HOW DO WE DECIDE WHAT’S TRUE?

Fiction Vs. NonFiction

"Why Monkey’s Live in Trees?” by Julius Lester

"The Case of the Monkeys that Fell From the Trees”

by Susan E. Quinlan

NAME: ___________________________
THINK/PAIR/SHARE

Think about the sentence on the board.

In reality, monkeys who live in trees probably _____________, but in a fictional story they might _______________.

Now complete the chart below with a partner in a think/pair/share activity. What do monkeys do in reality? What might an author write about in monkeys doing in a fictional story?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>MONKEYS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>REALITY</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FICTIONAL STORY</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Ω
Fiction is writing that tells about imaginary people, animals, or events. A work of fiction contains one or more made-up elements, such as a leopard that speaks. Some writers create works of fiction that are realistic. Although they may seem real, these works contain invented characters, settling, or plots.

Nonfiction is writing that tells about real people, animals, places, events, or ideas. For example, a science article that explains the eating habits of jungle animals is a work of nonfiction. In nonfiction, everything must be true. It must contain facts and details from the real world.

DIRECTIONS: Each passage below comes from one of the selections about monkeys, either “Why Monkeys Live in Trees” or “The Case of the Monkeys That Fell from the Trees.” Read each passage. On the first line following the story, tell whether the passage comes from a work of fiction or nonfiction. Then, on the following lines, explain how you know if it is fiction or nonfiction.

1. At that exact moment, one of Leopard’s children ran up to him.
   “Daddy! Daddy! Are you going to be in the contest?”
   “What contest?” Leopard wanted to know. If it was a beauty contest, of course he was going to be in it.
   This passage comes from a work of ______. I know this because ______

2. Normally, howling monkeys are skilled, nimble climbers. They often leap ten feet or more between tree limbs, and they almost never fall.
   This passage comes from a work of ______. I know this because ______

3. King Gorilla had the animals pick numbers to see who would go in what order. To everybody’s disappointment, Hippopotamus drew Number 1.
   This passage comes from a work of ______. I know this because ______

4. Again, Glander found an answer in his field records. Howlers had fed in 331 of the trees in the study area, but they made only one stop in 104 of these trees.
   This passage comes from a work of ______. I know this because ______
Study these words from the selections. Then, complete the activities.

**Word List A**

**behavior** [bee HAY vyuh] n. the way someone acts
   Jessica was exhibiting some strange behavior, singing in her sleep.

**bellowed** [BEL ohd] v. shouted or roared
   Lin bellowed at the kids to come back, but they didn’t listen to her.

**determine** [di TER min] v. find out
   I wanted to determine where my sister was going every day after school.

**evidence** [EV uh dens] n. information and facts that help prove something
   I gathered the evidence I would need to prove him guilty.

**incidents** [IN suh dents] n. events; things that happen
   The strange incidents began after the spaceship landed.

**individual** [in duh VIJ oo uhl] adj. single and separate
   Each individual witness was interviewed separately.

**involved** [in VAHLVD] adj. taking part in
   I was involved in the school play and really enjoyed it.

**suspectiously** [suh SPISH uhs lee] adv. in a way that seems bad or strange
   After he returned from his trip, Bob began acting suspiciously.

**Word List B**

**complicated** [KAHM pli kay tid] adj. having a lot of parts or steps; difficult
   The problem was too complicated to solve quickly.

**nonetheless** [nuhn thuh LESS] adv. in spite of
   Jerry was angry, but nonetheless he had a big smile.

**researchers** [REE serch erz] n. people who study things in depth
   The researchers were looking for ways to make our jobs easier.

**tolerate** [TAHL uh rayt] v. to put up with something; be able to deal with something
   He could only tolerate loud noises in small doses.

**toxic** [TAHK sik] adj. poisonous
   Until he got sick, he didn’t realize the mushrooms were toxic.

**uncommon** [uhn KAHM uhn] adj. rare, unusual
   It was uncommon to see Jane and Mandy get along.

**unlimited** [un LIM uh tid] adj. without end, having no boundaries
   Shawn got excited when he saw the unlimited supply of candy.

