



# Instruction Coach English Language Arts




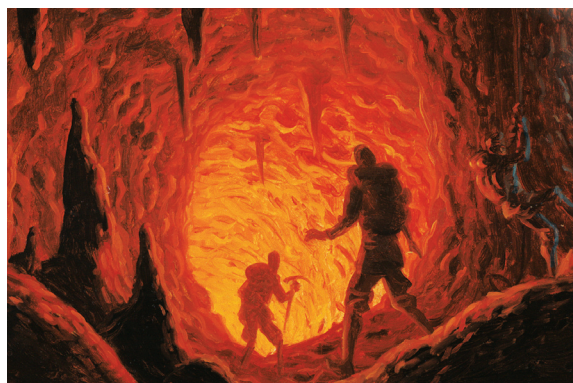
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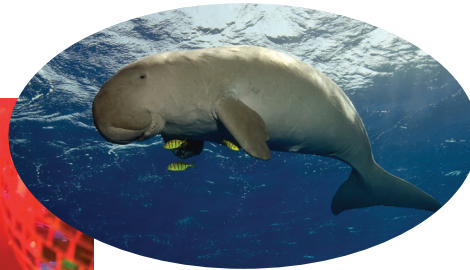
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# Reading Literary Nonfiction



**Look at this** picture of a grizzly bear.

Why would an entertainer include a dangerous bear in his act? Why do you think people would pay to see his shows?

## ESSENTIAL QUESTION

*Why would an author want to tell about people or events from long ago?*

## Listen and Learn

### Consider ►

What was the relationship between P. T. Barnum and Grizzly Adams?

How were Barnum and Adams alike, and how were they different?

# The GREATEST SHOW on EARTH

### PRIMARY AND SECONDARY SOURCES

A primary source is a document written or created by someone who experienced an event. An autobiography is an author's life story. Other primary sources include letters, interviews, speeches, and diaries.

A secondary source is written by someone who was *not* part of an event. Secondary sources include textbooks, biographies, and articles that discuss or report events based on information in primary sources. How can you determine whether paragraph 1 is a primary or secondary source?

### FIGURATIVE LANGUAGE

The meaning of a figurative expression is not determined by knowing the meaning of each word in it. The phrase *conjures up* means "to make appear magically," but it does not mean that in paragraph 2. It is a figure of speech, a type of figurative language. Other types include simile (which uses *like* or *as*), metaphor, and personification. What is the meaning of *conjures up* in paragraph 2?

- 1 "There's a sucker born every minute!" Many believe P. T. Barnum exclaimed this during his lifetime. There is no proof that he did, but it's easy to understand why such an exclamation would be attributed to Barnum. It fits with what is known about his life and his interactions with James "Grizzly" Adams.

Thinking of Barnum might make you think of a three-ring circus and The Greatest Show on Earth. Thinking of Grizzly Adams conjures up images of huge, menacing bears. The great entertainers Barnum and Adams were an important part of nineteenth-century American culture.



