

Core CHOMP!

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7th Grade English Language Arts

A FREE Sample of Ten Core CHOMP! Exercises



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Chomp 10

Modifiers are words or groups of words that describe, limit, or modify other words or groups of words in a sentence. In the following sentences, the modifiers are underlined.

- I saw a green monster.
- She tiptoed slowly.
- Pumping his legs as fast as he could, Jake won the race.

Writers must make sure their modifiers are in the right place. By rule, modifiers must modify the closest word or group of words in a sentence. If too much distance separates a modifier and the words it describes, the modifier is misplaced.

Example of sentence with a misplaced modifier

Covered in dirt, my mom gave the dog a bath.

In this sentence, it sounds like the mom is covered in dirt!

Correction

My mom gave the dog covered in dirt a bath.

Read the following three sentences. Identify what is wrong, and correct each sentence.

- 1. Every day, my mom serves cookies to my friends on paper plates.**
-

- 2. We ate the popcorn that we had bought slowly.**
-

- 3. Covered with warm chocolate, the waitress served the hot cake to the customers.**
-

Chomp 14

Should the death penalty be used in the United States?

1. If you were writing an argumentative essay on this topic, and your claim was that the death penalty is wrong, which of the following would you not include in your essay?
 - a. statistics that show the cost and financial burden of using the death penalty
 - b. the fact that sometimes innocent people are given the death penalty
 - c. the morality of the death penalty
 - d. statistics that show that the death penalty decreases crime

2. If your claim was in favor of the death penalty, what reasons could you use to support it? (List three reasons below.)

Reason 1	Reason 2	Reason 3

Since 1973, over 130 people have been released from death row with evidence of their innocence. (Staff Report, House Judiciary Subcommittee on Civil & Constitutional Rights, Oct. 1993, with updates from DPIC).

3. If you were going to use the information above, what would your claim be?
 - a. The death penalty is wrong.
 - b. The death penalty is a fair punishment.

Chomp 22

THE STRAW, THE COAL, AND THE BEAN From Grimms' Fairy Tales, by The Brothers Grimm

In a village dwelt a poor old woman, who had gathered together a dish of beans and wanted to cook them. So she made a fire on her hearth, and that it might burn the quicker, she lighted it with a handful of straw. When she was emptying the beans into the pan, one dropped without her observing it, and lay on the ground beside a straw, and soon afterwards a burning coal from the fire leapt down to the two. Then the straw began and said, "Dear friends, from whence do you come here?" The coal replied, "I fortunately sprang out of the fire, and if I had not escaped by sheer force, my death would have been certain,--I should have been burnt to ashes." The bean said, "I too have escaped with a whole skin, but if the old woman had got me into the pan, I should have been made into broth without any mercy, like my comrades."

"And would a better fate have fallen to my lot?" said the straw. "The old woman has destroyed all my brethren in fire and smoke; she seized sixty of them at once, and took their lives. I luckily slipped through her fingers. "But what are we to do now?" said the coal. "I think," answered the bean, "that as we have so fortunately escaped death, we should keep together like good companions, and lest a new mischance should overtake us here, we should go away together, and repair to a foreign country." The proposition pleased the two others, and they set out on their way together. Soon, however, they came to a little brook, and as there was no bridge or foot-plank, they did not know how they were to get over it. The straw hit on a good idea, and said, "I will lay myself straight across, and then you can walk over on me as on a bridge." The straw therefore stretched itself from one bank to the other, and the coal, who was of an impetuous disposition, tripped quite boldly on to the newly-built bridge. But when she had reached the middle, and heard the water rushing beneath her, she was after all, afraid, and stood still, and ventured no farther. The straw, however, began to burn, broke in two pieces, and fell into the stream. The coal slipped after her, hissed when she got into the water, and breathed her last. The bean, who had prudently stayed behind on the shore, could not but laugh at the event, was unable to stop, and laughed so heartily that she burst. It would have been all over with her, likewise, if, by good fortune, a tailor who was traveling in search of work, had not sat down to rest by the brook. As he had a compassionate heart he pulled out his needle and thread, and sewed her together. The bean thanked him most prettily, but as the tailor used black thread, all beans since then have a black seam.

1. What conflict do the straw, the coal, and the bean face once they set out on their way to a foreign country, and what was their plan to solve this conflict? Use the text to support your answer.

2. Which of the following do all three of the main characters lack?

- a. patience in making a decision
- b. generosity
- c. courage
- d. awareness of their weaknesses

Support your answer above by citing textual evidence.

3. What do the underlined words *impetuous disposition* mean as they are used in the story? Use context clues to help you.