**vary** [VAIR ee] v. change; make different
   I like to vary my clothes by wearing a different color every day.
Exercise A  Fill in each blank in the paragraph below with an appropriate word from Word List A. Use each word only once.


Exercise B  Answer the questions with complete explanations.

Example: Would a complicated story be easy to follow? Why or why not?
   It probably would not be easy to follow because complicated means involving many steps.

1. What are two things researchers of animal behavior might study?

2. If an event such as an eclipse was uncommon, would you expect to see it often? Why or why not?

3. If you could have an unlimited amount of anything, what would it be? Why?

4. If the doctor told you to vary your diet, would you eat the same things every day? Explain.

5. What is one thing you just can’t tolerate, and why?

6. If someone ate something toxic, would you nonetheless expect him or her to feel great? Explain.
At first, I didn’t think much about it, but then the incidents began piling up. Strange occurrences began happening almost daily. Food was missing from the kitchen, or messes were made in various rooms in the house. I was determined to get to the bottom of it all because I wanted to know who was involved. Who had a part in these crimes?

I began by examining everyone’s behavior. How was everyone acting? Was any individual in the house acting suspiciously, or rather, was any person who lived here acting more strangely than usual?

Unfortunately, I could not determine that anyone was. In fact, I just couldn’t figure it out. Inez still went off to work every morning, while Ernesto stayed in his room most of the time and listened to music. Monica followed me around the house, begging me to play with her. There was nothing unusual about any of that. In short, things were just as they always were.

Still, slowly, I began to gather evidence, carefully writing down each clue I discovered. Then I created a profile of my suspect: He (or she) was small and very, very sneaky.

Days went by without a sign of my villain, but I didn’t give up. I watched and waited patiently, until one day I caught him. A little monkey climbed in through the window and grabbed some bananas off the kitchen table. “Oh, no, you don’t!” I bellowed after him. I began to give chase, but the monkey got away. When I told the kids, they just laughed. “Mom,” they said, “monkeys are a part of life in Costa Rica. Now you can say you’ve finally settled in!”

1. Underline the words that explain what incidents are. Then, write about two incidents that happened to you last week.

2. Underline the words that tell what involved means. Then, describe something you are involved in.

3. Circle the word that tells what behavior means. What two adjectives would you use to describe the narrator’s behavior?

4. Underline the phrase that tells you what individual and suspiciously mean. Then, use both words together in a sentence.

5. Circle the words that tell what determine means. What does the narrator want to determine?

6. Underline the words that tell how the narrator gathers evidence. What does she use the evidence for?

7. Underline the sentence that explains why the narrator has bellowed at the monkey. Describe a situation in which you might bellow at someone.
"Why Monkeys Live in Trees" by Julius Lester
"The Case of the Monkeys that Fell from the Trees" by Susan E. Quinlan

Reading Warm-up B

Read the following passage. Pay special attention to the underlined words. Then, read it again, and complete the activities. Use a separate sheet of paper for your written answers.

For years, researchers have been studying why people eat the foods they do. They’re curious about how humans came to realize that certain foods are healthful, while others are just plain toxic. How did they know to eat blueberries but not deadly nightshade? How were the edible parts of potatoes, which have poisonous leaves, first discovered? How did people avoid poisonous items yet still get all the nutrients they needed?

The answer, of course, is complicated. It is not just a simple theory that can be proved or disproved. There is no magic window onto the past that allows us to see how things happened. We have to figure it out using clues and logic.

Many experts suggest that people figured out what to eat through trial and error. This makes sense. Out of an almost unlimited number of possibilities, people ate what did not make them sick. In other words, if people could tolerate a certain food, it got added to the list. If not, it got rejected. Those who chose their foods wisely were more likely to survive. Eating something uncommon and therefore untested was definitely risky.

Nonetheless, around the world, humans still managed to create diets that contained a great variety of foods. That, perhaps, is part of the secret. It was not just enough to avoid foods that are known to be bad. There must have also been advantages to seeking out as many foods as possible. Perhaps those who ate a wider variety received more nutrients, lived longer, and had more children.

