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LEVEL 2 (GRADES 8 AND UP)

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## The Michaels Return Home

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2021/2022: ISSUE 2



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NATIONAL

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INTERNATIONAL

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## WHAT IN THE WORLD?

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I have had many parents comment to me about how great they think *What in the World?* is, and they look forward to each month's issue coming home... This is a great resource for a small country school to explore the global issues that affect us all.

K. Camelon, Grade 7/8 teacher

Admaston, ON



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NATIONAL

# THE LONG ORDEAL OF THE TWO MICHAELS

## BEFORE READING

1. Prepare 5 question cards with the words *Who? What? Where? When? Why?* written on them.
2. Have students view a news report that shows an overview of the ordeal of the two Michaels:  
<https://www.yout-ube.com/watch?v=sBq1Co1s3A> [4:07] (The report ends at the 1:54 mark.) Instruct students simply to watch to get the gist of the story.
3. Next, divide the class into 5 groups and provide each group with one question card and blank stickie notes. Then, have students view the report a second time. Have students within each group record questions, one per stickie note, using their assigned word, about the report. (e.g., *Who are the two Michaels? Why were the two Michaels detained in China?*)
4. Have groups display their questions, stacking any repeated questions together, within the group. Then, using a **gallery walk** strategy, have groups visit other groups' questions. Students are encouraged to discuss possible answers and also to add questions to each group's collection.
5. Finally, invite students to set a purpose for reading the article, referring to the resource page **Setting A Purpose Before Reading** as needed.



## THE LONG ORDEAL OF THE TWO MICHAELS



Friends and family gathered at Calgary International airport on September 25 to cheer, cry, and celebrate the long-awaited arrival of Michael Spavor and Michael Kovrig. The two Canadian men had been held in Chinese prisons for over 1000 days.

“There are no words to describe the emotions that have been running through us these last 24 hours,” said Vina Nadjibulla, Mr. Kovrig’s wife. “Joy, relief, overwhelming gratitude for everyone who has worked to make this happen.”

Prime Minister Justin Trudeau was on hand to welcome the two Canadians home as well, hugging them as they arrived.

### THE TWO MICHAELS

Who are the two men and why had they been held in Chinese prisons for almost three years?

Michael Kovrig is a former Canadian diplomat who was working in China as a researcher for a global company

called the International Crisis Group. Michael Spavor is a businessman who was in the Far East trying to foster stronger commercial and cultural ties between North Korea and the West.

Chinese authorities charged the men with separate cases of spying, but they kept them in prison for 18 months before making that formal. The Michaels weren’t allowed to choose their own lawyers and were permitted very little contact with Canadian diplomats.

### TRIED IN SECRET

After more than two years, in March 2021, their two trials were held at last – in secret. Officials from the Canadian embassy and other nations including the United States, the Netherlands, the United Kingdom, France, Denmark, Australia, Sweden, and Germany tried to attend the hearing. They were turned away.

In China, courts can delay verdicts for a long time, so Mr. Spavor was

just declared guilty in August. That outcome was no surprise. Chinese courts convict 99 percent of defendants brought to trial. He was sentenced to 11 years in prison.

Mr. Kovrig never received a verdict or a sentence before he was released.

### A TIT-FOR-TAT RESPONSE?

All along, Canada strongly disputed the claims of espionage. The federal government called the Michaels’ convictions **hostage diplomacy**. The leaders of many nations, along with critics, scholars, and former diplomats, agreed. The **consensus** was that the two Canadians were imprisoned simply in **retaliation** for Canada’s treatment of Meng Wanzhou, a Chinese citizen living part-time in British Columbia.

How does Ms. Meng figure into the story? She’s the chief financial officer (CFO) of Huawei Technologies, a huge Chinese multinational technology company – and she had been under

### DEFINITIONS

**CONSENSUS:** a general agreement about something; an idea or opinion that is shared by all the people in a group

**HOSTAGE DIPLOMACY:** the taking of hostages for diplomatic purposes

**RETALIATION:** to do something bad to someone who has hurt you or treated you badly; to get revenge against someone



house arrest in Vancouver since December 1, 2018.

