

**READING STRATEGIES AND  
LITERARY ELEMENTS TRANSPARENCY**

**1**

FOR USE WITH FOCUS LESSON 1: FLASHBACK

A **flashback** is an interruption in the chronological narrative of a literary work to relate events from an earlier time. Authors use flashbacks to give readers necessary background information or to create tension or contrast.

Name a story that you have read in which the author uses flashbacks. Identify the order the events are told to the reader and the order they actually occurred. Decide why the author may have chosen to use flashbacks and the effect they have on the story. Fill in the chart below.

<b>Order events are written:</b>	<b>Order events occurred:</b>
<b>Why were flashbacks used?</b>	
<b>What effect does the use of flashbacks have on the story?</b>	

Answer: Sure I was nervous. It was the first time I had tried out for anything. I wanted to choose just the right lines. Most of the other girls chose one fainting scene or another, but I needed something more subtle. I need to be convincing. I know I'll get picked for the part if I am.

**Point of view** is the relationship of the narrator, or storyteller, to the story. In a story with **first-person point of view**, the story is told by one of the characters, referred to as “I.”

In a story with a **limited third-person point of view**, the narrator reveals the thoughts of only one character, but refers to that character as “he” or “she.” In a story with an **omniscient third-person point of view**, the narrator is outside of the story and reveals the thoughts of several characters.

Change the following passage to a first-person point of view, with Mita as narrator.  
How does this change affect the passage?

**Limited Third-Person**

Mita was nervous. She had never tried out for anything before. She took a long time to choose which lines to audition. Most of the girls had chosen the dramatic fainting scene, but the lines she decided on were subtle. If she was convincing, she was sure the director would choose her for the part.

**First-Person**

Choose a selection you have read and determine the point of view.

The **plot**, or action, of a story is the sequence of events. The plot often focuses around a conflict and the resolution of the conflict.

Choose a story you have read. Summarize the main points of the plot. What was the conflict and how was it resolved? How does completing this chart help you to better understand and appreciate the story?

**Plot**

**Conflict**

**Resolution**

Summarize the plot and identify the conflict for another story you have read.

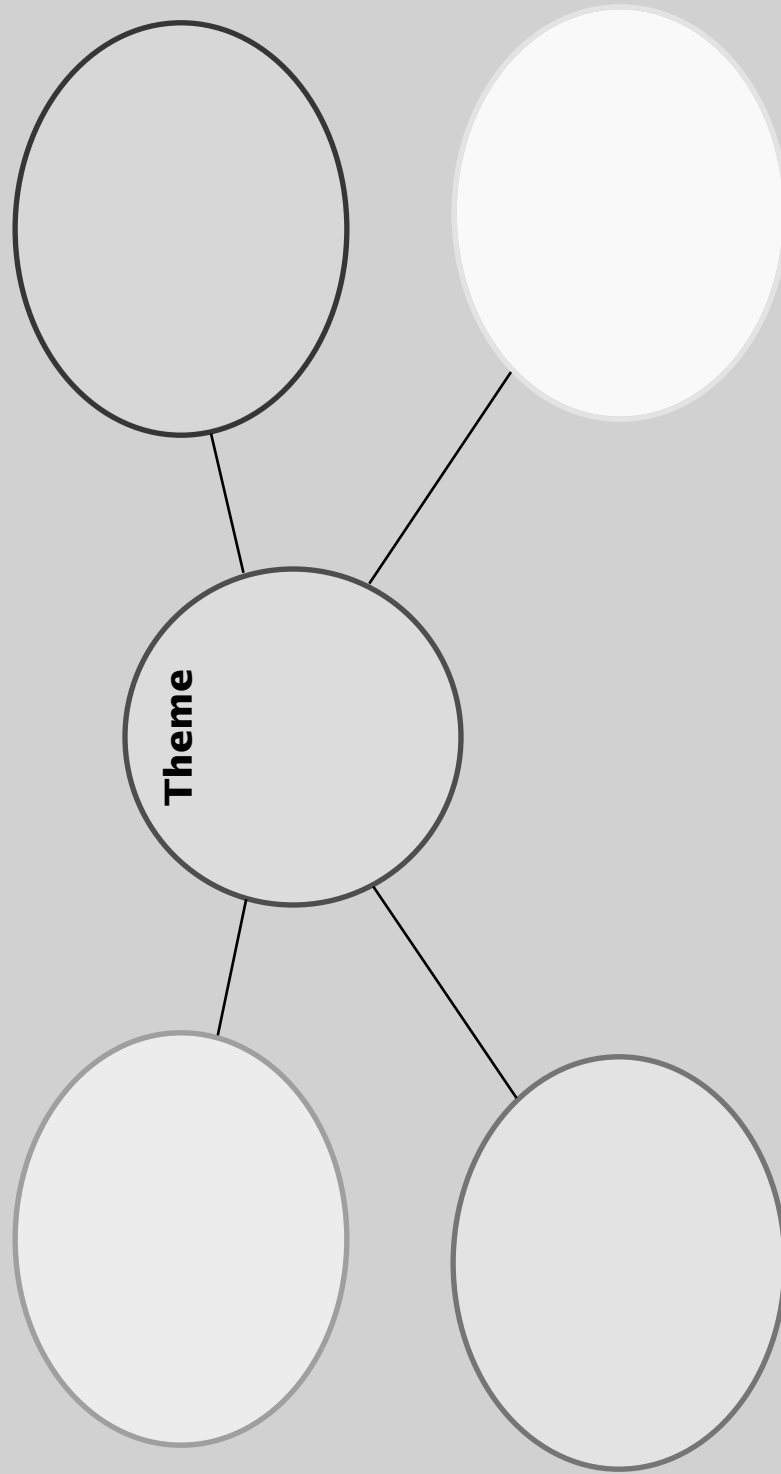
The **setting** of a story is the time and place in which the events occur. Setting includes historical period, culture, geographic region, season, weather, and spaces, such as buildings, rooms, and landscapes. Setting not only places a story but adds to its mood, or atmosphere.

