# 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 4.0 if Environmental Protection Agency and place names are not included in the calculation. It's 4.6 if they are.**

### Fire on the Water

On June 22, 1969, the river caught fire again. Debris covered in oil had piled up near a train bridge. A flare from a passing train likely ignited it. Flames

The fire was small and short. It was out in less tha bridge. No one got a photo of the 1969 fire before

At first, the fire did not seem like a huge news sto Many people saw the river as just a place for facto play.

### A Small Fire Gets Big Attention

The story soon grew. The next day, Cleveland may them the dirty water and other problems.

A few weeks later, Time magazine wrote about the famous photo was used with stories about the 196 1952 fire.

The 1969 fire became a symbol of dirty water. A sy burning river showed people how bad water pollu

### Change Had Already Begun

The fire did not cause a change by itself. Work ha money for better sewers. Mayor Stokes and repor People in other places were worried about pollutio

Still, the fire helped bring more attention to the p rivers and lakes. In 1970, the U.S. Environmental water, and land. In 1972, the Clean Water Act gav

### A River Reborn

Cleaning the river took many years. Cities fixed se groups and city workers kept working.



## The River That Caught Fire

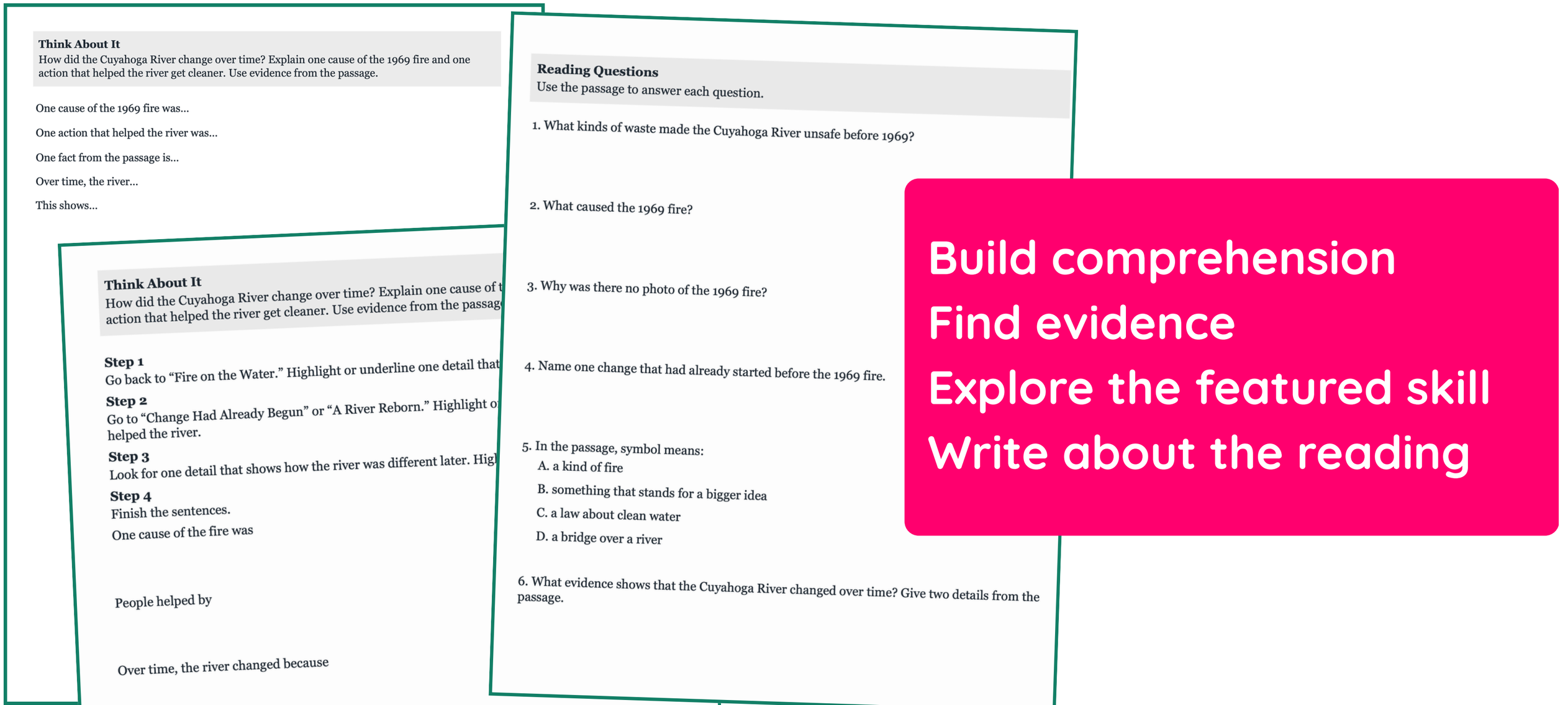
How a Polluted River Became a Symbol for Change

| Vocabulary | |
|---|---|
| **pollution** | harmful waste that makes water, air, or land dirty or unsafe |
| **sewage** | dirty water and waste from homes and buildings |
| **debris** | loose trash or broken pieces |
| **ignite** | to start burning |
| **symbol** | something that stands for a bigger idea |

The Cuyahoga (ky-uh-HOG-uh) River is in Ohio. It flows through Cleveland and into Lake Erie. Today, people see fish, birds, and boats there. In 1969, the river was very different.