She hadn't broken any laws in Canada, but the United States government said she had broken theirs – and our nation has an **extradition** treaty with the U.S. So we held her until our courts could decide whether the Americans had a good reason to charge her with a crime.

U.S. officials said their case against Ms. Meng was strong. They accused her of tricking banks into doing business with Iran. That's in violation of laws in the United States, which has **sanctions** against Iran. The sanctions make it illegal for financial institutions that operate in the U.S. to handle any transactions involving the Middle Eastern country.

From the outset, China strongly denied the charges against Ms. Meng. Leaders of the Asian nation were furious that Canada was considering turning her over to U.S. authorities. So when the two Michaels were apprehended shortly after Ms. Meng's arrest, it appeared China was using them as **leverage** to try to secure Ms. Meng's freedom.

### BEHIND-THE-SCENES TALKS

All this caused a major crisis in Canadian-Chinese relations. In public, the two nations unleashed a torrent of angry words. Marc Garneau, Canada's minister of foreign affairs, called the Michaels' detention **arbitrary** and said their trials were a **sham**.

For its part, Chinese officials said Canada was making "groundless accusations" that its trial system is rigged.

But in private, Canada, the U.S., and China spent days and weeks hammering out an agreement that would end the **impasse**.

That agreement finally gelled in late September. In the deal, Ms. Meng did not confess guilt, but she did admit to making "untrue" statements to bankers about Huawei's actions in Iran. In response, the U.S. said it would drop its extradition request. A senior government official said Canada did not have to offer anything in return for bringing the Michaels home.

As soon as the British Columbia court released Ms. Meng, she flew to China.

"My life has been turned upside down. It was a disruptive time for me," Ms. Meng told reporters after being freed.

Meanwhile, China released the two Michaels almost immediately after Ms. Meng boarded her plane.

"China has said that there's been no linkage between the two, but by putting them on the plane [that same night], they've clearly acknowledged that this was hostage-taking," said Colin Robertson, a former Canadian diplomat.

### CONTRASTING CONFINEMENTS

The Michaels were elated to finally be able to return home. Their confinement had been more than

disruptive – it was a serious hardship. While Ms. Meng was detained in an upscale home in Vancouver, where she had access to many comforts and was allowed to receive guests, the two men were held in tiny cells. Mr. Kovrig's glasses were even briefly seized.

And while the lights in their rooms were on 24/7, neither man had seen sunlight since their arrest because Chinese prisons don't have exercise yards and prisoners must stay in their cells all day. Meals – mainly a mash of boiled rice and vegetables – were pushed under the doors. Some have described them as "doggy bowls."

"These two men have gone through an unbelievably difficult ordeal," Mr. Trudeau said. "For the past thousand days they have shown strength, perseverance, resilience, and grace, and we are all inspired by that."

### A FRESH START

Observers fear it may be a long time before the relationship between our two countries heals. Even now, China's war of words hasn't stopped.

"This is an incident of political persecution against a Chinese citizen, an act designed to hobble Chinese high-tech companies," a statement from China declared following Ms. Meng's release.

But diplomatic relations can wait. For now, the focus is on the two Michaels.

"It's fantastic to be back in Canada, and I'm immensely grateful for everybody who worked so hard to bring [us] home," Mr. Kovrig said. ★

## DEFINITIONS

**ARBITRARY:** not based on reason or evidence; done without concern for what is fair or right

**EXTRADITION:** to send a person accused of a crime to another state or country for trial

**IMPASSE:** a situation in which it is impossible to make any progress

**LEVERAGE:** influence or power used to achieve a desired result  
**SANCTION:** an action that is taken to force a country to obey international laws by limiting or stopping trade or not allowing economic aid with that country, etc.

**SHAM:** something that is not what it seems to be and is intended to deceive people



# THE LONG ORDEAL OF THE TWO MICHAELS

## COMPREHENSION QUESTIONS

1. What executive position does Meng Wanzhou hold?

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2. When and where was she arrested?

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3. Why was she arrested by Canadian authorities?

