

WHAT ^{IN THE} WORLD?

LEVEL 2 (GRADES 8 AND UP)

An Election in Taiwan

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SAMPLE EDITION
2023/2024: ISSUE 5



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WHAT IN THE WORLD?

Level 2, 2023/2024: Issue 5

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HAY'SXW'QA!

LesPlan is grateful to the Lkwungen Peoples, the Songhees and Esquimalt Nations, on whose unceded land we now live, and do our work.

We welcome your comments and appreciate your suggestions. Please contact us at any time.

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LesPlan Educational Services Ltd. aims to help teachers develop students' engagement in, understanding of, and ability to critically assess current issues and events by providing quality, up-to-date, affordable, ready-to-use resources appropriate for use across the curriculum.



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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**BEFORE READING**

1. Write the word 'Taiwan' on the board.
2. Ask students to popcorn out any information they know about Taiwan. (E.g., *it's a country; it's in Asia; its capital is Taipei; it's an island; etc.*) Choose a couple of students to fact check ideas, if needed.
3. Project a map of southeast Asia, such as the one found at:
<https://alearningfamily.com/main/southeast-asia-political-map/>
Ask students what observations they can make about the map in general, and about Taiwan in particular. (E.g., *Taiwan is near China, it's a small island.*)
4. Next, write the title of the article on the board: "An Election in Taiwan Angers China". Ask students to discuss in small groups why an election in one country might anger another country. (E.g., *the other country doesn't like the policies of the new leader; the other country is afraid of how the new leader might treat them; the other country is concerned for its national safety; etc.*)
5. Have students watch this summary of China's reaction to the election results in Taiwan:
<https://www.cbc.ca/player/play/2299696195563> [2:18]
6. Finally, invite students to set a purpose for reading the article, referring to the resource page **Setting A Purpose Before Reading** as needed.



A recent election that took place on the other side of the world could have major **implications** for global politics.

On January 13, people on the small island of Taiwan chose Lai Ching-te to be their next president. Mr. Lai and his Democratic Progressive Party (DPP) won with around 40 percent of the vote.

Why was this election so significant? The big question for the Taiwanese people – and for the rest of the world – is how the election results will affect Taiwan’s relationship with China, its **superpower** neighbour just 180 kilometres away.

A TOUGH BALANCING ACT

The problem is that the Chinese government insists that Taiwan is part of China. Since the 1990s, it has conducted various threatening activities to emphasize its military readiness to fight for this claim. These drills have included flying military

aircraft near Taiwan, conducting missile tests, and deploying naval forces in nearby waters.

Yet Taiwan has been functioning as a **sovereign** nation for decades. It has its own constitution, it holds elections, and it issues passports recognized by many countries. It is also regarded as a beacon of human rights in Asia.

That has left the U.S. in a thorny diplomatic **quagmire**. It must decide which side to support and how much support to give that nation. If it gets the balance wrong, the threat of a conflict with China could escalate.

FIRST, A LITTLE HISTORY

The question of who owns Taiwan has its roots in a **civil war** that was fought on mainland China from 1927 to 1949. The battle then was between two political groups – the Nationalists led by Chiang Kai-shek and the **Communists** headed by Mao Zedong. At stake was control of all of China.

TAIWAN AND CHINA

Taiwan is in the South China Sea, west of Japan. It is separated from the Chinese mainland by the Taiwan Strait. One of the smallest countries in Asia by area, it is home to nearly 24 million people. Nearly all the people in Taiwan are Han, or ethnic Chinese.

China is a large nation in East Asia. With a population of over 1.4 billion, it is the world’s second-most-populous country. About a third of the people live in cities. With an area of 9.6 million square kilometres, it is the third-largest country by total land area.