1. Describe the most important element of the setting of a story you have read.

2. How does the setting affect the atmosphere of the story?

The **theme** of a story is its central message. A theme can be stated directly, or it can be implied by the actions or thoughts of a character, the symbolism in the story, or the lessons a character learns.

Choose a story or poem you have read. Then fill in the following idea web with the theme of the selection and clues that imply the theme.



**Characterization** is the way an author reveals information about characters through action, dialogue, and description. This is the main method a writer uses to develop the personality of a character. In **direct characterization**, a writer makes direct statements about a character's personality. In **indirect characterization**, a writer reveals a character's personality through the character's words and actions and through what other characters think and say about the character.

Find two examples of direct characterization and two examples of indirect characterization in selections you have read.

**Direct characterization:**

**Indirect characterization:**

Possible answer: Simile—Sarah was as tired as a marathon runner after a race; Metaphor—Sarah's fatigue was an anchor around her neck.

Figures of speech help readers picture characters, the action, or the setting of a story. A **simile** makes a comparison using the words *as*, *than*, or *like*: She was quiet as a mouse. A **metaphor** makes a comparison without using the words *as*, *than*, or *like*: He was a stone wall.

Find two examples of similes and two examples of metaphors in literary works you have read. Write them in the left column. Then tell what is compared.

<b>Simile</b>	<b>What is compared?</b>
1.	
2.	
<b>Metaphor</b>	<b>What is compared?</b>
1.	
2.	

Make up a simile and a metaphor for the following expression:  
*Sarah was extremely tired.*

**Personification** is a figure of speech in which a human quality is given to an animal, object, or idea. Authors use personification to create images or feelings or to emphasize ideas through association.

Choose a story or poem you have read that uses personification. Use the graphic below to analyze the author's use of personification.

