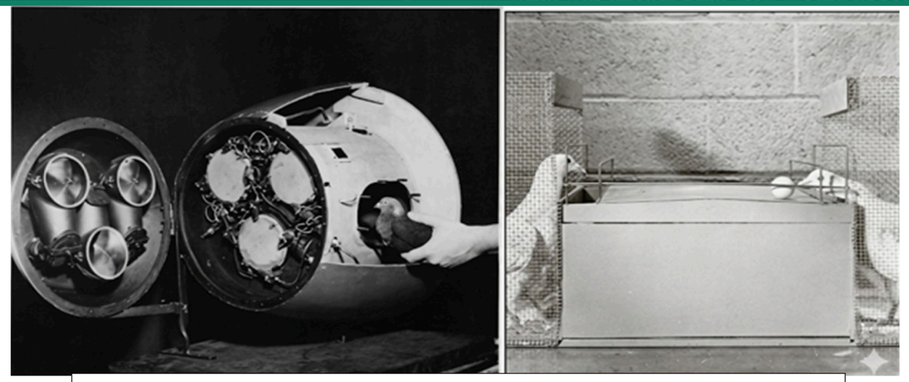
HIGH-INTEREST READING WITHOUT THE BABYISH FEEL

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



Could a Pigeon Guide a Machine?

The Strange Story of Project Pigeon

Vocabulary	
technology	tools, machines, or methods created to solve a problem
peck	to hit or pick at something quickly with a beak
guidance	help that keeps something moving toward the right place
signal	a message or sign that tells what to do
prototype	an early model made to test an idea

A Problem in the Air

During World War II, the U.S. wanted a better way to guide weapons toward enemy targets. Today, a

Next: Put the Bird in the Machine

Training the bird was only the first part. Skinner also needed a way for the pigeon to control a mach
He built a prototype to test the idea.

The front of the weapon would have a lens. As the weapon moved through the air, the lens would sh
what was ahead. That view would appear on a screen in front of the pigeon. If a ship was the target,

ck the target.

ce.

e target image would stay near the center of the scr

Then the target image would slide to one side of t
ew spot.

ed. That peck would send a signal to the steering p
rned, the target image would move back toward th

ck it, send a signal, and turn. The bird would keep

ch bird had its own small space and screen. The pl
system depend less on only one pigeon.

could learn the task. In tests, the birds followed m
of the same pigeons still remembered what to do.

Military leaders ended the project. New electronic

e stayed inside the weapon. The job would have pu

READ. THINK. USE THE TEXT.

Think About It
Did the tests show that the pigeons learned the task? Use two details from the passage to explain your answer.

I think the tests did/did not show that the pigeons learned the task because...
One detail from the passage is...
Another detail is...
These details show...

Think About It
Did the tests show that the pigeons learned the task? Use two details fr
explain your answer.

Step 1
Circle one: YES NO

Step 2
Look at the passage again. Highlight or underline two details that sho
to do.

Evidence from the passage	What this

Reading Questions
Use the passage to answer each question.

1. Why did B. F. Skinner begin Project Pigeon?

2. What happened when a pigeon pecked the correct target during traini

3. How did the team make the training harder after the pigeon learned to

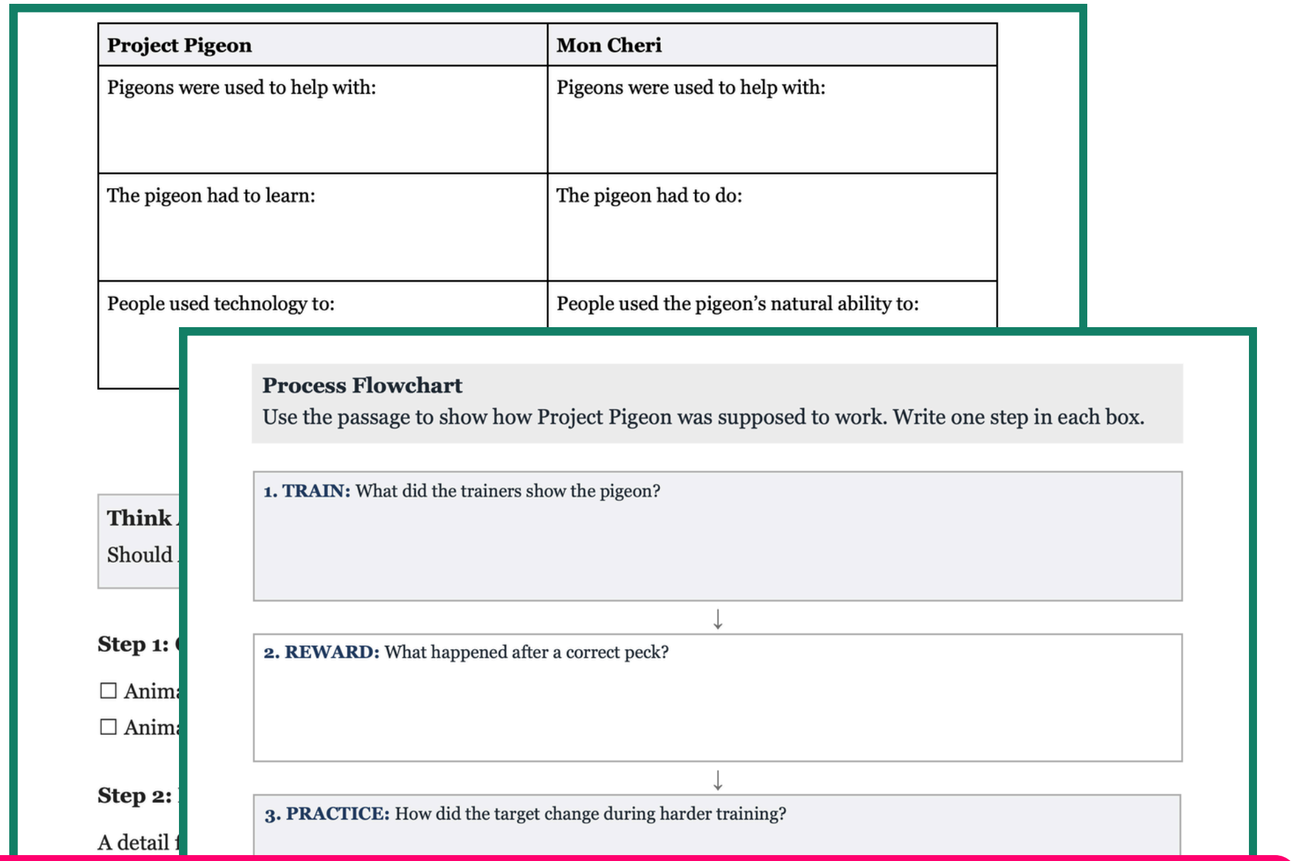
4. How was the pigeon supposed to see the target while it was inside the v