Phineas T. Barnum

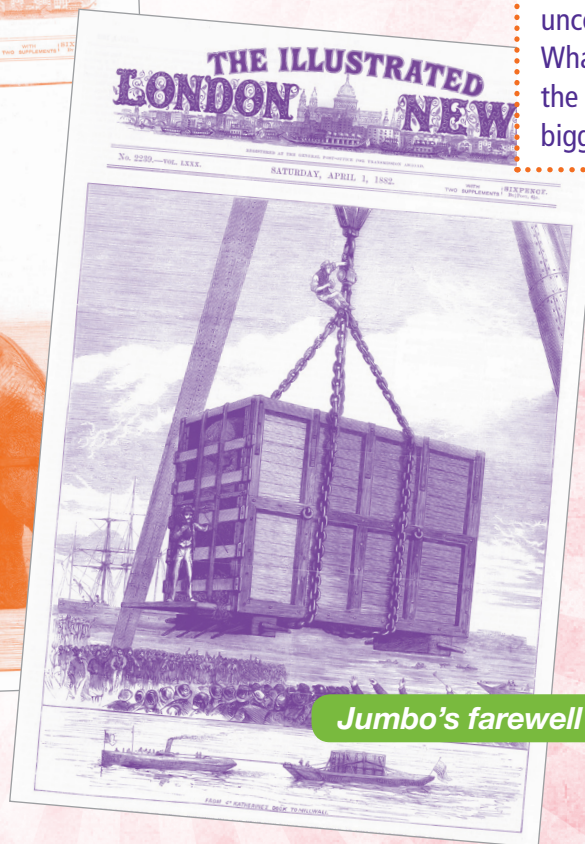
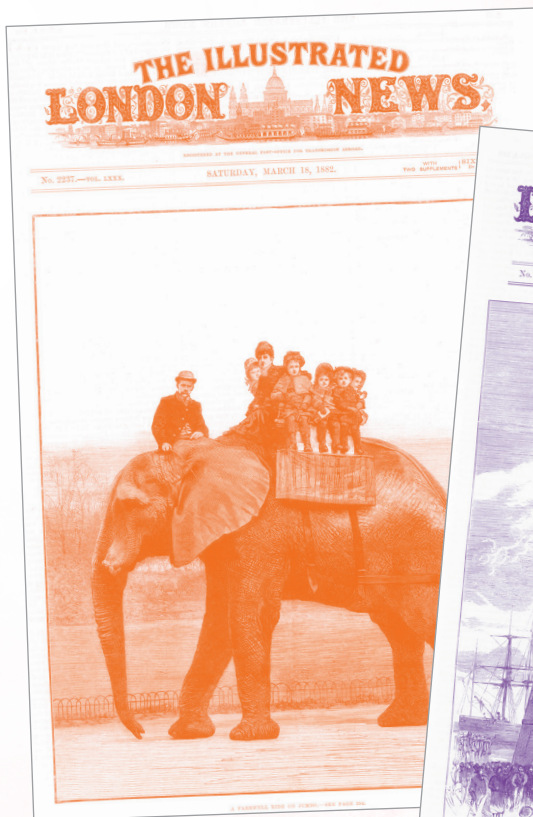
In your mind, travel back to the nineteenth century in the United States, a period when the Industrial Revolution allowed Americans more leisure time, when people were looking for entertainment. P. T. Barnum was right there to fill the bill.

Barnum made a sport—and a living—out of hoaxes. He enticed others to pay to see his attractions, some real and some not so real. People came to see trained fleas, parading elephants, and a 161-year-old woman!

- 5 His star attraction, however, was an African elephant named Jumbo. Some people believe that the word *jumbo* didn't exist before Barnum. In fact, Jumbo was already the elephant's name when Barnum bought the animal for his circus. Barnum kept the name Jumbo and used it to advertise his star attraction. The word *jumbo* became a frequently used word in the English language as a synonym for *enormous*.

**CONTEXT CLUES** Context clues are nearby words and phrases that help you figure out the meaning of an unknown word or phrase. What context clues help you figure out the meaning of the figurative expression *fill the bill* at the end of paragraph 3?

**CONNOTATION AND DENOTATION** A word's denotation is the dictionary meaning of the word. A word can also have a connotation; it can imply a judgment or an emotional meaning. For example, the word *inferno* means "a fire." But *inferno* has the connotation of a huge, uncontrollable, destructive fire. What word in paragraph 5 has the connotation of "something bigger than can be described"?



**ANALOGY** An analogy compares relationships between two different sets of things; for example, *paw* is to *cat* as *hoof* is to *horse*. Complete this analogy from the information in paragraph 7: *Jumbo* was to *Barnum* as \_\_\_\_\_ was to *Adams*.

**CENTRAL IDEA** The central idea is the most important idea in a passage, or what the passage is mostly about. What are paragraphs 7 through 9 mostly about? What does the passage tell you about Barnum and Adams?

**CITE EVIDENCE** What examples from paragraph 9 support the central idea? What examples from paragraph 9 show the author is telling the story in a creative way?

**PREDICT WORD MEANING** To predict word meaning, you can look at parts of a word and think about nearby words and phrases. When you first see the word *fanfare* in paragraph 9, what do you think it means? Why? After you read the sentence, do you find that the word means what you had predicted? Explain.

By the mid-1800s, Barnum was showing attractions at Barnum’s American Museum in New York City. There, he and Grizzly Adams met to talk about an entertainment deal.

Adams had earned his nickname, “Grizzly Adams,” while hunting and trapping grizzly bears in the mountains in and around California. Adams’s “Jumbo” was a grizzly named General Fremont. General Fremont and other bears traveled with Adams to New York.

Barnum wrote about Adams, who would grow to be a close friend, saying Adams was nearly as wild as the beasts he hunted and trapped. The two struck an agreement for Barnum to manage Adams’s grizzly bear shows in New York.

Barnum had a huge tent set up for the advertised California Menagerie.<sup>1</sup> The show opened to fanfare in the street. An open wagon followed a marching band. Adams and his grizzlies stood on the wagon, with Adams “riding” on Fremont’s back.

10 Adams’s show attracted thousands of paying customers. After six weeks, though, a combination of injuries and fever sent Adams to bed. A doctor advised him he would not survive much longer. But Adams said he was strong; he gradually improved.

