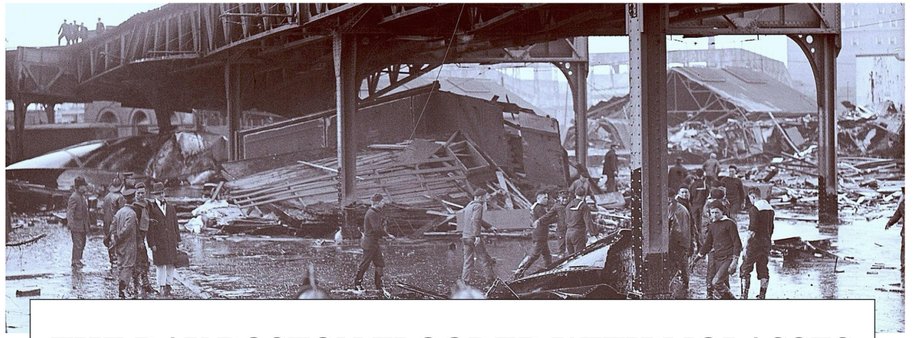
HIGH-INTEREST READING WITHOUT THE BABYISH FEEL

Accessible informational text for older students who need reading support with real topics, age-appropriate design, and meaningful thinking.

Flesch-Kincaid Grade Level is 3.6



THE DAY BOSTON FLOODED WITH MOLASSES

molasses	a thick, dark liquid made from sugar
trigger	the event that starts a chain of events
contributing cause	one of several things that helps an event happen
effect	what happens because of a cause
pressure	a force that pushes on something
brittle	easy to crack or break
viscosity	how easily a liquid flows; thick liquids have high viscosity

On January 15, 1919, a strange flood hit Boston. It was not a flood of water. It was a flood of molasses.

was too thin. The metal was under a lot of pressure.

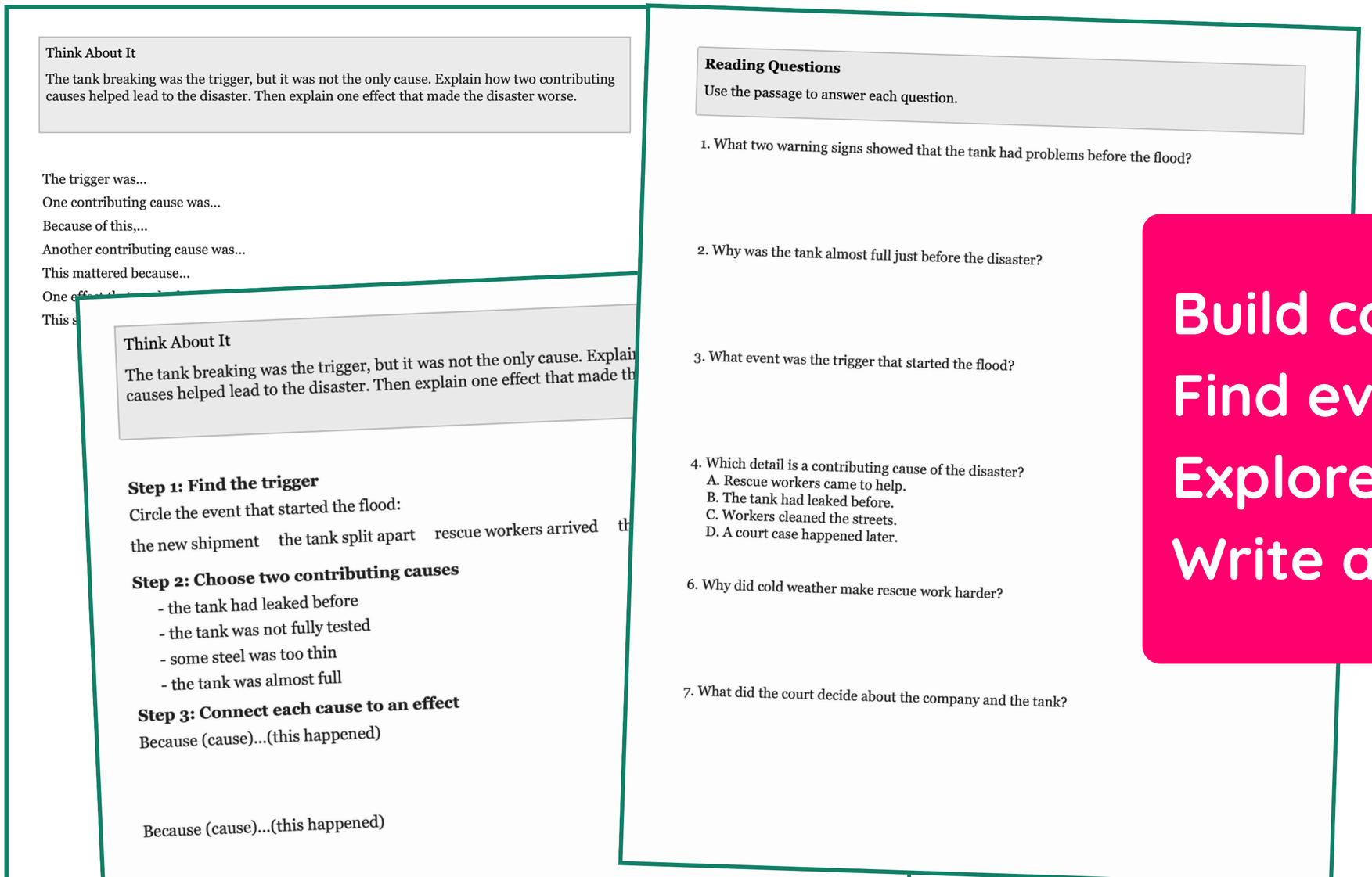
A few days before the flood, a ship brought in more molasses. The tank was almost full.

