UNIT 8

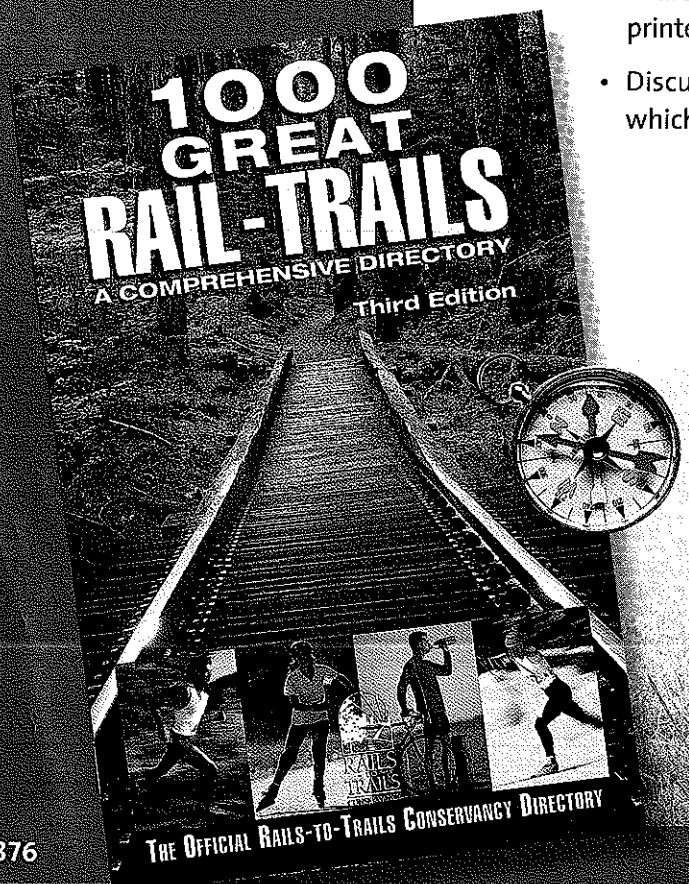
Share What You Know

Where do you get your FACTS?

You don't go a single day without needing to gather some **facts.** With message boards, magazines, books, and directories all offering you information, where do you turn when you need an answer you can count on? It depends on what kind of facts you're looking for, and what you need to know.

ACTIVITY Work with a partner to analyze where you get your information.

- Make a list of five or six facts that you might look for in a typical day.
- Next to each fact, write one or more sources in which you might find it.
- Share your list with others. Do you get most of your facts from printed material, from the Internet, or from somewhere else?
- Discuss which of these sources are most trustworthy and which are easiest to use.



Preview Unit Goals

READING

- Identify main idea and supporting details
- Identify and analyze author's purpose
- Distinguish between fact and opinion
- Adjust reading rate to purpose
- Summarize main ideas in an article
- Take notes
- Use text features to comprehend and locate information
- Interpret and evaluate graphic aids

WRITING AND GRAMMAR

- Write a problem-solution essay
- Capitalize titles correctly
- Use commas correctly after introductory words and phrases

SPEAKING, LISTENING, AND VIEWING

- Interpret how events and information are presented in the news
- Compare how different media cover the same event
- Deliver an oral report

VOCABULARY

- Apply knowledge of base words, affixes, and root words to determine the meaning of words
- Use word origins to help understand how other languages have influenced English word meaning

ACADEMIC VOCABULARY

- main idea
- supporting details
- summarize
- text features
- graphic aids

Reading Informational Text

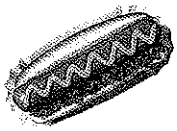
You are living in an age of information. In a matter of minutes, you can find magazine articles, Web sites, and blogs on just about any topic, from global warming to cell-phone technology. But how can you be sure you're getting the most out of what you're reading? What's the best way to wade through all those facts and figures? Learning a few strategies can help you navigate through a sea of information, find answers to your questions, and remember what you've learned.

Part 1: Text Features

Time is money in the fast-paced, modern world. So, it's important to be able to find information quickly when you're searching through Web sites, books, and magazines. One way to locate useful information at a glance is to notice the text features writers use. **Text features** include titles, subheadings, captions, sidebars, boldfaced words, bulleted lists, and links. These elements allow you to see the most important ideas without having to read every word.

Consider the following article from the back of a "Fun Facts" pamphlet. By scanning the text features, you can anticipate what information the article include before deciding to read further.

The History of Hot Dogs ❶



Hot Dogs in Europe ❷

There are several different theories about the origin of the hot dog. Traditionally, Frankfurt-am-Main, Germany, is credited with originating the frankfurter.