Adams wanted to take the show on the road, but Barnum advised against it. He thought Adams was too ill to continue performing. Insisting that he was healthy enough to continue, Adams asked for a bonus for completing the road tour. Barnum jokingly offered \$500—a fortune at that time—because he never thought Adams would live long enough to complete the road tour. Adams accepted. He also accepted a new hunting suit from Barnum for the shows. Adams said, “Mr. B., I suppose you’re going to give me this new hunting-dress.”

<sup>1</sup>**menagerie** a collection of wild or unusual animals shown in an exhibition





Retorting in their typical jovial banter, Barnum replied, “Oh no. I got that for your successor, who will exhibit the bears tomorrow; besides, you have no possible use for it.”

Adams convinced Barnum to let him keep the suit until he was “done with it.” Thinking Adams would be done with it soon, Barnum agreed. But Adams got the last laugh.

Adams made it through the ten weeks of shows on the road, although his health was failing. Barnum paid the bonus. Knowing he would not survive much longer, Adams asked his wife to be certain he would be buried in the hunting suit, and he was. He used it until he was “done with it” and then some. While Adams did not survive, stories of the jovial bond between P. T. Barnum and Grizzly Adams certainly did.

### USE REFERENCE SOURCES

A reference source, such as a dictionary, thesaurus, or glossary, can help readers understand content. In paragraph 12, the author uses the word *jovial* to describe the relationship between Barnum and Adams. Which resource would be the best for finding the meaning of *jovial*?

### ANALYZE AUTHOR'S

**TECHNIQUE** Literary nonfiction provides facts and information in a creative way. Often the author includes entertaining examples and stories to engage the reader. Look at paragraph 14. How does the author entertain the reader?

### MAKE INFERENCES

When making an inference, a reader uses facts that are stated to support an understanding or an idea that is not stated. Why did the stories about the bond between Barnum and Adams survive? What information in the selection supports your answer?



### Comprehension Check

Look back in “The Greatest Show on Earth” to note uses of figurative language. Use the graphic organizer to write three sentences from the selection that include this kind of language. In your table, explain the meaning of the figurative language. Then use figurative language in a sentence to describe the relationship between Barnum and Adams.

Example of Sentence with Figurative Language	Meaning
A. “There’s a sucker born every minute!”	There are many people who are easy to fool.
B.	
C.	

D. Write a sentence using figurative language that describes the relationship between Barnum and Adams.

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## Vocabulary

Use the word map below to help you define and use one of the highlighted vocabulary words from the Share and Learn selection you are about to read or another word you choose.

<b>invincible</b>	<b>rendered</b>	<b>docile</b>
<b>ferocious</b>	<b>speculation</b>	<b>apparatus</b>

<b>Synonyms</b>	<b>Antonyms</b>

<b>My word</b>	
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<b>Definition</b>	<b>Other forms</b>

<b>My sentence</b>

## Share and Learn

### Consider ►

How do “The Greatest Show on Earth” and “Old Grizzly Adams” both tell information in interesting, creative ways?

How does this passage, which was written by Barnum, help you better understand “The Greatest Show on Earth”?

from  
“CHAPTER IV:  
**OLD GRIZZLY ADAMS”**

in *The Humbugs of the World*

by P. T. Barnum

**CONNOTATION AND DENOTATION** The word *perils* denotes a danger. What is the connotation of the word *perils*?

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**CAUSE AND EFFECT** What is James Adams’s nickname? How did he get that name?

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- 1 James C. Adams, or “Grizzly Adams,” as he was generally termed, from the fact of his having captured so many grizzly bears and encountered such fearful perils by his unexampled daring, was an extraordinary character. For many years a hunter and trapper in the Rocky and Sierra Nevada Mountains, he acquired a recklessness which, added to his natural **invincible** courage, **rendered** him truly one of the most striking men of the age. He was emphatically what the English call a man of “pluck.” In 1860, he arrived in New York with his famous collection of California animals, captured by himself, consisting of twenty or thirty immense grizzly bears, at the head of which stood “Old Sampson”—now in the American Museum—wolves, half a dozen other species of bear, California lions, tigers, buffalo, elk, etc., and “Old Neptune,” the great sea-lion from the Pacific.



Old Adams had trained all these monsters so that with him they were as **docile** as kittens, while many of the most **ferocious** among them would attack a stranger without hesitation, if he came within their grasp. In fact, the training of these animals was no fool's play, as Old Adams learned to his cost; for the terrific blows which he received from time to time, while teaching them "docility," finally cost him his life.