The Tank Breaks



it. Around lunchtime,
apart.
l out. The tank breaking
rts a chain of events.
problems helped the
. The weak tank, old
ered.
e thought it would. Reports said the first wave
quid hit the area around the tank. It knocked
s, carts, and other things were caught in the flo
one people died. About 150 more were hurt.
d with thick molasses.
Cold weather caused another problem.
Molasses gets thicker when it gets cold. Th
part of its viscosity, or how easily a liquid f
The thick molasses was hard to move thro
Some people were trapped in it or under
broken wood and metal. Rescue workers h
move slowly.
The cleanup was hard too. Workers used

READ. THINK. USE THE TEXT.



Think About It

The tank breaking was the trigger, but it was not the only cause. Explain how two contributing causes helped lead to the disaster. Then explain one effect that made the disaster worse.

The trigger was...
One contributing cause was...
Because of this,...
Another contributing cause was...
This mattered because...

Think About It

The tank breaking was the trigger, but it was not the only cause. Explai
causes helped lead to the disaster. Then explain one effect that made th

Step 1: Find the trigger

Circle the event that started the flood:

the new shipment the tank split apart rescue workers arrived th

Step 2: Choose two contributing causes

- the tank had leaked before
- the tank was not fully tested
- some steel was too thin
- the tank was almost full

Step 3: Connect each cause to an effect

Because (cause)...(this happened)

Because (cause)...(this happened)

Reading Questions

Use the passage to answer each question.

1. What two warning signs showed that the tank had problems before the flood?

2. Why was the tank almost full just before the disaster?

3. What event was the trigger that started the flood?

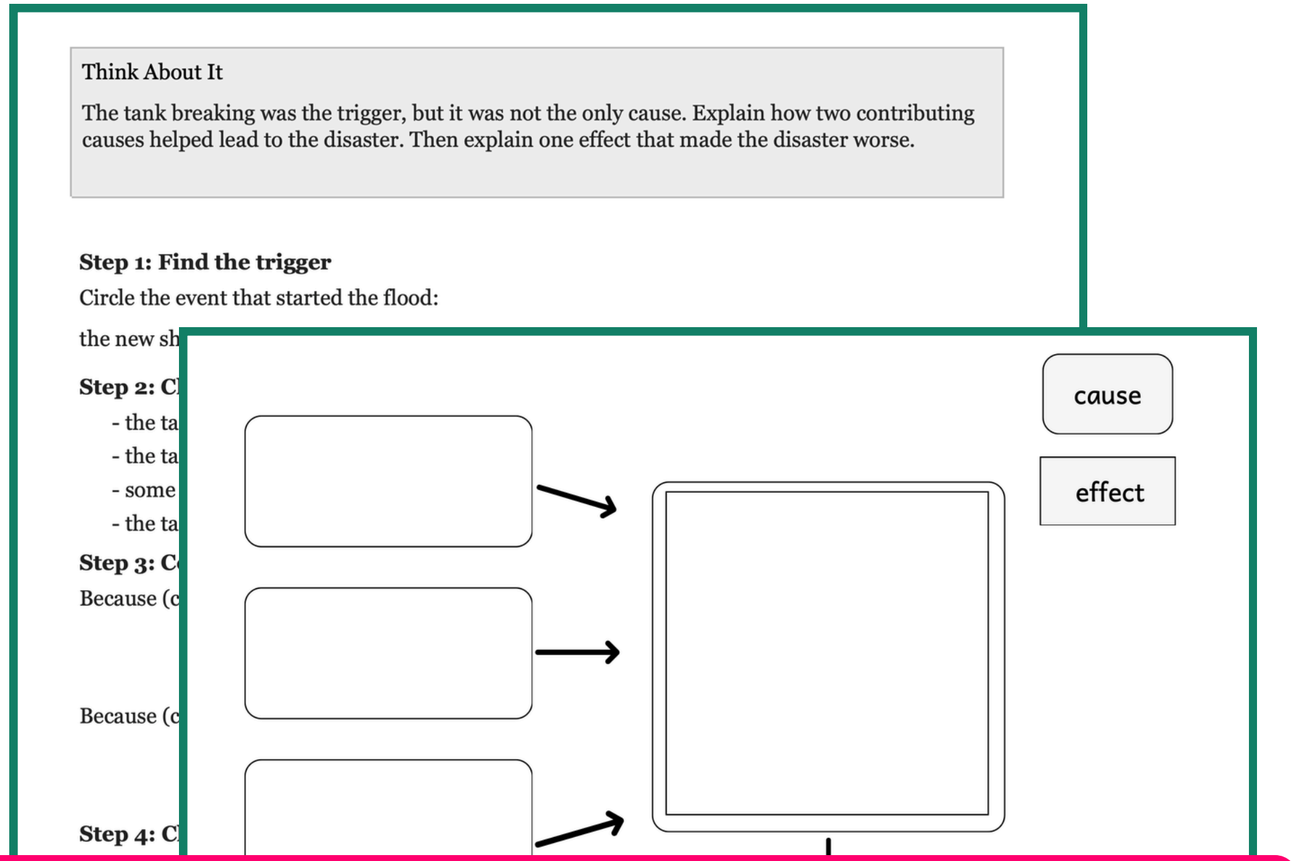
4. Which detail is a contributing cause of the disaster?
   A. Rescue workers came to help.
   B. The tank had leaked before.
   C. Workers cleaned the streets.
   D. A court case happened later.

