India’s Monsoons
by Ellen Persio

Fountas-Pinnell Level X
Informational Text

Selection Summary
India’s monsoons—friend or enemy? Depending on their direction, the warm winds bring flood or drought, rich farmland or barren dessert. Monsoons play an integral part in the India of yesterday and today, and some worry that the southwest monsoon may be drying up.

Characteristics of the Text

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Genre</th>
<th>• Informational text</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Text Structure</td>
<td>• Seven brief chapters, the longer ones divided by subheadings</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Text Insets provide additional information.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Details help the reader compare and contrast information</td>
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<tr>
<td>Content</td>
<td>• Human dependence on nature</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Scientific information about monsoons: causes, effects, future behavior</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Historical information about formation of Indian subcontinent and Harappan civilization</td>
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<tr>
<td>Themes and Ideas</td>
<td>• The ability of humans to predict and control the effects of natural events is limited.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Humans and their environment are interdependent.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Scientists continue to study monsoons.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Language and Literary Features</td>
<td>• Similes: wrapped like mummies and wobble like sinking boats</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Conversational language</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Poem and joke appear in inset</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sentence Complexity</td>
<td>• Declarative sentences with a few interrogatives and exclamations</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Simple and complex sentences of varying lengths</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Parenthetical pronunciation keys for Indian names</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vocabulary</td>
<td>• Scientific and geographic terms</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Words</td>
<td>• Words with affixes: embodied, unearthed, recreational</td>
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<tr>
<td>Illustrations</td>
<td>• Color photos, graph, diagram, and maps</td>
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<tr>
<td>Book and Print Features</td>
<td>• Sixteen pages of text, including a glossary of science terms used in the text</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Table of contents</td>
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Build Background
Help students use their weather knowledge to visualize the selection. Build interest by asking questions such as the following: What can rain be both a good and a bad thing? What happens when too much rain falls? Read the title and author and talk about the cover illustration. Note the table of contents and glossary. Tell students that the selection is informational text that gives facts about a weather event called a monsoon.

Introduce the Text
Guide students through the text, noting important ideas, and helping with unfamiliar language and vocabulary so they can read the text successfully. Here are some suggestions:

Page 4: Explain that the text is about the monsoons of India. These high winds reverse direction in spring and fall, causing either extremely rainy or extremely dry weather. Suggested language: Turn to page 4 of this book. Read the last three sentences. Why do people call monsoons ruthless? How might they affect what work and recreational activities people can do?

Page 7: Draw attention to the photos and captions on this page. What are two differences between ocean breezes (mini-monsoons) and monsoons?

Page 10: Point out the map on page 10. Help students to understand the relationship between the map and the inset of the globe. What does the red box on the small globe tell you?

Page 15: Draw attention to the poem and joke. What attitudes toward monsoons are embodied in these writings?

Now, turn back to read about of India’s powerful monsoons.

Target Vocabulary

ancestral – having to do with family members from long ago, p. 9
artistry – artistic ability or quality p. 12
destiny – what is expected to happen in a person’s future, p. 5
embodied – gave form or shape to an idea or an attitude, p. 9
forge – is to build or create something, p. 5
majestic – having majesty, grandeur or beauty, p. 3
recreational – done for relaxation and amusement, p. 12
ruthless – without pity or compassion; cruel, p. 3
sagas – long stories, especially ones that tell historical stories or heroes, p. 5
unearthed – dug up from the ground, p. 12
Read

Have students read silently while you listen to individual students read. Support their understanding of the text as needed.

Remind students to use the Summarize Strategy and to think of questions as they read.

Discuss and Revisit the Text

Personal Response

Invite students to share their personal responses to the selection.

Suggested language: Can weather ever change people’s lives? How?

Ways of Thinking

As you discuss the text, help students understand these points:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Thinking Within the Text</th>
<th>Thinking Beyond the Text</th>
<th>Thinking About the Text</th>
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<td>• Although farmers are the first affected by monsoons, eventually all Indians feel the effects of flooding and drought.</td>
<td>• Natural phenomena, such as monsoons, can have an enormous effect on human life and the environment.</td>
<td>• Information about monsoons in the selection is sequenced in chronological order, from historical information, to current information, to speculations about the future.</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Deforestation increases the destructive effects of monsoons.</td>
<td>• Human actions can increase the destructive impact of natural events and phenomena.</td>
<td>• The analogies in the text help readers understand difficult, sometimes unfamiliar, concepts.</td>
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<td>• Some people believe India’s southwest monsoon is drying up.</td>
<td>• People are often dependent on nature.</td>
<td>• The author uses dramatic language to emphasize the powerful effects of monsoons on the environment and human life.</td>
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Choices for Further Support

- **Fluency** Invite students to choose a passage from the text to act out or use for a readers’ theater. Remind them to choose a passage with dramatic language. Encourage them to use gestures, voice inflections, and facial expressions to convey the narrator’s tone.