When Adams and his other wild beasts (for he was nearly as wild as any of them) arrived in New York, he called immediately at the Museum. He was dressed in his hunter's suit of buckskin. . . . In fact, Old Adams was quite as much of a show as his bears. They had come around Cape Horn on the clipper-ship *Golden Fleece*, and a sea-voyage of three and a half months had probably not added much to the beauty or neat appearance of the old bear-hunter.

During our conversation, Grizzly Adams took off his cap, and showed me the top of his head . . . the last blow from the bear called "General Fremont." . . . I remarked that I thought that was a dangerous wound, and might possibly prove fatal.

5 "Yes," replied Adams, "that will fix me out. . . . I'm a used-up man. However, I reckon I may live six months or a year yet."

This was spoken as coolly as if he had been talking about the life of a dog.



The artist who designed this flag used Grizzly Adams's bear as a model for the drawing.

### FIGURATIVE LANGUAGE

Find two instances of figurative language used in paragraph 2. What does each mean?

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**COMPARE** How was the behavior of the bears different with Adams and with others? Are wild animals ever completely safe around humans? Explain.

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### PRIMARY AND SECONDARY SOURCES

Is this passage a primary source or a secondary source? How can you tell?

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### ANALYZE AUTHOR'S TECHNIQUE

How does the author comment when Adams says he has six months or a year to live? How does this comment change the impact of Adams's response?

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**MAKE INFERENCES AND CITE EVIDENCE**

Why might the three grizzlies hit or bite Adams occasionally? Cite evidence from the selection that supports your inference.

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**CHRONOLOGY** Did this conversation between Barnum and Adams happen before or after the events in the last two paragraphs of "The Greatest Show on Earth"? How can you tell?

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**CENTRAL IDEA** What main message does the author give about Adams throughout the selection? Underline examples that convey this message.

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The immediate object of "Old Adams" in calling upon me was this. I had purchased one-half interest in his California menagerie from a man who had come by way of the Isthmus from California, and who claimed to own an equal interest with Adams in the show. Adams declared that the man had only advanced him some money, and did not possess the right to sell half of the concern. However, the man held a bill of sale for one-half of the "California Menagerie," and Old Adams finally consented to accept me as an equal partner in the speculation, saying that he guessed I could do the managing part, and he would show up the animals. I obtained a canvas tent, and erecting it on the present site of Wallack's Theatre, Adams there opened his novel California Menagerie. On the morning of opening, a band of music preceded a procession of animal-cages, down Broadway and up the Bowery; Old Adams dressed in his hunting costume, heading the line, with a platform-wagon on which were placed three immense grizzly bears, two of which he held by chains, while he was mounted on the back of the largest grizzly, which stood in the centre, and was not secured in any manner whatever. This was the bear known as "General Fremont;" and so docile had he become that Adams said he had used him as a packbear to carry his cooking and hunting apparatus through the mountains for six months, and had ridden him hundreds of miles. But apparently docile as were many of these animals, there was not one among them that would not occasionally give even Adams a sly blow or a sly bite when a good chance offered; hence Old Adams was but a wreck of his former self, and expressed pretty nearly the truth when he said:

"Mr. Barnum, I am not the man I was five years ago. Then I felt able to stand the hug of any grizzly living, and was always glad to encounter, single-handed, any sort of an animal that dared present himself. But I have been beaten to a jelly, torn almost limb from limb, and nearly chawed up and spit out by these treacherous grizzly bears. However, I am good for a few months yet. . . ."

## Discussion Questions

Discuss the following questions with your peer group. Then record your answers in the space provided.

1. The author of the first article describes the bond between P. T. Barnum and Grizzly Adams as “jovial.” Based on Barnum’s descriptions in the second article, “Old Grizzly Adams,” what is another word you could use to describe their friendship? Support your answer with details from the text.

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2. How does each article treat the subject of Adams’s early death? Support your answer with details from both texts.

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## Comprehension Check

1. How does the passage titled “Old Grizzly Adams” differ from “The Greatest Show on Earth”? Support your responses with information from the passages.

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2. Suppose Adams had traveled to New York immediately after he captured the grizzly bears, before he spent time training them. What would have been the likely result?

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3. Read the following statement made by Adams: “Mr. Barnum, I am not the man I was five years ago. . . . However, I am good for a few months yet. . . .” Why was Adams not the man he had been five years earlier? Based on “The Greatest Show on Earth” and “Old Grizzly Adams,” why do you think Adams believed he was “good for a few months yet”?

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## Read On Your Own

Read another piece of literary nonfiction, “The Life and Adventures of Alexandre Dumas,” independently. Apply what you learned in this lesson and check your understanding.