- a. angry outlook
- b. unthinking nature
- c. thoughtful character
- d. cheerful outlook

Chomp 25

Root Practice

1. Chronology is the study of _____.

- a. time
- b. colors
- c. animals
- d. water

2. A government should strive to achieve complete symbiosis with the community it serves. Symbiosis means:

- a. relationship of cooperation
- b. relationship of one in control over another
- c. relationship to achieve wealth
- d. relationship of downfall for one of the involved

3. Daniel was a malicious criminal so he spent most of his life in jail. Malicious means:

- a. bad, harmful
- b. smart
- c. angry
- d. depressed

Now, circle the root and/or prefix in underlined words above.

Then, write the meaning above each part you circle.

Chomp 31



The Road Not Taken

Two roads diverged in a yellow wood,
And sorry I could not travel both
And be one traveler, long I stood
And looked down one as far as I could
To where it bent in the undergrowth;

Then took the other, as just as fair
And having perhaps the better claim,
Because it was grassy and wanted wear;
Though as for that, the passing there
Had worn them really about the same,

And both that morning equally lay
In leaves no step had trodden black
Oh, I kept the first for another day!
Yet knowing how way leads on to way,
I doubted if I should ever come back.

I shall be telling this with a sigh
Somewhere ages and ages hence:
two roads diverged in a wood, and I --
I took the one less traveled by,
And that has made all the difference.

- Robert Frost

1. Who is the speaker in this poem? _____

What do the roads symbolize? _____

2. What is the author's purpose of the last stanza in this poem?

- It summarizes the main idea.
- It changes the message.
- It adds a sarcastic tone.
- It reflects upon the speaker's choices in life.

3. What is the best way to summarize the first stanza?

- I stood and studied both paths in the woods to decide which one I should take.
- I looked at two paths in the woods and dreamed about taking the first one.
- I argued with myself over which path I should take in the woods.
- I found myself lost in the woods, and I did not know which way to go.

Chomp 49

You have been assigned to write an argumentative essay on the following topic: Should NASA send humans to Mars to live or vacation?

1. Read each of the following facts. Decide whether each fact would help you argue for sending humans to Mars or against sending humans to Mars. Then, explain your answers.

Fact	For or against?	Explanation
Earth's population is projected to hit more than 9 billion by 2075.		
It could take up to 10 months to travel to Mars.		
Scientists have found that when humans spend a lot of time away from Earth's gravity, the human body can suffer.		

2. List two of your own reasons for or against humans living or having vacations on Mars.

- _____
- _____

3. Write your thesis statement for this writing prompt.

Chomp 52

From *The Celebrated Jumping Frog of Calaveras County* by Mark Twain

- 1 "What might it be that you've got in the box?"
- 2 And Smiley says, sorter indifferent like, "It might be a parrot, or it might be a canary, may be, but it ain't – it's only just a frog."
- 3 And the feller took it, and looked at it careful, and turned it round this way and that, and says, "H'm – so 'tis. Well, what's he good for?"
- 4 "Well," Smiley says, easy and careless, "He's good enough for one thing, I should judge – he can out jump any frog in Calaveras County."
- 5 The feller took the box again, and took another long, particular look, and give it back to Smiley, and says, very deliberate, "Well, I don't see no p'int about that frog that's any better'n any other frog."
- 6 "May be you don't," Smiley says. "May be you understand frogs, and may be you don't understand 'em; may be you've had experience, and may be you an't only an amateur, as it were. Anyways, I've got my opinion, and I'll risk forty dollars that he can outjump any frog in Calaveras County."
- 7 And the feller studied a minute, and then says, kinder sad like, "Well, I'm only a stranger here, and I an't got no frog; but if I had a frog, I'd bet you."
- 8 And then Smiley says, "That's all right – that's all right – if you'll hold my box a minute, I'll go and get you a frog." And so the feller took the box, and put up his forty dollars along with Smiley's, and set down to wait.

1. How does Smiley feel about his frog? Underline a line from the story to support your answer.

2. Dialect is used in this story. Find one example of dialect from the passage above and write it on the following line.

3. In paragraph six, the underlined word amateur means _____.

- a. a professional
- b. a skillful person
- c. an unskilled person
- d. a know it all

**Read the following stanza from James Whitcomb Riley’s poem
“When the Frost Is on the Punkin”**

They’s something kindo’ harty-like about the atmusfere
When the heat of summer’s over and the coolin’ fall is here-
Of course we miss the flowers, and the blossoms on the trees,
And the mumble of the hummin’ birds and the buzzin’ of the bees;
But the air’s so appetizin’; and the landscape through the haze
Of a crisp and sunny morning of the airly autumn days
Is a pictur’ that no painter has the colorin’ to mock
When the frost is on the punkin and the fodder’s in the shock.

