watching carefully for signs of the sickness, everyone was worried about the disease.

2. Say: "We have been working with the same mentor sentence to understand what it means. Now we will work together to take it apart so we can write our own quality sentences with a similar structure."
3. Ask: "What have we learned so far about this mentor sentence?" Conduct a brief discussion to review what was learned in the previous language links. Use the following questions to guide the discussion:
 - a. "What does this sentence mean?"
 - b. "What have you noticed about this sentence?"
 - c. "How is it put together?"

Student Look-Fors:

- Students may notice that this sentence starts with a phrase that describes everyone. They might identify it as a participial phrase.
- Students might say they noticed prepositional phrases, commas, or conjunctions.
- There is a comma after the introductory phrase/element, which helps set off the first phrase from the rest of the sentence. It makes it stand out, so the information in that phrase must be important to the meaning of the sentence.
- There is a long independent clause with lots of parts to it.
- The independent clause is *everyone was worried about the disease*.
- *About the disease* is a phrase that tells why everyone was worried.
- Students should understand that the parts of this sentence are participial phrase + comma + independent clause + punctuation
- They should understand that the participial phrase answers the question "What was everyone doing?"

4. Display or project:

Divided by illness, Mama took care of Angeline while Omakayas stayed outside with Neewo and Pinch.

5. Ask: "How is this sentence similar to the mentor sentence in the way that it is constructed?"

Student Look-Fors:

- Students should identify that the structures are similar--this example, like the mentor sentence, begins with a participial phrase followed by a comma and then an independent clause.
- They should also identify that the introductory phrase answers the question "Why was the family divided?"

6. Say: "Both of these sentences begin with a participial phrase. A participial phrase begins with a verb ending in -ing, -ed, or another irregular form. A participial phrase serves as an adjective and modifies a noun."
7. Say: "Now let's build a quality sentence about what happens when Mama does not appear at the door to bring in the water using a participial phrase."
8. Write a quality sentence as a class imitating the structure of the mentor sentence. As needed, review the structure of the mentor sentence again and/or ask students to compare the class sentence to the mentor sentence.

Student Look-Fors:

- Plagued with illness, Mama is sick and does not come get the water.
- Taking care of her siblings, Omakayas kept them warm and fed them.

9. Say: "Now let's construct frames to illustrate the structure of the mentor sentence. We will use these frames to write our own sentences and include a participial phrase."
10. Prompt students to identify other participial phrase which might be used in their writing. Record those phrases. Then, as a class, create sentence frames that illustrate the structure of the mentor sentence. Reinforce any other grammatical elements or spelling students may need to produce a quality sentence.

Student Look-Fors:

- Trying to rise to his feet, _____.
- Begging her father to stay in, _____.
- Raising a block of wood high, _____.

11. Direct students to reflect on their learning. Ask: "How does breaking down this sentence into its parts support your understanding of the sentence?" Answers can be spoken or written.

The Birchbark House

Mentor Sentence 3: Can I write a quality sentence?

1. Display or project:

Watching carefully for signs of the sickness, everyone was worried about the disease.

Trying to rise to his feet, _____.

Begging her father to stay in, _____.

Raising a block of wood high, _____.

Describe what happens when Omakayas wakes to see Deydey trying to rise to his feet.

2. Say: “Now we are going to write our own quality sentences.” Remind students of the elements of a quality sentence discussed in previous language links as well as other model sentences.
3. Read aloud the prompt, “Describe what happens when Omakayas wakes to see Deydey trying to rise to his feet.”
4. Ask students to work independently to write 1-2 quality sentences that answer the question and imitate the structure of the mentor sentence.
5. Remind students they should begin their sentences with participial phrases that modify the subject of the sentence.
6. Encourage students to use the unit texts to ensure they have an accurate response.

Student Look-Fors:

- An exemplar should follow the sentence frame. For example:
 - Trying to rise to his feet, Deydey is hot and wants to go outside to cool down.
 - Begging her father to stay in, Omakayas knows that he will die outside.
 - Raising a block of wood high, Omakayas hits her dad in the head to keep him from going outside.
- The participial phrase should modify the noun that follows it. For example in the first look-for above, the participial phrase explains Deydey’s actions.

Note: Less complete sentence stems may be provided, as needed, as a method of differentiated support. For example, “Trying _____, _____.”

The Birchbark House

Mentor Sentence 4: What does this sentence mean?