- **Comprehension** Based on your observations of the students’ reading and discussion, revisit parts of the text to clarify or extend comprehension. Remind students to go back to the text to support their ideas.

- **Phonics/Word Work** Provide practice as needed with words and word parts, using examples from the text. Remind students that some word families consist of words that share a common root. For example, the word *ancestral* in the sidebar on page 9 is an adjective. It shares a common root with the noun *ancestor* (one from whom a person is descended, generally a relative more distant than a grandparent).
Writing about Reading

Critical Thinking
Have students complete the Critical Thinking questions on BLM 16.8.

Responding
Have students complete the activities at the back of the book, using their Reader's Notebook. Use the instruction below as needed to reinforce or extend understanding of the comprehension skill.

Target Comprehension Skill

Compare and Contrast
Remind students that they can compare and contrast ideas and details in the selection to find out how they are the same or different. Model how to add details to the Graphic Organizer by using a “Think Aloud” like the one below:

Think Aloud
The narrator explains that the southwest monsoon causes rain to fall across all of India, but the northeast monsoon brings rain to only southern India. List the directions of these monsoon winds and add details about the effects of each monsoon to the Graphic Organizer.

Practice the Skill
Have students share an example of another book in which comparing and contrasting helped them understand the topic.

Writing Prompt: Thinking Beyond the Text
Have students write a response to the prompt on page 6. Remind them that when they think beyond the text, they use their personal knowledge to reach new understandings.

Assessment Prompts
• What is this selection mainly about?
• Point out two sentences on page 4 that support the idea that monsoons can greatly affect human life and the environment.
• In the first paragraph on page 6, the phrase the monsoon puzzle means
Critical Thinking

Read and answer the questions. Possible responses shown.

1. Think within the text What is Cherrapunji known for?

   Speaker 1: Why does Cherrapunji receive record rainfalls?
   Speaker 2: The mountains near Cherrapunji cause a huge buildup of rain clouds.

2. Think about the text What was Harappan?

   Speaker 1: How may monsoons have destroyed the Harappan civilization?
   Speaker 2: Monsoons may have caused floods and mudslides or a long drought that destroyed the civilization.

3. More than the text The selection illustrates that cultures can adapt even to the most extreme weather challenges. Can you think of at least one way that your culture or community has adapted to your environment?

   Speaker 1: Why are the effects of monsoons difficult to manage?
   Speaker 2: The effects of monsoons are difficult to manage because forecasting them is difficult. Monsoons can change unexpectedly due to one small factor. Also, managing the effects of monsoons requires constant work to protect humans, crops, and livestock from heavy rains and terrible droughts.

4. Think beyond the text What kind of weather do the summer monsoons bring?

   Speaker 1: What does the September monsoon bring?
   Speaker 2: a long dry spell

5. Write About It
   Text to World Suppose that you are writing an article for a travel magazine. Create a list of travel tips for tourists visiting India during the summer monsoon season.
India’s Monsoons

Thinking Beyond the Text

Think about the questions below. Then write your answer in two paragraphs.

Remember that when you think beyond the text, you use your personal knowledge to reach new understandings.

On page 5, the author says, “The monsoons are both India’s best friend and a villain.” What does the author mean? If you lived in India, do you think you would agree with the author? Why? How would you feel about living with India’s monsoons?

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Critical Thinking

Read and answer the questions.

1. **Think within the text**  What is Cherrapunji known for?

2. **Think within the text**  What was Harappan?

3. **Think about the text**  The selection illustrates that cultures can adapt even to the most extreme weather challenges. Can you think of at least one way that your culture or community has adapted to your environment?

4. **Think beyond the text**  How are the climate and weather conditions in India different from those in your area? How are they the same?

**Making Connections**  If you lived in an area where monsoons were a part of life, then you might spend a lot of time indoors during monsoon season. Name three ways you would spend your time. Explain why you would choose those activities.

**Write your answer in your Reader’s Notebook.**
India’s Monsoons • LEVEL X

How do monsoons work? Where does their incredible wind power come from? Scientists have figured out many of the basics over hundreds of years. Current technology is helping to uncover new pieces of the monsoon puzzle.

New clues about monsoons have come from beneath the ocean floor. Sand and other bits of matter sink to the bottom of the sea. This sediment has built up since time began. The deepest layers of sediment hold the remains of ancient sea animals. These fossils help scientists trace changes in India’s monsoons over millions of years.

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Comments:

Accuracy Rate

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