**Personification**

**Why was it used?**

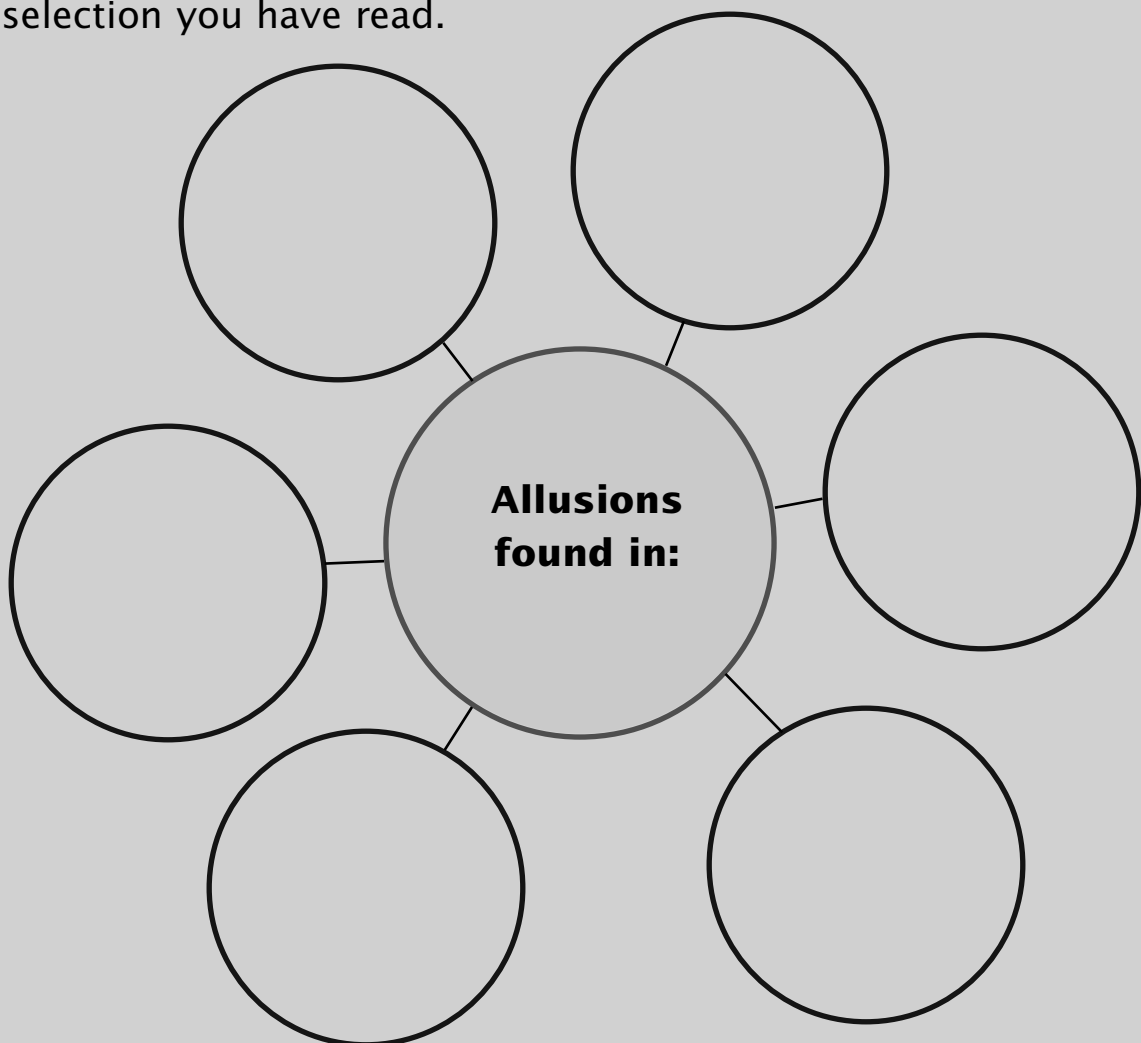
	→	
	→	
	→	

What was the author's purpose for using personification?

An **allusion** is a reference to a character, place, or situation from another work of art or literature or from history. For example, the following sentence contains an allusion to Athena, the Greek Goddess of Wisdom:

*He sailed through the math test so easily that he was sure Athena had been guiding his pencil.*

Use the graphic below to help you organize the allusions found in a selection you have read.



Recall another literary work you have read that contains allusions. To what did the work allude? How did the allusions help convey the message of the work?

# READING STRATEGIES AND LITERARY ELEMENTS TRANSPARENCY 7

FOR USE WITH FOCUS LESSON 7: MOOD

The **mood** of a story is the emotional effect produced by the overall atmosphere of a work. The author creates a mood through choice of words and details that describe the setting, events, and objects. The author may add to the mood through word choice or particular sentence structures that imitate sounds or create certain feelings in the reader.

List some of the elements that produce the mood of a selection you have read.

Element from the selection	Mood it creates
	
	
	
	

READING STRATEGIES AND  
LITERARY ELEMENTS TRANSPARENCY **8**

FOR USE WITH FOCUS LESSON 8: IRONY

**Irony** is the difference between the way things seem to be and the way they really are. In **situational irony**, the outcome of a situation is the opposite of what the reader expects.

Identify two examples of situational irony from a work you have read. Explain why the situations are ironic.