What lesson can we take from all this about our eating habits today? First of all, it’s important to avoid things that we know are poisonous. Perhaps more important, though, is the idea that we need to vary our diet. Eating a wide variety of foods may be the only way to ensure that we get the nutrients we need.

1. Circle two words that help describe researchers. Then, write a sentence describing a researcher.

2. Circle the word that means the same thing as toxic. Then, use toxic in a sentence.

3. Circle the word that means the opposite of complicated. What makes something complicated?

4. Based on the passage, there is almost an unlimited number of what?

5. Based on the passage, what happened if people couldn’t tolerate a food?

6. What was risky about eating an uncommon food?

7. In your own words, rewrite the sentence containing the word nonetheless. Then, write what nonetheless means.

8. Underline the words that help to explain what vary means. Why is it important to vary our diet?
Build Background: Trickster Tales

The story that you are about to read, "Why Monkeys Live in Trees," is a West African trickster tale. A *trickster tale* is a story in which an animal is personified, or takes on human characteristics, and uses intelligence and cleverness to trick or outwit an opponent. This particular tale is one of many stories that were told among African-American slaves who gathered around a fire at night as a respite from the suffering, anguish, and humiliation they endured during the day. Oral storytelling, a common practice in native West African communities, forged a bond among slaves who longed for reminders of the lives that they were forced to leave behind.

The main character in a trickster tale is typically a small, weak animal who takes on a larger and stronger animal, resulting in a struggle between brains versus brawn. The two most common trickster animals in West African folk literature are the rabbit (known as Brabby, Brer Rabbit, Buh Rabbit, or Bruh Rabbit) and the spider (known as Ananse or Anansi). These trickster animals, however, were not always honorable characters. They frequently broke the rules; were greedy, nasty, and selfish; and sometimes got in trouble. Still, their role as the weak and helpless underdog who could not be intimidated by a greater strength or power paralleled the struggle between the slaves and their owners. Slaves identified with the trickster hero whose spirit could not be broken despite overwhelming odds.

Trickster tales made heroes out of characters whose circumstances forced them to be guided by questionable values and to act accordingly. The tales gave a sense of hope to slaves that they could prevail over those in power and that trickery as a form of revenge was better than hate or violence. Like other types of folk literature, trickster tales helped listeners understand human nature.
Why Monkeys Live in Trees, page 716

**Analyze Literature: Folk Tales**

A **folk tale** is a brief story passed by word of mouth from generation to generation. Folk tales are considered to be part of **folk literature**, or the works, ideas, or customs of a culture, passed by telling stories, reciting poetry, and singing songs. Every early culture around the world creates its own folk literature, and nowhere is storytelling more a part of a culture's fabric than on the continent of Africa.

Storytelling in Africa goes back hundreds of years. Early African tribes had griots (male) or griottes (female) who were assigned the task of being the record-keepers, genealogists, and historians for the individual communities. This was an honorable position, and the griots or griottes were chosen as young children to assume this role as they got older. They underwent extensive training to learn the storytelling craft, committing many folk tales, legends, and historical accounts of their communities to memory. African folk tales, in particular, were told to community members to teach values or moral lessons, to understand the interrelationship between humans and nature, to pass along wisdom from one generation to the next, and to preserve the culture and history of its people.

Learning about folk tales can help you better understand the cultures that produced them. As you are reading this West-African folk tale, you will discover many characteristics that are common to all folk tales, regardless of the place of origin. Fill in the graphic organizer below with details that support the characteristics listed in the left-hand column. Be aware that you may not find all of these characteristics in the selection; if so, you may write "N/A" for "Not Applicable."

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Folk Tales</strong></th>
<th><strong>Details from Tale</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Reflect the values or moral lessons of a community; explain the interrelationship between humans and nature; explain a natural event; pass along wisdom to future generations</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Are set in the past and typically begin with “Once upon a time…” or “Long ago…”</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Have characters that are common people living ordinary lives</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Have both good and evil characters in the tale</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Have animal characters that behave as humans</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Have plots that present a problem to solve for the main character, who may get assistance with the problem from a helper (a person, an animal, or an object)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Have repetition of phrases or actions or the number three (three characters, three tasks, and so on)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Have elements of magic or the supernatural</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Have elements of deceit or trickery</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. Have happy endings</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. Have many variations</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Story Map

Instructions: Fill in the boxes to show how your story developed.

