

Reading Comprehension Worksheet: Main Idea & Supporting Details

Read the short story and answer each question.



How Bridges Stay Standing

Bridges help people and vehicles cross rivers, valleys, and busy roads. They may seem like simple structures, but a lot of science and planning goes into keeping them strong and safe.

Most bridges are held up by strong materials like steel and concrete. These materials don't bend easily and can carry the weight of cars, trucks, and people. Engineers choose the best design based on the space, weather, and how much weight the bridge needs to hold.

There are many kinds of bridges. A beam bridge uses straight, horizontal beams held up by supports at each end. An arch bridge uses curved shapes that push weight outward instead of straight down. A suspension bridge uses thick cables to hold up the roadway from tall towers.

To make sure bridges last a long time, workers inspect them regularly. They check for cracks, rust, or anything that could make the bridge weak. If a problem is found, repairs are made right away.

Bridges are more than just pathways—they are examples of how science, math, and design work together to solve real-world problems.



Name: _____

How Bridges Stay Standing

1. What is the main idea of the passage?

- A. Bridges are built using strong designs and materials to stay safe and carry weight.
- B. Engineers build bridges to block roads.
- C. People only walk across arch bridges.
- D. Concrete is stronger than wood.

2. Why do workers check bridges regularly?

- A. To make sure they are safe and to fix any problems.
- B. To build more roads nearby.
- C. To take pictures of the bridges.
- D. To find a better place to put them.

3. Fill in the blank:

A _____ bridge uses cables and towers to hold up the roadway.

4. What are two key details from the passage that explain how bridges stay strong?

5. How do those details support the main idea of safe and long-lasting bridges?



Parent and Teacher Guide

Guide Reading Level: P

Lexile Level: 645L-795L

Grade Level: 3rd Grade, End of the Year

Genre: Informational / Engineering

Introducing the Text

"Today we're reading a nonfiction passage about bridges and how they stay standing. As we read, we'll figure out the main idea of the passage and explore the key facts that explain how science and design make bridges safe."

Vocabulary: engineer, support, beam, arch, suspension

Before Reading Discussion Questions

1. Have you ever walked or driven across a bridge?
 2. What do you think makes a bridge strong and safe?
 3. What kinds of things might engineers think about when building a bridge?
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During Reading Discussion Questions

1. What are the three types of bridges described in the text?
 2. How do materials like steel and concrete help bridges?
 3. Why is it important to inspect bridges regularly?
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After Reading Discussion Questions

1. What is the main idea of this passage?
 2. What key details helped you figure it out?
 3. How do bridges show how science and math are used in real life?
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Activity Idea

Have students design their own bridge on paper or using building materials (like toothpicks, string, or LEGO). They should choose a type of bridge (beam, arch, or suspension), label the parts, and write 3–4 sentences explaining why their design is strong and safe.