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4. What charges did she face in the United States?

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5. How did China react to Ms. Meng's detention? Which Canadians were involved in this 'hostage diplomacy'?

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6. Briefly describe the two detained Canadians.

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7. Describe the conditions Ms. Meng was detained under. What conditions did the two Michaels experience while imprisoned?

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8. How long were the two Michaels jailed before they were put on trial?

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9. What happened to Ms. Meng on September 24? Explain.

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10. How did China react to this plea agreement and release? How long did the two Michaels spend in Chinese custody?

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**LITERACY FOCUS**

You will be practicing making notes using a Venn diagram. This structure is helpful in comparing and contrasting two or more issues, topics, or points-of-view. It helps you examine the similarities and differences so you can draw conclusions or create new ideas, perspectives, or opinions. You will use the article “*The Long Ordeal of the Two Michaels*” to compare and contrast different perspectives on how China and Canada have dealt with the arrest of the two Michaels and Meng Wanzhou.

**BEFORE READING**

- Record the topic and purpose for reading on the **Venn diagram**. Then, list what you already know about the topic – *the Two Michaels* – in the left-hand column. In the right-hand column, write what you want to know or wonder about the topic. For example, *Why were the two Michaels arrested? How long had they lived in China before being arrested?*

**DURING READING**

- As you read the article *be mindful of questions that arise*. Mark the text with a **?** each time a new question pops into your head. Write the question in the margin. For example, in the first paragraph you may wonder why Canada arrested Meng Wangzhou on behalf of the United States.
- Also, *make connections*. Identify connections with the letters **T-S** (text-to-self), **T-T** (text-to-text) or **T-W** (text-to-world) and make brief notes in the margin to explain the connections. For example, in the second paragraph you or your family may have participated in a public demonstration (a text-to-self connection). Or you may remember reading a news report about the two Michaels on social media (a text-to-text connection).
- *Distinguish relevant facts and arguments* supporting each country's reasons for arresting citizens of the other country, their legal process, and their treatment of the prisoners. Mark the text with a **CA** for facts and arguments that reflect Canada's reasons for arresting Meng Wanzhou and the conditions of her detainment and a **CH** for those facts and arguments that reflect China's reasons for arresting the two Michaels and the conditions of their detainment. For example, the fact that “Meng Wangzhou was under house arrest in Canada” would appear on the **CA** side of the Venn diagram.

**AFTER READING**

- Use the Venn diagram to make notes about each country's justice and prison system. Label the circles **CA** and **CH**.
- To help you organize your notes (and compare the similarities and differences more clearly) label each section of the Venn diagram with the following categories: *arrest, access to lawyers, prison conditions, court system*.
- Record differences for each category in the outside circles and similarities in the overlapping circles.
- When you have finished recording facts, complete the **What I think now** section of the organizer. Use the following questions to guide your response: *What surprised you about what you read? What new learnings or connections did you make? What questions do you still have? What are your reactions to the information in the article?*