All-American Dogs

Another story points to the Louisiana Purchase Exposition in 1904. A concessionaire sold hot dogs as plain sausages, and provided customers with white gloves for easier eating. After the gloves were not returned, he consulted a baker, who designed the "hot dog bun" to protect eaters' fingers.

One of the more credible stories comes from Barry Popick, a prominent hot dog historian at Roosevelt University. He claims the term began appearing in college magazines in the 1890s. Yale students kept referring to wagons selling hot sausages in buns outside their dorms as "dog wagons." It didn't take long for the use of the word *dog* to become "hot dog."

Hot Dog Specialties ❸

- In the South, people like their hot dogs "dragged through the garden" ❹ with a cole-slaw type topping.
- New Yorkers like their hot dogs served with steamed onions and pale yellow mustard.
- Folks in Kansas City enjoy hot dogs with sauerkraut and Swiss cheese.

❶ The **title** reveals the topic of the article—the history of hot dogs.

❷ **Subheadings** highlight what each section of the article is about.

❸ A **sidebar** provides more information.

❹ A **bulleted list** presents information in an easy-to-read format.

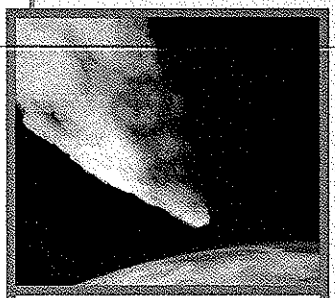
MODEL: TEXT FEATURES

Skim the text features in this Web article. What information do you think the article will provide? Now read the full article and answer the questions.

BACK FORWARD STOP REFRESH HOME PRINT

Articles | Games | Fun Facts | Home

DANGER from the Sky



See More Photos

That's not Swiss cheese up there. The **craters** that cover much of the Moon's surface were caused by collisions with space objects billions of years ago. In 1953 an astronomer even caught on film the bright flash of an object hitting the Moon. With so much evidence of objects hitting our nearest neighbor, scientists wonder when another large object from space will strike our planet.

Impacts on Earth

Earth's **atmosphere** protects us from collisions with small objects, which burn up in the air. However, when a large object strikes Earth, the atmosphere can spread the effects of the impact far beyond the crater. A large collision may throw dust high into the air, where it can be carried around the globe. The dust can block sunlight for months and sharply lower global temperatures.

About 65 million years ago, a large space object struck Earth. At about the same time, most species of organisms died out, including the dinosaurs. Many scientists think that the results of this collision caused the global devastation.

Risk of a Meteorite Collision

When will the next space object hit Earth? A collision is probably occurring as you read this sentence. Tiny particles hit Earth's atmosphere all the time. Some of these particles have enough mass to make it through the atmosphere.

Objects that reach Earth's surface are called **meteorites.** Most meteorites splash harmlessly into the ocean or hit unpopulated areas. However, every few years a meteorite damages a home or other property.

—by Miguel Lopez

TRACKING ASTEROIDS

Although Earth is unlikely to have a major collision with a space object anytime soon, scientists feel the danger is too great to ignore. They are using telescopes to find large, rocky space objects called **asteroids.** After locating an asteroid, they use computer models to predict its path.

Close Read

1. If you were doing a report on meteorites, would this article be useful to you? Explain which text feature helped you find the answer.

2. Summarize the information that appears under the subheading *Impacts on Earth*. Write another subheading that the author could have used.

3. What additional information does the sidebar provide?

Part 2: Main Idea and Supporting Details

After you preview a text, you're ready to examine it more closely. The following strategies can help you to better understand what you are reading and gather the information you need.

IDENTIFYING MAIN IDEAS

The **topic** of a piece of nonfiction is what the text is about. A topic can usually be stated in a word or two, such as *pets* or *dog training*. The **main idea** is the most important idea that a writer wants to share about a topic. The main idea might be the focus of a single paragraph, a section, or the entire article. For example, a main idea might be "The most important factor in dog training is consistent communication."

	LENGTH	EXAMPLE
TOPIC	one or two words	dog training
MAIN IDEA	sentence	The most important factor in dog training is consistent communication.

Often, the main idea of a paragraph or section is directly stated in a **topic sentence,** which is usually the first or the last sentence in that paragraph or section. The facts and examples the writer provides as support for the main idea are called **supporting details.** Sometimes, the main idea is implied, which means it's not directly stated. In that case, you need to **infer** the main idea by looking for what the supporting details add up to. Identifying the main idea of each section or paragraph can help you determine the main idea of the entire article.

Examine this paragraph from "Danger from the Sky." Notice how the main idea and supporting details work together to form a paragraph. The main idea of this paragraph can help you figure out the main idea of the entire article—that our risk of a major collision with space objects is low.