6. Why did cold weather make rescue work harder?

7. What did the court decide about the company and the tank?

Build comprehension
Find evidence
Explore the featured skill
Write about the reading

GO BEYOND BASIC COMPREHENSION



Think About It

The tank breaking was the trigger, but it was not the only cause. Explain how two contributing causes helped lead to the disaster. Then explain one effect that made the disaster worse.

Step 1: Find the trigger

Circle the event that started the flood:

the new sh

Step 2: C

- the ta
- the ta
- some
- the ta

Step 3: C

Because (c

Because (c

Step 4: C

cause

effect

Students use evidence to identify the causes and effects from the text and optional video. Two versions of Think About It provide structured writing practice.

Featured Skill: Cause & Effect

USE IT YOUR WAY

Suggested Pathways

Pathway	Use	Suggested Sequence
Core	Short reading lesson	Passage → Reading Questions → choose one Reading Think About It
Cause & Effect Focus	Teach the central text structure	Passage → Questions → partially filled Cause & Effect Chain → Think About It
Reading + Video	Add listening and source connection	Passage → Questions → Watch & Connect choice(s) → optional Cause Chain connection
Full	Multi-source lesson	Passage → Questions → Cause & Effect Chain → Word Study → Think About It

CORE PATHWAY — 1 lesson (30–45 mi

- Read the Passage
- Reading Questions
- Choose One Reading Think About It
- If time: Definition Clue Hunt OR Caus

CAUSE & EFFECT FOCUS — 2 blocks (about 30 minutes each)

Block 1 — Read and Build the Chain	• Read the Passage • Reading Questions • Partially Filled Cause & Effect Chain (Brief Lesson steps 1–4)
Block 2 — Explain the Chain	• Finish and review the Cause & Effect Chain (Brief Lesson steps 5–6) • Warning Sign or Contributing Cause? • Choose One Reading Think About It • If time: Cause-and-Effect Signal Language OR Sentence Combining With Causal Language

Choose one of the suggested pathways

OPTIONAL READING EXTENSIONS

Morphology: The -ure Suffix

- Show that *pressure* comes from *press*, and that -ure turns an action into a noun.
- Build more examples: fail → failure, mix → mixture, and close → closure.
- Ask students to use *failure* in a sentence about the tank.

Word Family: *contribute*

- Build the family: contribute → contributing → contributor → contribution.
- Discuss what it means to contribute to a group project, then connect that meaning to a contributing cause. Each one adds a part to the final result.

Word Origin: *disaster*

- Share that *dis-* means "bad" and *aster* means "star." Long ago, people blamed bad luck on the stars, so *disaster* meant "bad star."
- Connect *aster* to *asterisk* (a little star) and *astronaut* (a star sailor).

Word Study: Comparing with -er and *more*

- Find *warmer, thicker, faster, easier,* and *more brittle* in the passage.
- Point out the y-to-i change in easy → easier, and discuss why the author wrote *more brittle*. Many longer words use *more* instead of -er.
- Explain that these comparisons carry key science ideas: molasses gets thicker when it is cold, and cold steel can become more brittle.

Word Study: Irregular Past Tense

- Sort irregular past-tense verbs from the passage into three groups: no change (hit, split), -ought/-aught (brought, thought, caught), and other changes (stood, bent, took, built, found, led, heard).

Or build your own with optional extensions

- Find vocabulary words that are defined again in the passage. Highlight the word and the definition that follows it.
- Good examples include molasses, trigger, viscosity, and brittle. Circle clue words such as “is” or “or” when they introduce a definition.
- Discuss why informational writers sometimes define a word exactly where readers need it.



My name is Cathy White, Ed.D., and I'm the creator behind Pathwise Works. I've spent 25+ years in education, and I build frameworks and systems to help educators have **more time** to actually teach.

Work smarter, not harder!

PATHWISE WORKS

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