In 1949, the Communists won the civil war and gave the country a new name – The People’s Republic of China (PRC). After the Nationalists were defeated, Chiang Kai-shek, along with about two million troops and supporters, retreated to Taiwan. There, they set up their own government,

DEFINITIONS

CIVIL WAR: a war between groups of people in the same country

COMMUNISM: a political and economic system that aims to create a classless society in which the major means of production, such as mines and factories, are owned and controlled by the state

IMPLICATION: a possible effect or result of an action or a decision

QUAGMIRE: a difficult or dangerous situation

SOVEREIGN: free to govern itself; completely independent

SUPERPOWER: one of the countries in the world that has very great military or economic power and a lot of influence, for example the U.S.



giving Taiwan the official title it still uses – The Republic of China.

At the time, both the Nationalists and the Communists recognized Taiwan as a part of China. However, the Nationalists did not accept defeat. They maintained that they were China’s only legitimate government and believed that one day they would return to take over the mainland. That never happened.

During this period, Chiang Kai-shek and his military ruled Taiwan with an iron fist, curtailing basic freedoms. But after he died in 1975, Taiwan began to **democratize**, and by the 1990s, it was holding free and fair elections.

SHIFTING ALLEGIANCES

Meanwhile, changing **geopolitical** positions have clouded the question of Taiwan’s independence.

After the civil war, many Western nations refused to recognize the new government in Beijing. The **Cold War** was underway and China’s communist policies conflicted with Western values. But tensions eased between China and the West in the 1980s. In 1979, the U.S. had officially recognized the People’s Republic of China and Beijing was starting to loosen its tight controls on the population and beginning to develop and modernize its economy.

Today, only 13 countries recognize Taiwan as a sovereign nation. And at China’s insistence, Taiwan is not

a member of the United Nations. Since 2013, however, when the current **hardline** Chinese leader Xi Jinping took power, friction between China and the U.S. has been rising again.

WHAT’S IN IT FOR CHINA?

Why does China continue to maintain that Taiwan is just another Chinese province? There are several reasons. For one thing, it believes that Taiwan’s separation from China is just a **remnant** of the civil war and is therefore no longer meaningful. For another, Chinese authorities, who strongly promote national unity, say there can only be one sovereign state named China.

As well, Taiwan is strategically located. Controlling Taiwan would give China a military advantage in the Asia-Pacific region – an area it wants to dominate. What’s more, Taiwan, which has a healthy economy, is home to key technology companies. China would like to **capitalize** on that.

WHAT THE ELECTION MEANS

As for the Taiwanese themselves, they hold a range of views about China. Some want to reunite with the mainland, some want to maintain the **status quo**, and some favour complete independence.

However, the election of Mr. Lai, who campaigned on a promise to protect the island’s sovereignty, was seen as showing support for an independent Taiwan. That has angered Chinese

leaders, who were hoping for a vote in support of reunification.

Mr. Lai says he wants to avoid conflict, but he also seeks to strengthen ties with the United States and other democracies.

As for President Xi, he says that China is hoping for a “peaceful reunification.” But he hasn’t ruled out using force.

PLAYING BOTH SIDES

That presents a challenge to the U.S. Officially, it says it is behind a “one China” policy it doesn’t recognize Taiwan as a country separate from China. Still, U.S. President Joe Biden has signalled that he backs Taiwan in other ways. For example, he has sent high-level U.S. officials to meet with leaders there. And he has also said in the past that the U.S. would come to Taiwan’s defence if China decided to invade the country. He has even sent American warships to the Taiwan Strait to demonstrate the U.S.’s strength.

Doing anything more would be a departure from a long-standing U.S. policy of “strategic **ambiguity**.” That would be worrisome, since top American officials believe that President Xi has ordered his army to be ready to invade the island by 2027.

So is there a real likelihood of a war between the U.S. and China? That remains to be seen. ★

DEFINITIONS

AMBIGUITY: an unclear or indefinite position

CAPITALIZE: to gain a further advantage from a situation

COLD WAR: a period of geopolitical tension between the United States and the Soviet Union and their respective allies, the Western Bloc and the Eastern Bloc, that started after the end of World War II in 1945 and lasted until 1991

DEMOCRATIZE: to make a country or an institution more democratic

GEOPOLITICAL: connected with the political relations between countries and groups of countries in the world, as influenced by their geography

HARDLINE: having very fixed beliefs and being unlikely or unwilling to change them

REMNANT: a part of something that is left after the other parts have been used, removed, destroyed, etc.