<b>Irony</b>	<b>Explanation</b>
1.	
2.	

Some authors write in such a distinctive way that readers can guess who they are by reading a short paragraph. **Style** is the distinctive way in which a writer uses words, constructs sentences, and creates meaning.

Name an author you have read. List four characteristics of the author's writing style. Then give examples for each from a piece of the author's writing.

Style characteristics	Example
1.	
2.	
3.	
4.	

Name another author you have read. How would you characterize that author's writing style?

**Symbolism** is the use of an object, person, place, event, or experience to stand for a quality or idea. For example, spring often symbolizes the start of something new.

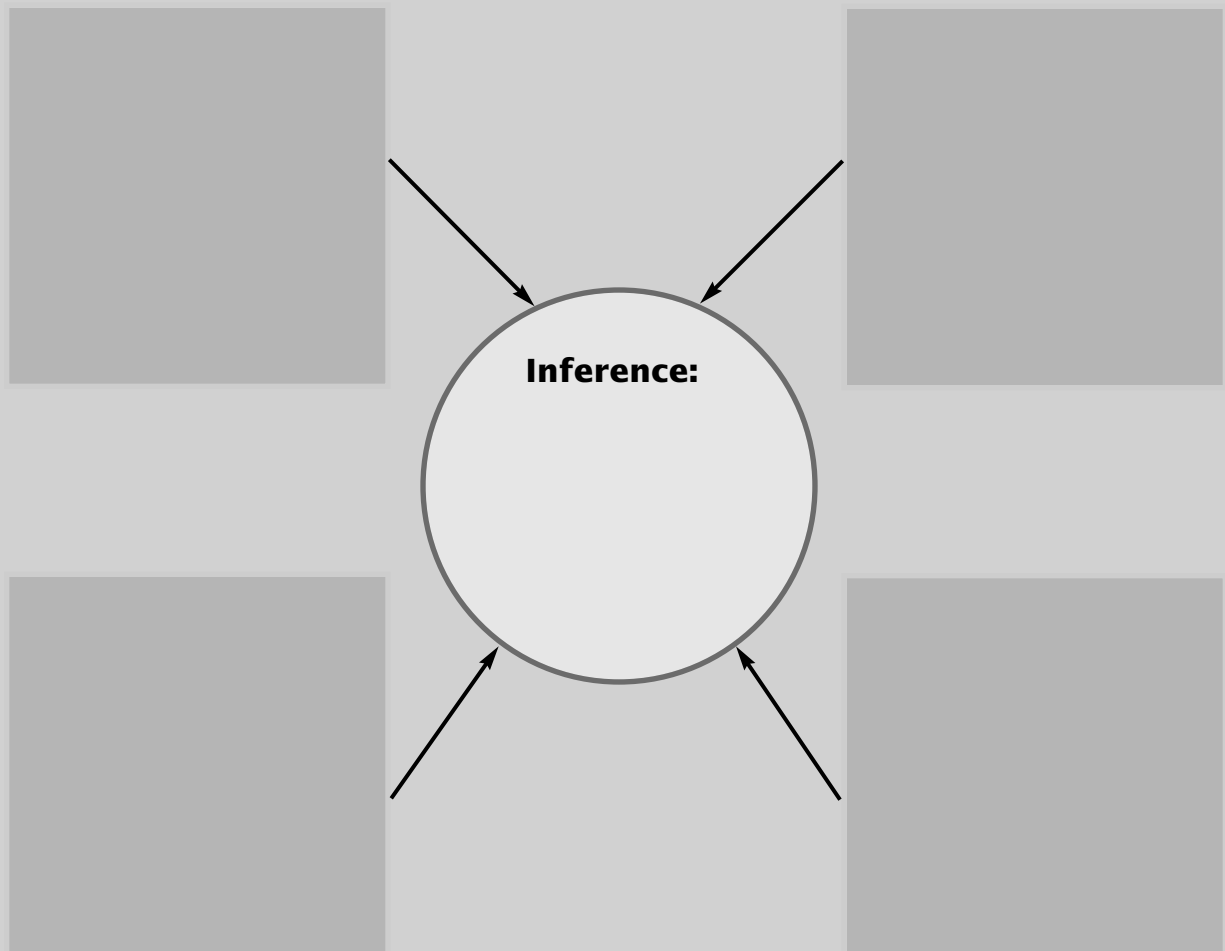
Think of four examples of symbols from a selection you have read. Tell what each one might stand for.