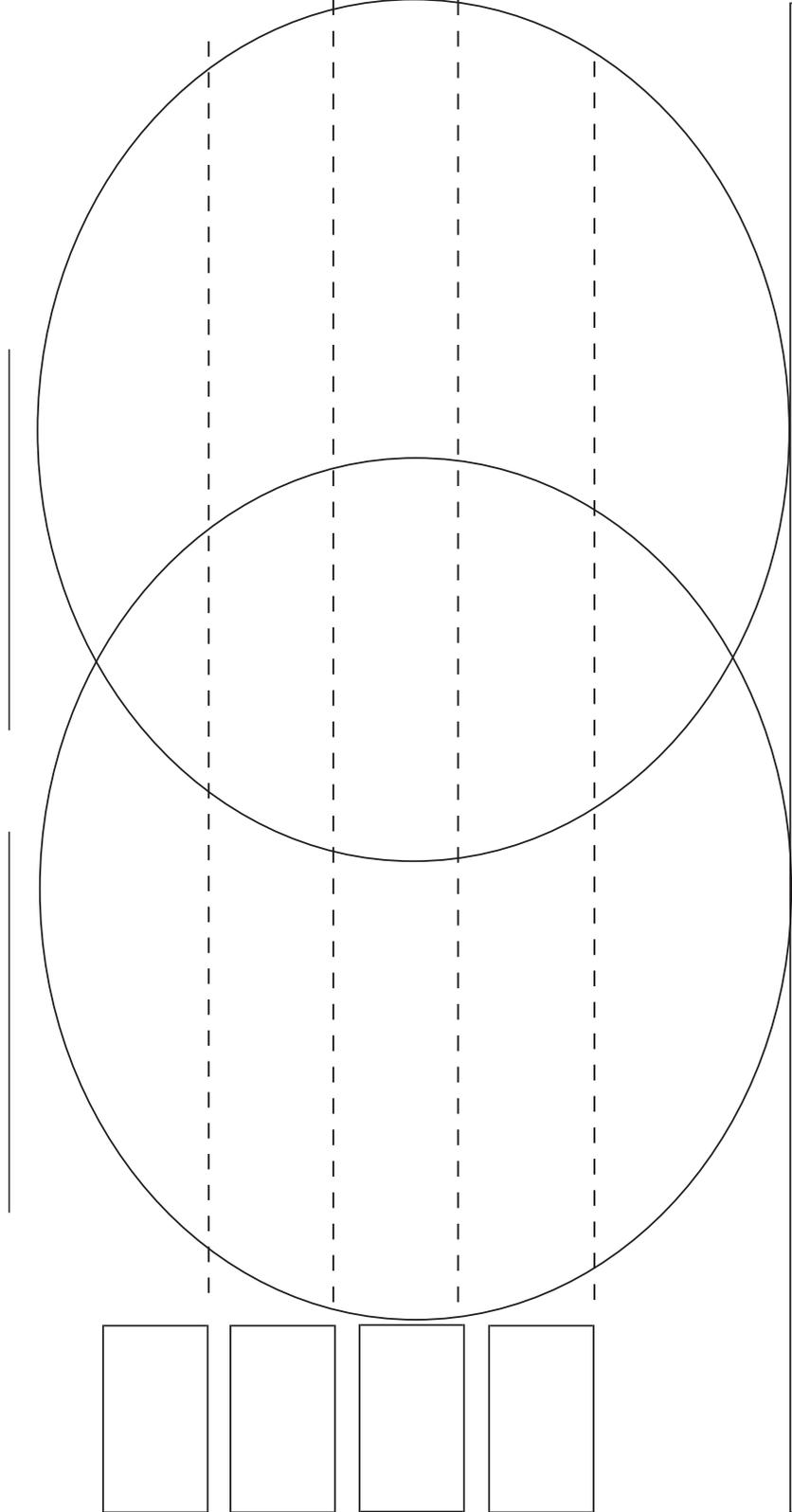
# THE LONG ORDEAL OF THE TWO MICHAELS

## ORGANIZER

Topic: \_\_\_\_\_

Purpose for reading: \_\_\_\_\_

What I already know • •	What I wonder • •
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What I think now



# THE LONG ORDEAL OF THE TWO MICHAELS

## QUESTIONS FOR FURTHER THOUGHT

1. The U.S. accuses Meng Wangzhou of tricking banks into doing business with Iran, which is in violation of laws in the United States because they have sanctions against Iran. The sanctions make it illegal for financial institutions that operate in the U.S. to handle any transactions involving Iran.

The extradition treaty between Canada and the U.S. requires both countries to hold suspected criminals on behalf of the other country if there is sufficient evidence to do so. The two Michaels were arrested by Chinese authorities less than two weeks after Ms. Meng's arrest in Vancouver.

As you see it, did the Canadian government act appropriately or inappropriately in arresting Meng Wanzhou on behalf of the United States? Given the opportunity, what questions would you ask of Canadian authorities about this situation?