### A River in Trouble

# READ. THINK. USE THE TEXT.



**Think About It**
How did the Cuyahoga River change over time? Explain one cause of the 1969 fire and one action that helped the river get cleaner. Use evidence from the passage.

One cause of the 1969 fire was...

One action that helped the river was...

One fact from the passage is...

Over time, the river...

This shows...

**Think About It**
How did the Cuyahoga River change over time? Explain one cause of t
action that helped the river get cleaner. Use evidence from the passag

**Step 1**
Go back to "Fire on the Water." Highlight or underline one detail that

**Step 2**
Go to "Change Had Already Begun" or "A River Reborn." Highlight o
helped the river.

**Step 3**
Look for one detail that shows how the river was different later. High

**Step 4**
Finish the sentences.

One cause of the fire was

People helped by

Over time, the river changed because

**Reading Questions**
Use the passage to answer each question.

1. What kinds of waste made the Cuyahoga River unsafe before 1969?

2. What caused the 1969 fire?

3. Why was there no photo of the 1969 fire?

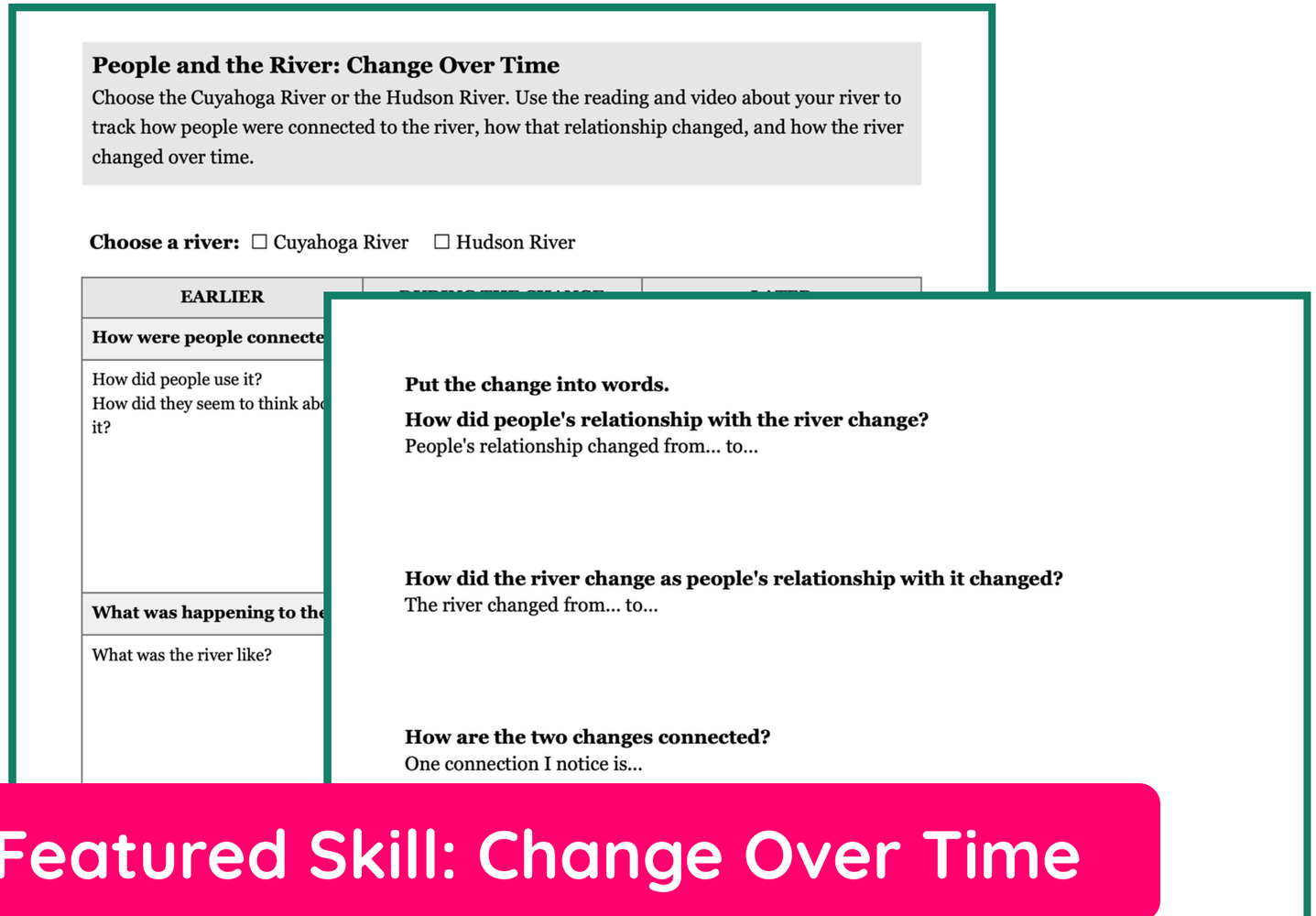
4. Name one change that had already started before the 1969 fire.