STATUS QUO: the situation as it is now, or as it was before a recent change



COMPREHENSION QUESTIONS

1. List at least four important facts about China.

2. List at least four important facts about Taiwan.

3. When did the Chinese civil war occur? Which two main groups fought for control during this 22-year-long conflict?

4. Which group won control of mainland China? What happened to the defeated forces?

5. How has Taiwan changed politically since the Nationalists took control in 1949?

6. What three main political options are available to Taiwan's citizens regarding the island's political future?

7. Who won the recent election in Taiwan? What party does he lead and what policies does this party support?

8. Why is China upset about this election?

9. List at least three reasons why China believes Taiwan should not be independent.

10. What has China's president said about the future of Taiwan?



AN ELECTION IN TAIWAN ANGERS CHINA

QUESTIONS FOR FURTHER THOUGHT

1. Imagine that you lived in a small country like Taiwan that was located close to a superpower like China, who rejects your right to be a sovereign state. What concerns would you have as a citizen? How might this affect your vote in a national election like the one that Taiwan has just had? Give examples to support your ideas.

2. The article talks about the “long-standing U.S. policy of ‘strategic ambiguity’ with respect to its support of Taiwan. As you see it, why would the U.S. want to maintain a certain neutrality in this situation? Provide reasons to support your thinking.

3. Some observers have drawn parallels between China’s wish to reclaim Taiwan and Russia’s invasion of Ukraine, a former Soviet Republic. What lessons do you think Chinese President Xi Jinping may have learned from Russian President Putin’s invasion of Ukraine? How do you think these lessons might impact China’s intentions to reclaim Taiwan? Explain.



QUESTIONS FOR ONLINE EXPLORATION

Note: The links below are listed at www.lesplan.com/links for easy access.

1. Meet Taiwan's newly elected president, Lai Ching-te, and learn what his win means for Taiwan:

<https://www.cbc.ca/player/play/2299755075816> [9:26] (podcast)

<https://www.cbc.ca/news/world/taiwan-china-tsai-ing-wen-president-election-1.5424623>

What did you learn?

2. See how other world leaders have reacted to Mr. Lai's win:

<https://www.cbc.ca/player/play/2299695171643> [1:17]

Which countries support this new government? Which countries do not?

3. Learn more about the complex relationship between Taiwan and China:

<https://www.cbc.ca/player/play/2299471939879> [5:40]

<https://www.cbc.ca/player/play/2299338307650> [4:23]

What questions do you still have?

4. Find out more about why China is angered by Taiwan's election:

<https://www.cbc.ca/news/world/taiwan-election-china-president-1.7078215>

<https://www.cbc.ca/news/world/taiwan-election-1.7083033>

<https://www.cbc.ca/player/play/2299338307649>[3:48]

What do you predict China's next move will be? Explain.

5. Explore why this election will have implications around the globe:

<https://www.cbc.ca/player/play/2298743363698> [3:43]

<https://www.cbc.ca/news/world/taiwan-election-tsai-han-1.5421878>

6. Learn more about Taiwan:

<https://www.worlddata.info/asia/taiwan/index.php>

<https://knoema.com/atlas/Taiwan-Province-of-China>

Would you like to visit Taiwan? Why or why not?



AN ELECTION IN TAIWAN ANGERS CHINA

INFOGRAPHIC

China-Taiwan military strength compared

China spends more on defence than any country except the U.S. and could draw on a huge range of capabilities in any military confrontation with Taiwan



CHINA: Has claimed Taiwan through its “one China” policy since 1949, and has vowed to bring it under Beijing’s rule, by force if necessary



TAIWAN: Some Western experts predict Taipei could at best aim to slow Chinese attack while waiting for outside help, which could come from U.S.