Although Earth is unlikely to have a major collision with a space object anytime soon, scientists feel the danger is too great to ignore. They are using telescopes to find large, rocky space objects called asteroids. After locating an asteroid, they use computer models to predict its path.

Notice that the **main idea** is directly stated: The danger of a major collision between Earth and a space object, though unlikely, is too great to ignore.

These facts **support** the main idea by explaining what scientists are doing to predict dangerous collisions.

MODEL 1: MAIN IDEA AND DETAILS

Read this article about a lifelike robot created by a Korean scientist.

Female Android Debuts

Article by **Victoria Gilman**

These school-age tots seem to be making friends with EveR-1, a female android that made her debut in South Korea. The robot was built by Baeg Moon-hong, a senior researcher with the Division for Applied Robot Technology at the Korea Institute of Industrial Technology in Ansan, just south of Seoul.

Children check out Korean android EveR-1.

Meet EveR-1 EveR-1 is designed to resemble a Korean female in her early 20s. Fifteen motors underneath her silicon skin allow her to express a limited range of emotions, and a 400-word vocabulary enables her to hold a simple conversation. The android weighs 110 pounds and would stand 5 feet, 3 inches tall—if she could stand. EveR-1 can move her arms and hands, but her lower half is immobile.

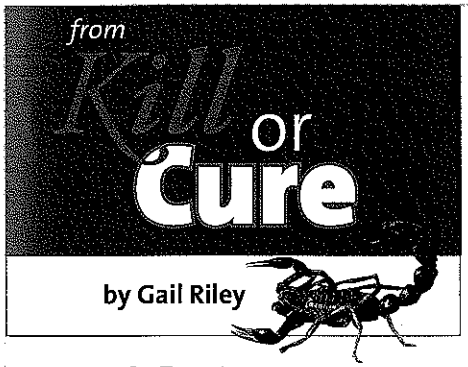
Not Alone Researchers at Osaka University in Japan unveiled their own life-size female android, Repliee Q1. That robot could "speak," and gesture and even appeared to breathe but, like EveR-1, was only mobile from the waist up.

Close Read

1. The main idea of the *Meet EveR-1* section is boxed. Identify the details that support it.
2. What is the main idea of the section with the subheading *Not Alone?*

MODEL 2: MAIN IDEA AND DETAILS

This article is about deadly poisons. Skim the title and the subheading, and answer the first **Close Read** question. Then read the article more closely to help you answer the second question.



Night falls in an Israeli desert. A cockroach skitters across the sand. Suddenly, a scorpion grabs the cockroach in its pincers. It injects searing venom into its victim through its stinger. The venom causes paralysis. The cockroach cannot move. It can do nothing to fend off the scorpion's attack.

Toxic Treatments

It's hard to believe, but the deadly venom that paralyzed the cockroach can be used to heal rather than harm. Scientists are experimenting with the Israeli scorpion's venom. Some of them believe it has the power to shrink brain tumors. For hundreds of years, scientists have been experimenting with poisons extracted from animals and plants. They have found that the same toxins that can injure or kill can also be used to treat health problems.

Close Read

1. Based on the title and the subheading, what do you think the main idea of the article will be?
2. Identify the main idea that the boxed sentences are supporting.

TAKING NOTES

Have you ever read an article on a fascinating subject—talking robots or life-saving poisons, for example—and later realized that you couldn't recall a single thing about it? Taking notes as you read can help you retain the main ideas and imprint them on your memory. There's something about finding, organizing, and recording the most critical information that can really help you learn.

Your notes can take any number of forms, including an outline, a bulleted list, or a graphic organizer, such as a word web or a Y-chart. The form you use isn't as important as the information you include. As you read, try to determine what information is most important, then restate it in your own words.

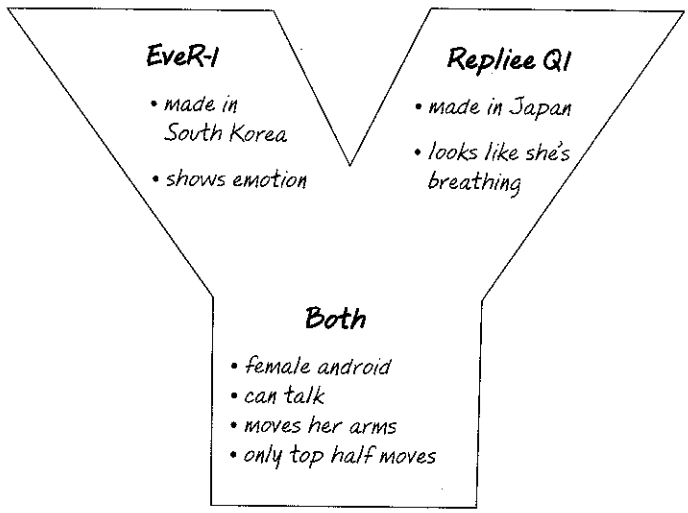
Notice how information from one of the articles you just read can be organized in two different ways.