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2. Prior to the release of the two Michaels, federal Conservative Leader Erin O'Toole suggested that Canada consider boycotting the 2022 Olympic Games in Beijing. In his opinion, it might have been dangerous for Canadian athletes to travel to China, given the strained relationship between the two countries which has intensified with the case of the two Michaels. He also feels it is inappropriate to celebrate an Olympic host country that has made arbitrary arrests of foreign nationals living in China.

As you see it, should Canada boycott the Beijing Olympic Games now that the Michaels have been released? Explain.

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# MAP ASSIGNMENT CHINA

Complete this map assignment to better understand the article *The Long Ordeal of the Two Michaels*.

## INSTRUCTIONS

1. Obtain the required resources and read all the instructions before starting.
2. Colour your map after all labelling is completed.
3. Print in pencil only first, then go over the printing in black ink.
4. Work carefully and neatly.

**Resources Required:** pencil, black pen, pencil crayons, ruler, eraser and an atlas.

**Part A** Locate and label China in CAPITAL letters and shade this country red.

**Part B** Locate and label the capital of China and underline this city name.

**Part C** Locate and label the following countries in CAPITAL letters and shade each as indicated:

Mongolia (pink)	North Korea (purple)	South Korea (orange)
Taiwan* (orange)	Nepal (pink)	Kyrgyzstan (yellow)

**Part D** Locate and label the capital of each country and underline each city name.

**Part E** Locate and label the following countries in CAPITAL letters and shade each as indicated:

Kazakhstan (green)	Russia (yellow)
Vietnam (green)	Laos (brown)
Thailand (orange)	Myanmar (yellow)
Bangladesh (purple)	Bhutan (orange)
India (green)	Pakistan (orange)
Tajikistan (brown)	

**Part F** Locate and label the following cities in China:

Shanghai	Chongqing
Tianjin	Guangzhou
Shenzhen	Chengdu

**Part G** Draw and label the following rivers and shade them light blue:

Huang He River (Yellow River)	Yangtze River
Amur River	

**Part H** Locate and label the following and shade all salt water dark blue:

Pacific Ocean	Yellow Sea
Bay of Bengal	

**Part I** Shade all remaining territory grey.

**Part J** Complete your map with a frame, title, and compass. ★

\*Note: Taiwan is an island that has for all practical purposes been independent since 1950. However, China regards the island as a rebel region that is part of the People's Republic of China and must be reunited with the mainland.



China





# THE LONG ORDEAL OF THE TWO MICHAELS

## PUTTING IT ALL TOGETHER

A. Write the letter that corresponds to the best answer on the line beside each question:

\_\_\_\_\_ 1. Meng Wanzhou is the CFO for which large telecommunications company?

- a) Huawei
- b) Apple
- c) Bell
- d) Nokia
- e) Samsung

\_\_\_\_\_ 2. Canada arrested Meng Wanzhou under the Canada-U.S. \_\_\_\_\_ treaty.

- a) environmental
- b) executive
- c) international
- d) extradition
- e) exchange

\_\_\_\_\_ 3. China accused the two Michaels of:

- a) armed robbery
- b) money laundering
- c) drug smuggling
- d) computer hacking
- e) spying

B. Mark the statements T (True) or F (False). If a statement is True, write one important fact to support it on the line below. If a statement is False, write the words that make it true on the line below.

\_\_\_\_\_ 4. **True or False?** Meng Wanzhou was detained in a high security women's prison near Calgary.

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ 5. **True or False?** Ms. Meng is accused of tricking banks into doing business with China.

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ 6. **True or False?** The two Michaels were released two days before Meng Wanzhou left Canada.

\_\_\_\_\_

C. Fill in the blanks to complete each sentence.

7. In March 2021 Chinese authorities tried the two Michaels in \_\_\_\_\_.

8. The United States has imposed \_\_\_\_\_ against Iran.

9. The two Michaels were jailed in China for over \_\_\_\_\_ days.

D. Respond to the following question in paragraph form. (Use a separate sheet of paper if necessary.)

10. How do you predict that the imprisonment and release of the two Michaels will impact Canada-China relations going forward? Give reasons to support your response.

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_



# SETTING A PURPOSE BEFORE READING

There are a number of reasons we read: for enjoyment; to find something out; to critically evaluate information; or to learn how to perform a task.