Symbol	Might stand for:
1.	
2.	
3.	
4.	

How do the symbols contribute to the overall meaning of the selection?

Rather than state everything explicitly, authors often describe events with the intention that you will understand more than what is actually written. When you combine an author’s clues and details with your own knowledge to understand more than just the words on the paper, you are **making inferences**.

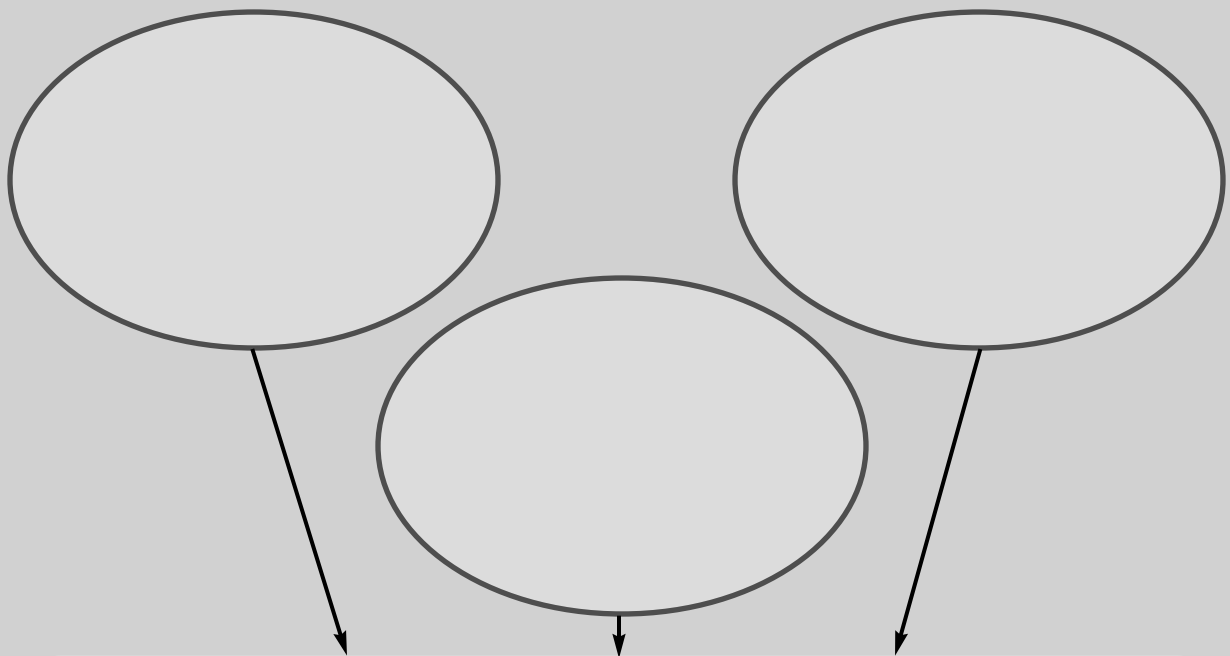
Choose a non-fiction passage that you have read. Identify an inference you drew while reading it. What clues and details led you to draw that inference? Fill in the web below.



Think of another non-fiction passage you have read. Create a web like this one for an inference you drew while reading it. Why didn't the author directly state the information you inferred?

The **author's purpose** is his or her reason for writing the selection. The purpose might be to describe, inform, persuade, or entertain. An author may have more than one purpose.

Name a non-fiction passage you have read. Identify clues that help you to determine the author's purpose or purposes. How does knowing the author's purpose help you better evaluate the selection?



**Author's purpose:**

Use this chart to help you evaluate another non-fiction passage you have read.

**Generating questions** while reading can help you understand a selection better. A question such as *What information is contained in this text?* helps the reader determine if the text will meet his or her needs. Questions such as *Who is the author?* *Why has the author taken this position?* help the reader understand and evaluate a selection.