- 1. What characteristics of fall mornings does the speaker enjoy?**
 - a. The flowers
 - b. The blossoms on the trees
 - c. The humming birds
 - d. The cool air

 - 2. Why are some words misspelled in this poem?**
 - a. The poet did not know how to spell.
 - b. The spelling is used to show that it was fall.
 - c. The speaker is a farmer who would spell this way.
 - d. The poem is old and words were spelled different then.

 - 3. Put the following line from the poem in your own words.**

Is a pictur’ that no painter has the colorin’ to mock
-

The Personal Character of Consciousness.—Mind can be observed and known. But each one can know directly only his own mind, and not another's. You and I may look into each other's face and there guess the meaning that lies back of the smile or frown or flash of the eye, and so read something of the mind's activity. But neither directly meets the other's mind. It follows therefore that only *you* can ever know *you* and only *I* can ever know *I* in any first-hand and immediate way. Between your consciousness and mine there exists a wide gap that cannot be bridged. Each of us lives apart. We are like ships that pass and hail each other in passing but do not touch. We may work together, live together, come to love or hate each other, and yet our inmost selves forever stand alone. They must live their own lives, think their own thoughts, and arrive at their own destiny.

Introspection the Only Means of Discovering Nature of Consciousness.—What, then, is mind? What is the thing that we call consciousness? No mere definition can ever make it clearer than it is at this moment to each of us. The only way to know what mind is, is to look in upon our own consciousness and observe what is transpiring there. In the language of the psychologist, we must *introspect*. For one can never come to understand the nature of mind and its laws of working by listening to lectures or reading text books alone.

How We Introspect.—Introspection is something of an art; it has to be learned. Some master it easily, some with more difficulty, and some, it is to be feared, never become skilled in its use. In order to introspect one must catch himself unaware, so to speak, in the very act of thinking, remembering, deciding, loving, hating, and all the rest. These fleeting phases of consciousness are ever on the wing; they never pause in their restless flight and we must catch them as they go. This is not so easy as it appears; for the moment we turn to look in upon the mind, that moment consciousness changes. The thing we meant to examine is gone, and something else has taken its place. All that is left then is to view the mental object while it is still fresh in the memory, or to catch it again when it returns.

1. How does the information in the section titled *How We Introspect* help to develop this article?

- a. It tells why people should think about their own thought processes.
- b. It explains what it means to introspect and just how difficult it is.
- c. It explains what consciousness is made of.
- d. It tells how people envision mental objects.

2. Which of the following is true about how the author views the mind?

- a. The author views the mind as being very individualized and complex.
- b. The author views the mind as a psychologist would.
- c. The author views the mind as a massive computer capable of innumerable functions.
- d. The author views the mind as readable and predictable.

3. The Greek root *intro* means *into*, and the Latin root *spec* means to look. Using this knowledge and information you have gathered from this text, generate a definition for the word *introspect*.

Introspect:

Chomp 91

Do Not Cry

-Nigerian Lullaby

Do not cry, my child,
O do not cry, my little one,
For I, your mother, am here.

O do not cry, my child.

Gather round me, children,

Gather round me

Like stars round the moon,

Gather round me.

Hush-a-bye, my child,

O hush-a-bye, my little one,

For I, your father, am here.

O hush-a-bye, my child.

1. Answer the following questions about the poem.

How many stanzas are in the poem? _____

Who is the speaker in the last stanza of the poem? _____

What is the simile in the poem?

2. What is the author's purpose in repeating the words *my child and my little one*?

- to create rhythm and emphasize comfort given by the parents
- to create rhyme and emphasize the crying of the baby
- to create alliteration and help the baby go to sleep
- to create suspense and emphasize the love for the baby

3. Summarize the first stanza using two sentences.

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BACK2SCHOOL

The full version includes 180 exercises, one for each day of the school year. Core CHOMP! can be used as a warm-up activity, a homework assignment, or as a closure for your class. There are 180 standards-based exercises, one for every day of the school year, and they are built around a rotating five-day pattern. Students will read a poem on day one, a complex fiction passage on day two, and an informational text on day three. Days four and five will address writing, research, and language.

Many of the Core CHOMP! exercises are not easy, but neither are the requirements of the Common Core State Standards. The program of daily exercises helps students gradually gain mastery of a wide variety of material, as required in the Standards. These exercises will require your students to complete tasks including the following:

- rewrite texts using effective techniques and well-chosen words and details
- make inferences on what they have read
- support answers with text
- develop a claim using valid reasoning and relevant and sufficient evidence
- analyze the author's purpose and literary elements
- determine themes or central ideas of texts
- assess whether reasoning provided in a text is sound or not
- determine the meaning of words, phrases, and figurative language
- analyze text structure used by an author
- and much more