Characters:

Setting:

Problem:

Title:

Author:

How the Characters Tried to Solve the Problem:

Solution:

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“Why Monkeys Live in Trees” by Julius Lester
“The Case of the Monkeys That Fell From the Trees” by Susan E. Quinlan

Vocabulary Builder

Word List

abruptly  bellowed  distress  incidents  reflection  regally

A. DIRECTIONS: Follow each instruction below to write a sentence. Use at least one word from the Word List in each sentence.

1. Write a sentence about something that happens without warning.

2. Write a sentence about someone who has just received bad news.

3. Write a sentence about something you might see in a mirror.

4. Write a sentence about related events.

5. Write a sentence about someone calling to a lost pet.

6. Write a sentence about a formal action by a king.

B. DIRECTIONS: Circle the word that is closest in meaning to the word in CAPITAL LETTERS.

1. INCIDENTS
   A. discussions  B. projects  C. questions  D. happenings

2. BELOWED
   A. tumbled  B. hollered  C. swerved  D. gobbled

3. DISTRESS
   A. suffering  B. noise  C. relaxation  D. pleasure

4. ABRUPTLY
   A. mysteriously  B. roughly  C. unexpectedly  D. silently
Analyzing Text Structure

Use the following organizer to outline an informational text you have read. You may add or delete numbers and letters as needed. Then, complete the activity at the bottom of the page.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Title of Text:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Topic of Text:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thesis (Main Idea) of Text:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Outline:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>II.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>III.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Choose one sentence, paragraph, or section of the informational text you have read and explain how it develops the main idea of the text.
Comparing Fiction and Nonfiction A

Example

Why Monkeys Live in Trees

- Monkeys take part in a contest.
- Monkeys are characters.

The Case of the Monkeys That Fell From the Trees

- Monkeys fall mysteriously from trees.
"Why Monkeys Live in Trees" by Julius Lester
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by Susan E. Quinlan

Comparing Fiction and Nonfiction B

Why Monkeys Live in Trees
The Case of the Monkeys That Fell From the Trees
"Why Monkeys Live in Trees" by Julius Lester
"The Case of the Monkeys That Fell From the Trees"
by Susan E. Quinlan

After You Read A: Comparing Fiction and Nonfiction

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Detail</th>
<th>Why It Is Fiction</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Leopard uses his reflection to see how he looks.</td>
<td>Real animals do not check their appearance.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Detail</th>
<th>Why It Is Fiction</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The setting is northwestern Costa Rica.</td>
<td>This setting exists in the real world.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
"Why Monkeys Live in Trees" by Julius Lester
"The Case of the Monkeys That Fell From the Trees"
by Susan E. Quinlan

After You Read B: Comparing Fiction and Nonfiction

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### Why Monkeys Live in Trees

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Detail</th>
<th>Why It Is Fiction</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

### The Case of the Monkeys That Fell From the Trees

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Detail</th>
<th>Why It Is Nonfiction</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
"Why Monkeys Live in Trees" by Julius Lester
"The Case of the Monkeys That Fell From the Trees" by Susan E. Quinlan

Integrated Language Skills: Support for Writing to Compare Literary Works

Before you write your paragraph comparing and contrasting the monkeys in these two selections, complete the graphic organizer below. In the left and right columns, note how the monkeys in each selection are different. In the center column, note how the monkeys in both selections are similar.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Monkeys in &quot;Why Monkeys Live in Trees&quot;</th>
<th>How Monkeys Are Similar in Both Selections</th>
<th>Monkeys in &quot;The Case of the Monkeys That Fell From the Trees&quot;</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Use your notes to write a paragraph comparing and contrasting the monkeys in "Why Monkeys Live in Trees" and "The Case of the Monkeys That Fell From the Trees."