ACTIVE DUTY PERSONNEL = 100,000



RESERVE PERSONNEL = 100,000



MAIN BATTLE TANKS = 200



ARTILLERY PIECES = 200



AIRCRAFT = 100



SUBMARINES = 5



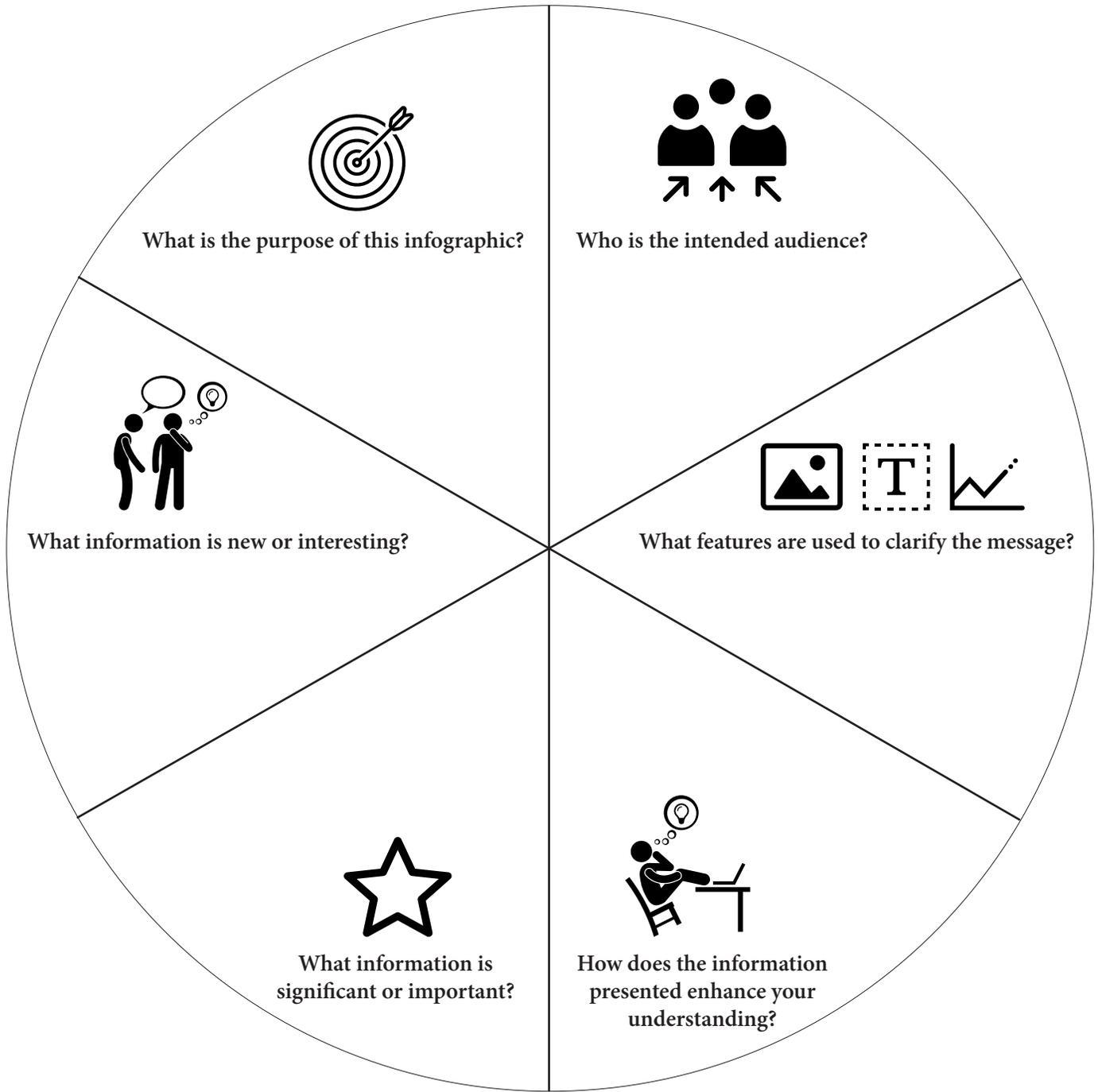
NAVAL SHIPS* = 5



*Only includes principal surface combatants (aircraft carriers, cruisers, destroyers and frigates)
Source: BBC/The Military Balance 2023, IISS © GRAPHIC NEWS



ANALYZING AN INFOGRAPHIC



What questions do you still have about the topic presented?