Setting a purpose for reading – knowing WHY we are reading – helps us to focus on important information and to better understand and remember what we read. It also helps us decide HOW we will read the text.

We don't read all texts for the same purposes or in the same way. For example, we read an instruction manual for a new Blu-ray player for a different reason than we read a book or a website. How we will read it – the strategies we use – will also differ. We are more likely to skim to find the information we need in a manual. Once we find what we need, we might read the instructions carefully to figure out what to do. Then, we stop reading, put the manual down, and carry out the steps. We may have to reread if we get confused or forget what to do.

This is a very different approach than the one we would use to read a book. When we read a book, we usually read cover-to-cover. We read carefully so we don't miss any details because we want to understand the whole story. Sometimes we make connections or create images in our minds as we read to help us better understand what we are reading. Depending on its length, we may put the book down before we finish reading it but we will start reading where we left off.

Good readers are flexible and responsive. This means that they match their reading strategies to their purpose for reading.

What types of text do you read? Why do you read them? What strategies do you use to read each of these texts? The following chart provides a summary of the main purposes for reading and what each entails.

Purpose for Reading	What does it look like
For enjoyment	Usually student-selected. Allows students to choose a variety of genres and forms. Allows students to pursue what interests them while developing reading skills.
To experience something new	Students make connections between their personal experiences and those of people around the world.
To learn more about themselves and others	Students reflect on what they've read and express opinions and perspectives. Students develop a sense of their personal values and make sense of the world around them.
To gain information	Students use the features of informational texts to gather, analyse and apply what they've learned.
To understand issues	Students develop a sense of perspective. Students pose questions, acknowledge other points of view, critique the opinions presented and support opinions with evidence.
To appreciate writing	Students respond to text in ways other than written answers to apply what they've learned in new contexts.
To appreciate use of media to communicate	Students respond to a variety of media formats (e.g., infographics, political cartoons, videos, etc.) and react to how the format supports the meaning of the message.

\* Chart adapted from: A Guide to Effective Literacy Instruction, Grades 4-6, p. 11.

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*Currents4Kids/Infos-Jeunes:* Grades 3 and up.

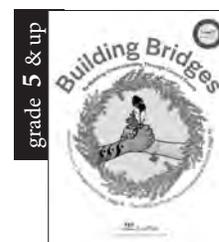
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## Did you know...

... that each issue of *What In The World?* includes a PDF file (complete document) and a Word file (articles and questions only).

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- easily modify and format content including changing **fonts** and **text sizes**
- create a PDF document and use **Adobe Reader's** 'Read Out Loud Mode'
- save paper and copying costs and help protect the environment
- promote and encourage students' computer skills

## Password Security

There are **three** ways to access data from a Word file that is password protected:

- 1) Select the data you wish to **Copy** and then **Paste** it into any word processing program. Use **Select All** to copy the entire document.
- 2) Import the entire Word file into **LibreOffice** (or another similar program) and then save as a new file
- 3) To remove the password from a protected Word file, use **Save As** to make a new copy of the file. You can then change the **Security** settings and remove the password.

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- **LibreOffice** is a free alternate to **Microsoft Office** and offers the same functionality. It's easy to install and use. See: [www.libreoffice.org](http://www.libreoffice.org)

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2020/2021: ISSUE 5

LesPlan A monthly current events resource for Canadian classrooms

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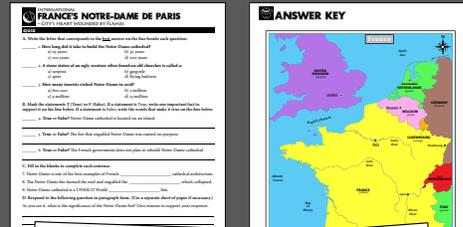
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Sample Pages

The sample pages show various content from the magazine, including a news article about the Notre-Dame de Paris fire, a map of France, and an article about the Uighurs in Xinjiang. The magazine is titled 'WHAT IN THE WORLD? LEVEL 1'.

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