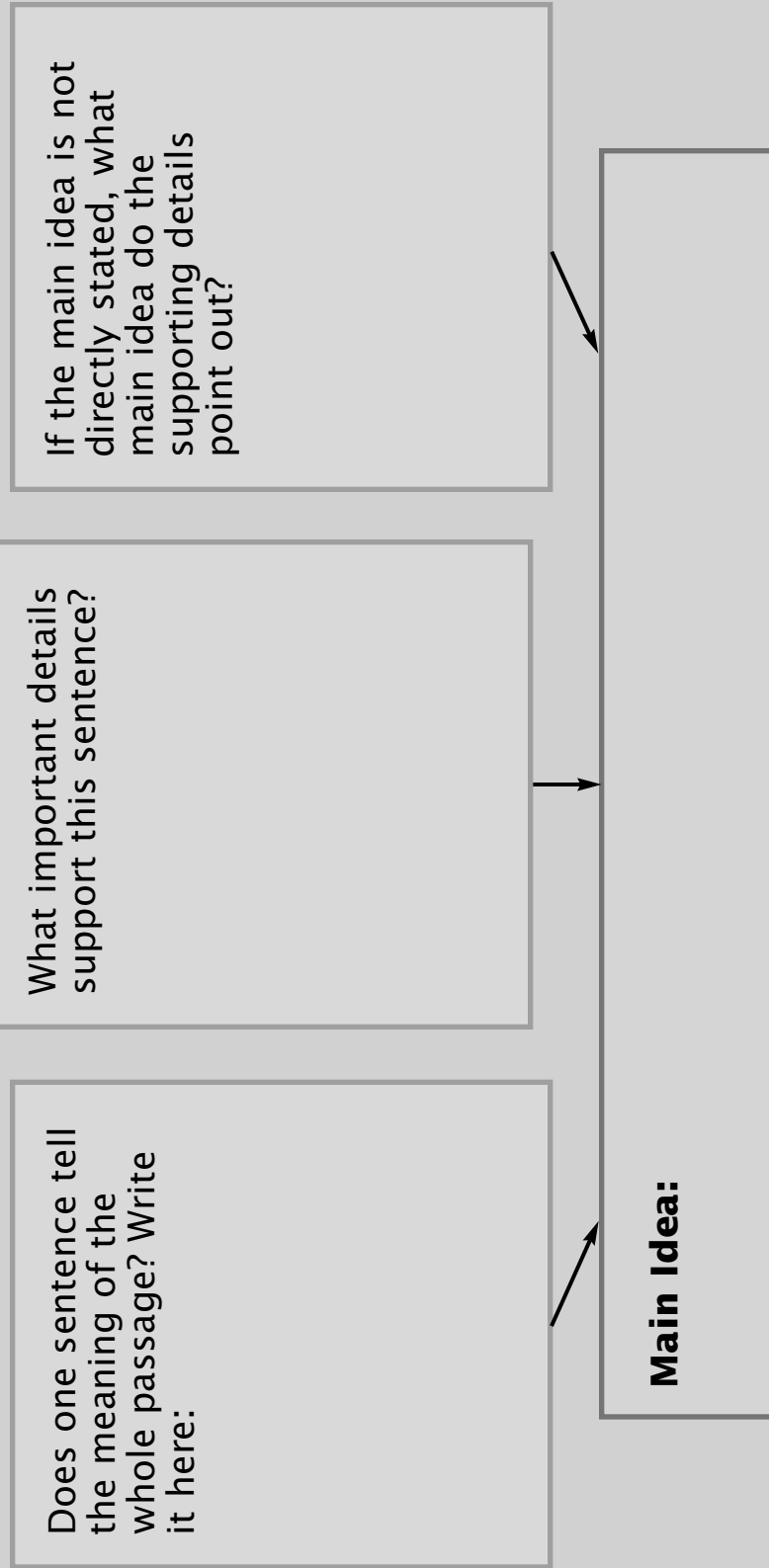
Choose a non-fiction book you have read. Using the chart below, generate two questions by looking at the table of contents, index, and headings. Then read the first page and ask yourself two more questions to help you evaluate the passage.

<p><b>Questions based on table of contents, index, and headings:</b></p> <p>1.</p> <p>2.</p>	<p><b>Questions based on reading the first page:</b></p> <p>1.</p> <p>2.</p>
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Think of another non-fiction work you have read. What questions can you ask yourself that will help you better interpret the contents of the work?