**YOUR TASK:**

Examine the editorial cartoon. Then, use the questions below to help you decode the cartoon's message. Be specific and include as many details as possible in your answers. *Note:* The **Editorial Cartoons** resource page may be useful.

INITIAL READING: What can an initial look reveal?

1. Glance quickly at the cartoon. What is your first impression – your “gut response”?
2. Consider your background knowledge. What do you already know about the context of the cartoon – the time, place or situation? (List key facts.)

CLOSER LOOK: What's happening in the cartoon?

3. Describe what you *see* and *read* in the cartoon.

DRAW CONCLUSIONS: What overall impression can you draw?

4. Identify possible biases. Whose perspective or point of view is expressed in the cartoon?
5. Explain the overall message of the cartoon in a paragraph. (Remember, a good interpretation is *specific* and *detailed*.) ★



CHINA AND TAIWAN

Complete this map assignment to better understand the article *An Election in Taiwan Angers China*.

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 and Taiwan* in CAPITAL letters. Shade China red and Taiwan pink.

Part B Locate and label the capitals of China and Taiwan and underline these city names.

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

| | | |
|-----------------|----------------------|----------------------|
| Mongolia (pink) | North Korea (purple) | South Korea (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 |
| Taiwan Strait | Bay of Bengal |

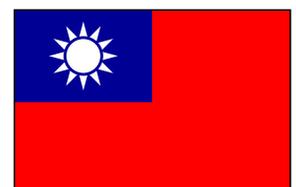
Part I Shade all remaining territory grey.

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



China

***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.



Taiwan





SETTING A PURPOSE BEFORE READING

There are a number of reasons we read, and 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 chart below is a summary of the main purposes for reading and what each entails.

| Purpose for reading | What it looks 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.



ASSESSMENT RUBRIC

This rubric may be helpful in providing students with formative, strength-based feedback and/or assessing students' responses holistically.

| | Emerging | Developing | Proficient | Extending |
|----------------------------|--|--|--|---|
| Supports thinking | Answers or reflections are brief and include obvious facts/details/evidence. | Answers or reflections are general and supported with some relevant facts/details/evidence. | Answers or reflections are clearly supported with specific, relevant facts/details/evidence. | Answers or reflections are insightful and supported with specific, relevant facts/details/evidence. |
| Shows understanding | Responses show a basic understanding of the text, topic, issue or message. | Responses are thoughtful and show a general understanding of the text, topic, issue or message. | Responses are thoughtful and show a complete understanding of the text, topic, issue or message. | Responses are insightful and show a deep understanding of the text, topic, issue or message. May synthesize ideas or explain the 'so what'. |
| Thinks critically | Makes straightforward connections or inferences. Focuses on retelling. | Makes logical connections to self (T:S) and/or background knowledge (T:S). Inferences are logical. | Makes meaningful connections to self. Considers ideas between texts (T:T). Inferences are plausible. | Makes powerful connections that go between texts and/or beyond the text (T:W). Inferences are plausible and insightful. |

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What in the World?