1. Provide student pairs or groups with the following sentence chunks on individual strips of paper.

Omakayas

a strong and healthy girl

took care

of her family

as they were ill

with smallpox

2. Direct pairs or groups to determine the meaning of each chunk and arrange the chunks into a complete sentence. As students work together, ask guiding questions and prompts to support students:
 - a. "What does each phrase mean?"
 - b. "What phrase sets the scene for the sentence?"
 - c. "What did Omakayas do?"
2. Prompt the pairs or groups to write the sentence they created. This can be done in individual reading logs, on chart paper, or using technology.
3. After several minutes, ask a few pairs or groups to share the sentence they created.
4. Ask: "What does the sentence mean?" Prompt students to use the following stems to guide the conversation.
 - a. "Another way to say this sentence is..."
 - b. "I made meaning of this sentence by..."
 - c. "I looked at..."
 - d. "I noticed that..."
5. Ask students to share the similarities and differences they notice among the sentences and interpretations

provided by their peers and reflect on how they would revise their original sentence or interpretation.

The Birchbark House

Mentor Sentence 4: What do I notice about this sentence?

1. Display or project:

Omakayas, a strong and healthy girl, took care of her family as they were ill with smallpox.

- What do you notice about this sentence?
- How does what you notice help you understand the sentence?

2. Provide student pairs or groups with the following sentence chunks on individual strips of paper.

Omakayas

a strong and healthy girl

took care

of her family

as they were ill

with smallpox

3. Direct pairs or groups to use the sentence chunks to explore the answers to the projected questions. As students work together, ask guiding questions and prompts to support students:
 - a. "How many ways can you rearrange this sentence and it still make sense?"
 - b. "How did you choose where to begin the sentence?"
 - c. "How would you punctuate this sentence? Why?"
 - d. "What phrases or clauses do you notice? How do those help you understand this sentence?"
 - e. "What is the role of the phrase *a strong and healthy girl* in this sentence?"

4. Call on 2-3 pairs or groups to share with the class what they notice about the sentence and explain how those ideas contribute to their understanding of the sentence.
5. Prompt students to use the following conversation stems to guide their sharing with the class.
 - a. "We noticed...which means..."
 - b. "We knew...so we..."

As pairs share, mark the grammatical elements students notice on the sentence and record any additional comments or thoughts on the board or chart paper. These will be needed for the next language links.

After each pair shares, ask another student to rephrase what the pair shared. Prompt students to use the following conversation stems to guide their rephrasing.

- a. "They noticed...which meant..."
- b. "They knew...so they..."

Student Look-Fors:

- Students may notice a wide variety of things about the sentence, including:
 - It starts with the subject of the sentence, *Omakayas*, followed by a phrase.
 - There is a comma before and after the phrase, which helps set it off from the rest of the sentence.
 - There are three prepositional phrases - *of her family*, *with smallpox*. *Of her family* modifies noun *care*. *With smallpox* modifies the noun *ill*.
 - The sentence is long, so it is hard to understand unless I break it into parts.

6. Ask students to reflect on their learning by completing one of the following sentence stems. Answers can be spoken or written.
 - a. To understand this sentence, I had to _____.
 - b. Noticing _____ helped me understand the sentence because _____.
 - c. Knowing _____ comes in handy when determining the meaning of this sentence.
7. Note: If student responses do not resemble the student look-fors in this language link, conduct a brief mini-lesson to review or reinforce a grammar skill from an earlier grade found in this sentence, such as using apostrophes or writing different sentence types. Focus on a specific skill your students need.⁶ It is acceptable for students not to understand the full meaning of the sentence on this day.

⁶ Access the [Grammar Guide](#) to determine the skills students should have coming into grade 5, the skills that need to be reinforced in grade 5, and the skills that need to be explicitly taught in grade 5.

The Birchbark House

Mentor Sentence 4: What do I know this sentence means?

1. Display or project:

Omakayas, a strong and healthy girl, took care of her family as they were ill with smallpox.

This sentence means...

2. Prompt students to read what they wrote in the previous language link about the meaning of the sentence.
3. Say: "We have been analyzing this mentor sentence. Now we are going to look again at its meaning."
4. Display or project:

- **WHO/WHAT?**
- (Did/will) **DO WHAT?**
- **WHEN** did who do what?
- **WHERE** did who do what?
- **WHY** did who do what?
- **HOW** did who do what?

Summary Sentence: _____

5. Ask the following questions one at a time and prompt students to record their written responses.

WHO/WHAT?	Omakayas
(Did/will) DO WHAT?	took care of her family
WHEN did who do what?	as they were ill
WHERE did who do what?	N/A
WHY did who do what?	N/A
HOW did who do what?	N/A

6. Encourage students to expand their summary sentence. Prompt them to use information from the unit texts to answer questions not provided in the original sentence.