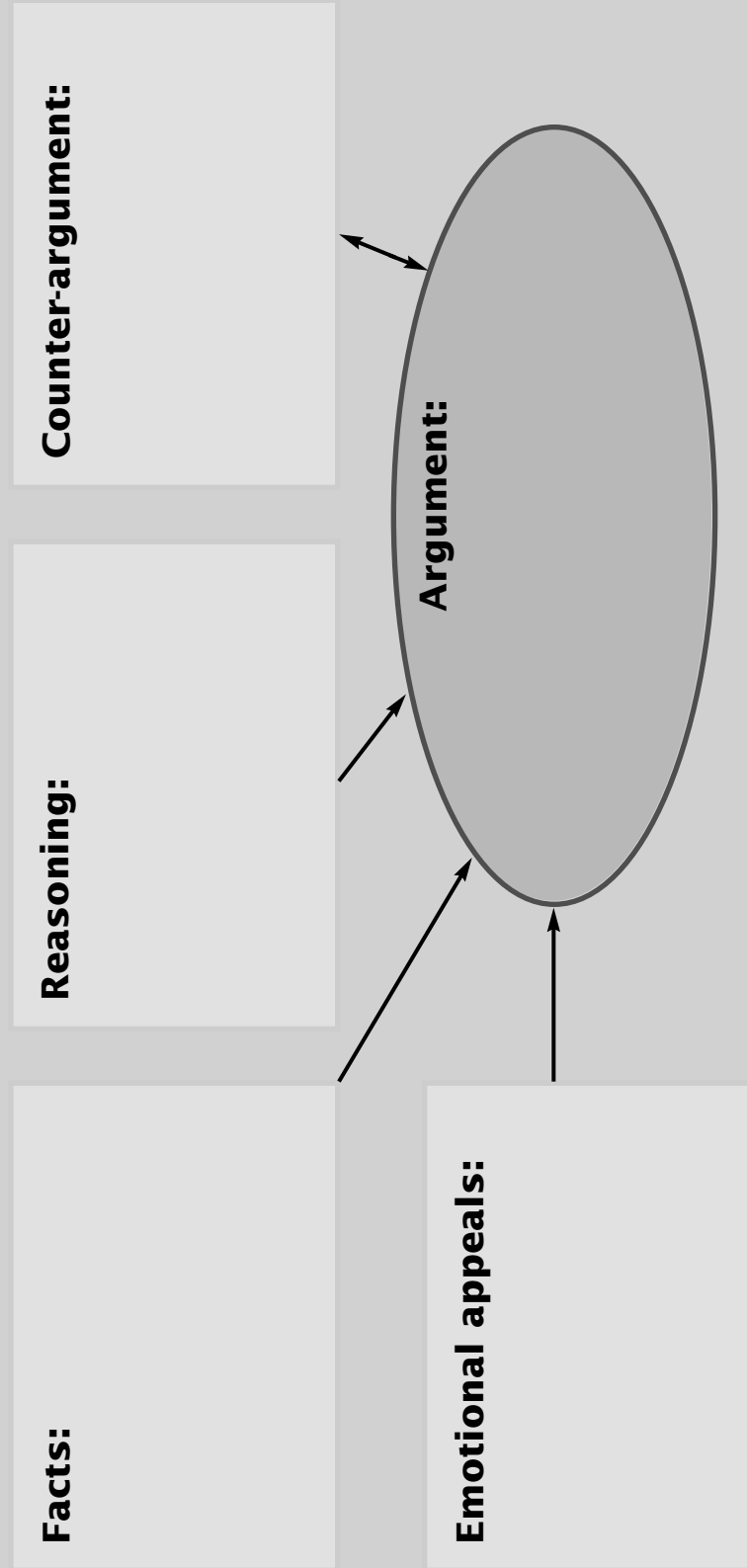
The **main idea** of a passage is the central idea or concept that the passage is about. The main idea is usually stated in the **thesis statement**. Sometimes an author will indirectly suggest the main idea through a variety of clues.

Choose a non-fiction passage you have read. Fill in the chart below to identify the main idea.



An **argument** is a type of persuasive writing in which logic, reason, and emotional appeals are used to influence the reader's ideas or actions. One way to support an argument is to use personal or real-world examples. A **counter-argument** is an argument from an opposite viewpoint. An author will often address this viewpoint in the essay.

Identify a piece of argumentative writing you have read. Fill in the chart with the facts, reasoning, emotional appeals and counter-argument used by the author.



How does analyzing the argument help you evaluate the work?

**Evaluating a passage for credibility** means looking at the source, evidence, and tone of the text to determine if the information included is accurate and true. Readers evaluate the author’s credentials, biases, and purposes. They also evaluate the evidence in the text by examining the source of and support for the facts.

Select a non-fiction passage you have read recently and evaluate its credibility.