5. In the passage, symbol means:
   A. a kind of fire
   B. something that stands for a bigger idea
   C. a law about clean water
   D. a bridge over a river

6. What evidence shows that the Cuyahoga River changed over time? Give two details from the passage.

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

# GO BEYOND BASIC COMPREHENSION



**People and the River: Change Over Time**

Choose the Cuyahoga River or the Hudson River. Use the reading and video about your river to track how people were connected to the river, how that relationship changed, and how the river changed over time.

**Choose a river:** ☐ Cuyahoga River ☐ Hudson River

| EARLIER | | |
|---|---|---|
| **How were people connecte** | | |
| How did people use it?<br>How did they seem to think abo<br>it? | | |
| **What was happening to the** | | |
| What was the river like? | | |

**Put the change into words.**

**How did people's relationship with the river change?**
People's relationship changed from... to...

**How did the river change as people's relationship with it changed?**
The river changed from... to...

**How are the two changes connected?**
One connection I notice is...

**Featured Skill: Change Over Time**

Students use evidence to trace what changed, compare earlier and later conditions, and explain how those changes are connected.

# USE IT YOUR WAY

**Suggested Pathways**

| Pathway | Use | Suggested Sequence |
|---|---|---|
| **Core** | Short reading lesson | Passage → Reading Questions → choose one Reading Think About It |
| **Change Over Time Focus** | Teach the central text structure | Passage → Questions → Change Over Time graphic organizer → choose one Change Over Time writing response |
| **Reading + Video(s)** | Add listening and source connection | Passage → Questions → choose one Watch & Connect video → guided notes → optional Change Over Time organizer |
| **Full** | Multi-source lesson | Passage → Questions → Word Study → one or both videos → Change Over Time graphic organizer → choose one Change Over Time writing response |

**CORE PATHWAY — 1 lesson (30–45 mi**

- Read the Passage
- Reading Questions
- Choose One Reading Think About It
- If time: Time and Contrast Signal Wor

**Choose one of the suggested pathways**

| CHANGE OVER TIME — 2 blocks (about 30 minutes each) | |
|---|---|
| **Block 1 —Read and Begin Tracing Change** | • Read the Passage (preview the headings to notice how the text moves from earlier to later)<br>• Reading Questions<br>• Change Over Time Graphic Organizer — Cuyahoga River: Earlier column (Brief Lesson steps 1–3) |
| **Block 2 — Watch and Connect** | • Change Over Time Graphic Organizer: Change Begins and Later columns, then the synthesis boxes (Brief Lesson steps 4–6)<br>• Choose One Change Over Time Writing Response<br>• If time: Text Order vs. Time Order OR Time and Contrast Signal Words |

## OPTIONAL READING EXTENSIONS

These activities are optional. Choose the ones that match students' needs and the skills already being taught. They are designed to pull additional word study, language, and text-structure work from the passage without requiring a separate lesson or worksheet.

### Morphology: *ign* = fire

- Identify **ign** in *ignite* and connect the word to its meaning: to start burning or catch fire.
- Connect the root to familiar or content-area words such as **ignition**, the process that starts an engine, and **igneous**, a type of rock formed from melted rock that cools and hardens.
- Have students explain what the meaning **fire** contributes to each word.
- Students can keep a short root list and add *ign* alongside other roots they encounter across the series.

### Comparatives and Spelling Patterns

- Have students sort the words by spelling pattern and identify what changed in each word.
  - *strong* → *stronger* — simply add **-er**
  - *big* → *bigger* — double the final consonant before adding **-er**
  - *healthy* → *healthier* — change **y** to **i** before adding **-er**
  - *good* → *better* — irregular form
- Then return the words to the context of the passage. Ask what is being compared when the text describes the river as **stronger, bigger, healthier,** or **better**. This keeps the spelling lesson connected to the larger idea of comparing the river at different points in time.

### The *y*-to-*i* Rule Across Word Types

**Or build your own with optional extensions**

- The word **healthier** also provides an opportunity to build a word step by step:
  - **health** → **healthy** → **healthier**
  - Students can discuss how each added ending changes the word's job or meaning.

### The *-tion / -ion* Noun Family



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!

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