MENTOR SENTENCES

WHO/WHAT?

(Did/will) **DO WHAT?**

WHEN did who do what?

WHERE did who do what?

WHY did who do what?

HOW did who do what?

Omakayas

took care of her family

as they were ill

in the Birchbark house

she did not get the illness like the rest of the village

keeping them warm and feeding them

7. Say: "Write a summary of the sentence underneath the quotation. Make sure to put the sentence into your own words."

Student Look-Fors:

- As they fell ill with smallpox, Omakayas took care of her family by keeping them warm in the Birchbark House and feeding them because she did not get the illness.

8. After several minutes, ask a few students to share their statements with the class.
9. Prompt students to revise or adjust their written responses based on what their classmates shared.

The Birchbark House

Mentor Sentence 4: What is the structure of this sentence?

1. Display or project:

Omakayas, a strong and healthy girl, took care of her family as they were ill with smallpox.

2. Say: "We have been working with the same mentor sentence to understand what it means. Now we will work together to take it apart so we can write our own quality sentences with a similar structure."
3. Ask: "What have we learned so far about this mentor sentence?" Conduct a brief discussion to review what was learned in the previous language links. Use the following questions to guide the discussion:
 - a. "What does this sentence mean?"
 - b. "What have you noticed about this sentence?"
 - c. "How is it put together?"

Student Look-Fors:

- This sentence means that Omakayas took care of her family.
 - Students might say they noticed prepositional phrases, commas, or an appositive.
 - Students should understand that the parts of this sentence are subject + comma + appositive phrase + adverb + verb phrase + prepositional phrase + punctuation
 - Students should understand that the appositive restates the meaning of the noun that comes before it.
4. Say: "An appositive phrase restates, expands, or explains, the noun before it. The sentence still makes sense without the appositive. There is a comma before and after the appositive, which helps set it off from the rest of the sentence. When we write, we use appositives to clarify or restate the noun to expand our sentences and make sure our meaning is clear to the reader and give the reader more information."

5. Display or project:

Neewo, Omakayas' baby brother, died from the smallpox disease.

6. Ask: "How is this sentence similar to the mentor sentence?"

Student Look-Fors:

- Students should identify that the structures are similar--this example, like the mentor sentence, includes an appositive.
- Students should explain that the function of the appositives in the sentences is to provide more information to the reader.

7. Say: “Now let’s build a quality sentence about Omakayas’ life after smallpox.”
8. Write a quality sentence as a class imitating the structure of the mentor sentence. As needed, review the structure of the mentor sentence again and/or ask students to compare the class sentence to the mentor sentence.

Student Look-Fors:

- Omakayas, a sad and scared girl, wondered what she could have done to save her brother from the illness.

9. Say: “Now let’s build a sentence frame to illustrate the structure of the mentor sentence. We will use these frames to write our own sentences.”

Student Look-Fors:

- subject + comma + appositive phrase + adverb + verb phrase + prepositional phrase + punctuation
- _____, _____, _____.

10. Direct students to reflect on their learning. Ask: “How does breaking down this sentence into its parts support your understanding of the sentence?” Answers can be spoken or written.

The Birchbark House

Mentor Sentence 4: Can I write a quality sentence?

1. Display or project:

Omakayas, a strong and healthy girl, took care of her family as they were ill with smallpox.

_____, _____, _____.

What happens to Omakayas as a result of the visitor?

2. Say: “Now we are going to write our own quality sentences.” Remind students of the elements of a quality sentence discussed in previous language links as well as other model sentences.
3. Read aloud the question, “What happens to Omakayas as a result of the visitor?”
4. Ask students to work independently to write 1-2 quality sentences that answer the question and imitate the structure of the mentor sentence.
5. Remind students that their sentences should include an appositive.
6. Encourage students to use the unit texts to ensure they have an accurate response.

Student Look-Fors:

- An exemplar should follow the sentence frame. For example:
 - Omakayas, a curious girl, wonders why she did not get the illness when the rest of her family was sick.
 - Omakayas, a curious girl, asked Old Tallow for answers about her family.
- The appositive phrase should have a clear relationship with the noun it modifies. For example in the first look-for above, the appositive phrase redefines Omakayas.

Note: More complete sentence stems may be provided, as needed, as a method of additional support. For example, “Omakayas, _____, asked Old Tallow for answers about her family. .”