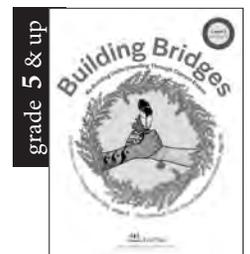
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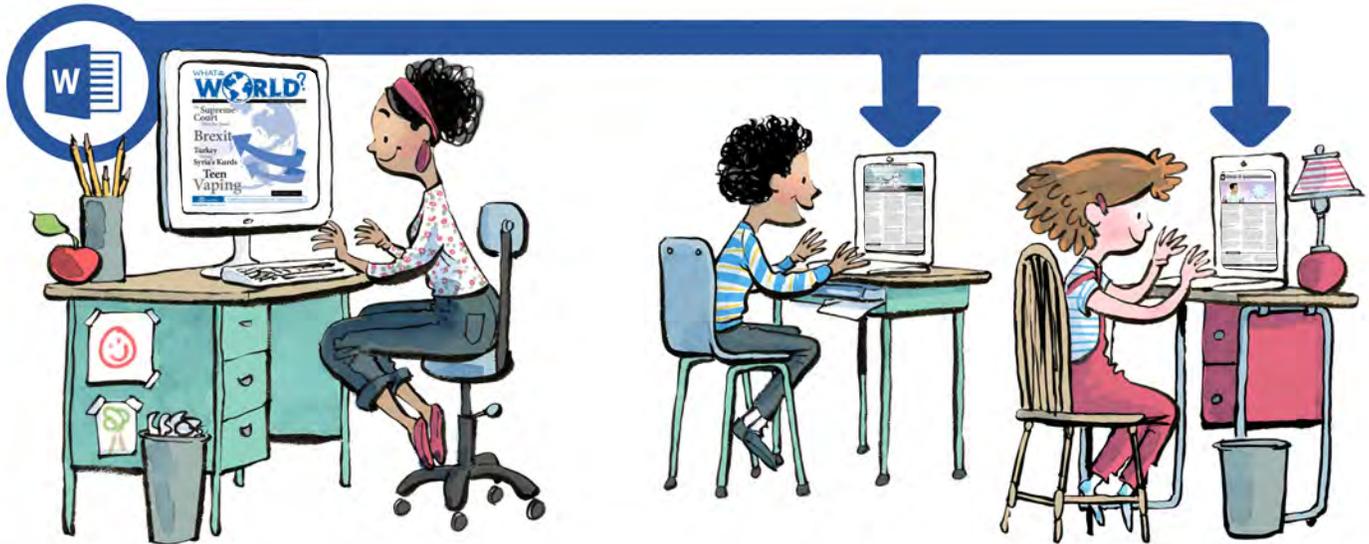
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- 3) To remove the password from a protected Word file, use **Save As** to make a new copy of the file. You can then change the **Security** settings and remove the password.

Google Docs and LibreOffice

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- You can translate **Google Docs** into another language (see *Tools>Translate document*) but you will need to edit the document to suit your requirements. **Google Docs** can translate into over 100 languages including Spanish, Mandarin, and German.
- **LibreOffice** is a free alternate to **Microsoft Office** and offers the same functionality. It's easy to install and use. See: www.libreoffice.org

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LEVEL 1 (GRADES 5 AND UP)

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INTERNATIONAL
THE UIGHURS OF CHINA
 – TERRORISTS OR VICTIMS?

Human rights groups around the world report that China has imprisoned up to one million Uighurs living in China's Xinjiang region. Satellite images and other evidence show a growing number of detention centres in Xinjiang, including at least 44 high-security buildings.

FAKE NEWS
 The Chinese government, however, denies this accusation. It is "completely untrue," a senior Chinese official told the UN last August. The centres have been set up to teach lessons on Chinese history, language, and culture. They offer "nutritious, free diets." The buildings are also used as job retraining centres, another official explained.

However, China does admit to cracking down on extremist activity' among Uighur Muslims are plotting attacks and stirring up tension between Uighurs and Han Chinese.

DEFINITIONS
 AUTONOMOUS: freedom to govern or control its own affairs
 DETENTION CENTRE: jails where prisoners are held temporarily
 EXTREMIST: far beyond the norm
 HAN CHINESE: China's main ethnic group
 PERCEIVE: to understand or think about something in a particular way
 SEPARATIST: group that wants to form a new country
 SOVIET UNION: a former country of Europe and Asia
 UNDERGROUND: secretly working against an existing regime

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