OUTLINE

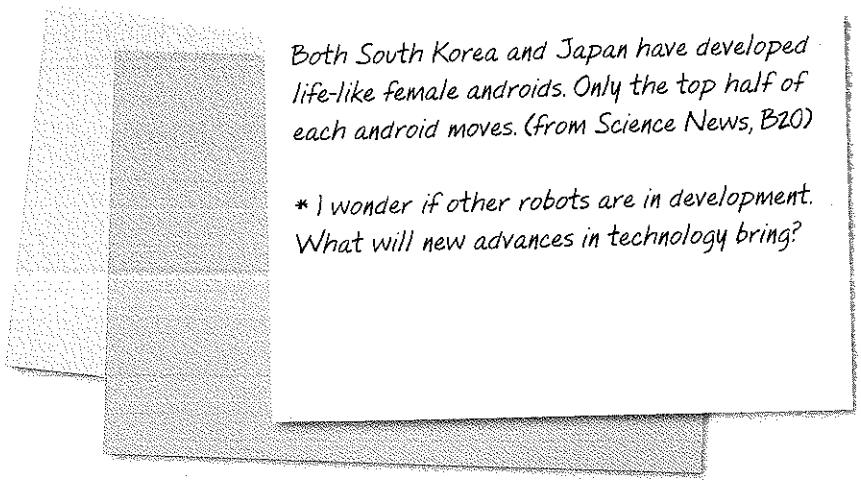
I. EveR-1 resembles a Korean female in her 20s.
- A. Made in South Korea
- B. Can show emotion, talk, and move her arms
- C. Can only move the top half of her body

II. Repliee Q1 is another life-size female android.
- A. Made in Japan
- B. Can talk, move her arms, and looks like she's breathing
- C. Can only move the top half of her body

GRAPHIC ORGANIZER



If you own the book, newspaper, or magazine you are reading, you might use a highlighter to mark the main ideas and supporting details. If you don't own the text, you can use colored sticky notes to flag important information. Just make sure to remove them after you've finished organizing your notes.



Part 3: Analyze the Text

Preview this article and answer the first **Close Read** question. Then read the article more closely, using the other questions to help you take notes.

THE *Great Chicago Fire* OF 1871

Magazine article
by **Michael Burgan**

RECIPE FOR DISASTER Chicago in 1871 was already a big city, bustling with more than 334,000 residents. Its streets, sidewalks, and most of its buildings were made of wood. Hay and straw were inside every barn. To make the situation worse, people used candles and oil lamps.

Fires had been common that year because of the dry weather. The Chicago Fire Department was overworked and underequipped. On Saturday, October 7, firefighters began putting out a fire that wiped out four city blocks. It took them 16 hours. By Sunday evening the men were exhausted. Then around 8:45 P.M., a fire began in the barn of Patrick and Catherine O'Leary.

"EVERYTHING WENT WRONG"

Human error then made a bad situation worse. One firefighter later said, "From the beginning of that fatal fire, everything went wrong!" A watchman atop the courthouse saw smoke rising from the O'Leary barn, but he assumed it was coming from the previous fire. When he finally realized a new fire was blazing, he misjudged its location. His assistant sent a message to the fire stations, but he mistakenly directed horse-drawn fire wagons to a location about a mile from the burning barn. When the fire department finally reached the barn, its equipment was no match for the blaze. The new fire raged on.

OUT OF CONTROL

As the fire blazed, there arose a deafening roar—wood crackling as flames devoured it, cries for help, explosions from oil and gas tanks, the crash of falling buildings. The fire department could do nothing to stop the fire. Around 4 A.M. the next day, the fire destroyed the city's waterworks, shutting off water to the fire hydrants. Firefighters had to drag water in buckets from Lake Michigan and the Chicago River. City officials made a desperate call for help to other cities, but their forces arrived too late. The fire kept burning—totally out of control.

THE AFTERMATH

The Great Fire burned until October 10, when rain finally fell. Thousands of buildings had been destroyed. About 300 people had died in the blaze, and more than 100,000 were left homeless.

Close Read

1. Preview the title and subheadings. What information do you think this article will provide?
2. Describe the main idea that the boxed details support. Copy the main idea and details into your notebook. Add letters as necessary.

I.
A.
B.

3. The main idea of the second section is listed here. Copy it into your notebook, along with the supporting details.

II. Human error made a bad situation even worse.
A.
B.

4. Identify the main idea and details in the third and fourth sections. Add the information to your outline.

III.
A.
B. The fire destroyed the city's waterworks.
IV.
A. 300 people died.
B.