Drawing Conclusions

Learning the Skill

If you read about a recent earthquake that caused many buildings in a town to fall, you might draw two conclusions. The first conclusion is that the town is located near the edge of a tectonic plate, where earthquakes often occur. The second conclusion is that because many of the buildings were not constructed to withstand an earthquake, perhaps this is the first quake the town has experienced.

Follow these guidelines to help you draw conclusions:
• Study the information carefully. What is the general topic being presented?
• Take note of the facts that support the main idea.
• Determine the importance of the different facts. What clues do they provide?
• Review what you already know—your prior knowledge about the topic.
• Use clues from the facts and common sense to form a conclusion about the topic or event.

✓ Practicing the Skill

Directions: Read the information below. Then answer the questions.

The Suez Canal

The Suez Canal, 101 miles long, provides an important link for international ships to sail from the Mediterranean Sea to the Red Sea. The ancient Egyptians first created a canal here more than 3,000 years ago. They saw value in connecting the two seas. Construction of the present-day canal began in 1859 and was completed in 1869. Because the water levels are similar, the Suez Canal has no locks. The canal continues to be improved upon and repaired. The Suez Canal has been at the center of many political conflicts. Control of the canal has belonged to the British and to the Egyptians. The canal has been closed from time to time, particularly during conflicts between Egypt and Israel.

1. Drawing Conclusions Considering the length of time it took to build the canal, what would you conclude about the expense of the project?
Critical Thinking Skills Activity
continued

2. Drawing Conclusions What conclusion might you draw about the purpose of locks in a canal? What evidence supports your conclusion?

3. Drawing Conclusions What conclusion could you draw about how controlling the canal affects the power of a nation?

✔ Applying the Skill

Directions: Read the information below, and then answer the questions that follow.

Aral Sea Disaster

The Aral Sea is located on the borders of Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan in Central Asia. The sea, which once was the fourth-largest lake in the world, covered an area of more than 25,000 square miles at one time. For many years, the Soviet Union redirected water from the rivers flowing into the Aral Sea to irrigation systems for farms. Climate changes added to the shrinking of the sea into two smaller bodies of water. The city of Aralsk, once located at the northern end of the sea, is now more than 62 miles away from the water. The shrinkage of the Aral Sea has caused the economy to suffer. Once a center of fishing, the landscape is now dotted with beached ships and fishing boats that are stranded far from any water. Factories that provided jobs have been closed for decades. People have been forced to live elsewhere in order to find work. The health of the people living in the area also has been affected. The rate of disease and birth defects has risen. Many think the rise is due to the effects of pesticides carried by winds. These chemicals originate from desolated farmlands in the area, ironically the same farms that required irrigation from the Aral Sea in the first place.

1. Drawing Conclusions What conclusion can you draw about taking away the sources of water for a large lake?

2. Drawing Conclusions What conclusions can you draw about living in Aralsk today?

3. Interpreting Why do you think the author uses the word *ironically* in the last sentence of the passage?