5. In the passage, a signal is:
   A. a kind of food reward
   B. a message that tells something what to do
   C. a picture of a pigeon
   D. a place where the bird sleeps

6. What happened when the target image moved away from the center of the screen? Give two steps.

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

GO BEYOND BASIC COMPREHENSION



Project Pigeon	Mon Cheri
Pigeons were used to help with:	Pigeons were used to help with:
The pigeon had to learn:	The pigeon had to do:
People used technology to:	People used the pigeon's natural ability to:

Process Flowchart
Use the passage to show how Project Pigeon was supposed to work. Write one step in each box.

1. TRAIN: What did the trainers show the pigeon?

↓

2. REWARD: What happened after a correct peck?

↓

3. PRACTICE: How did the target change during harder training?

Think
Should

Step 1:
☐ Anima
☐ Anima

Step 2:
A detail

Featured Skill: Process/Sequence

Students find the process steps in the text and add them to the flowchart. The structured Think About It helps them use text and video evidence to write an opinion about if animals should be used in war.

USE IT YOUR WAY

Suggested Pathways

Pathway	Use	Suggested Sequence
Core	Short reading lesson	Passage → Reading Questions → choose one Reading Think About It
Process/Sequence Focus	Teach the central text structure	Passage → Questions → Process Flowchart → Process Paragraph or Think About It
Reading + Video(s)	Add listening and source connection	Passage → Questions → Watch & Connect choice(s) → Optional opinion writing/debate
Full	Multi-source lesson	Passage → Questions → Process Flowchart → Word Study → Think About It → Watch & Connect → Opinion Task

CORE PATHWAY — 1 lesson (30–45 mi

- Read the Passage
- Reading Questions
- Choose One Reading Think About It
- If time: Process Signal Language OR S

PROCESS/SEQUENCE FOCUS PATHWAY — 2 blocks (about 30 minutes each)

Block 1 — Read and Begin the Process	• Read the Passage (preview the headings as stages of the process) • Reading Questions • Process Flowchart: Train, Reward, and Practice (Brief Lesson steps 1–4)
Block 2 — Complete and Explain the Process	• Process Flowchart: See the Target, Peck, Send a Signal, and Change Direction (Brief Lesson steps 5–7) • Process Signal Language • Choose one: Turn the completed flowchart into a short process paragraph OR Choose One Reading Think About It • If time: Sentence Combining

Choose one of the suggested pathways

OPTIONAL READING EXTENSIONS

Process Signal Language

- Have students scan the passage for words and headings that help the reader follow the process. Strong examples include **First, At first, Next, Then,** and **As**. The section headings—*First: Train the Pigeon, Next: Put the Bird in the Machine,* and *Then: Turn Pecks Into Guidance*—also make the sequence visible.
- Ask students to highlight the signal words and draw an arrow to the step that follows. Then reread the passage without the signal word. Discuss: **How does the signal word help the reader know where they are in the process?**
- As a short transfer activity, students can use **first, next, then,** and **finally** to orally retell the Project Pigeon process or to turn the completed flowchart into a short paragraph.

Sounds of -ed

- Have students find past-tense words ending in **-ed** and sort them according to the sound of the ending. The passage provides examples for all three pronunciations:
  - **/t/**: *pecked*
  - **/d/**: *moved, stayed, learned, followed, showed*
  - **/ĭd/**: *wanted, needed, ended*
- Read each word aloud and have students listen to the ending rather than relying only on the spelling. Emphasize that **-ed is spelled the same way even though it can represent three**

Or build your own with optional extensions

- In **sign**, the **g** is silent. In **signal**, the **g** is pronounced. Have students underline the shared spelling **sign** and circle the part that changes when **-al** is added.
- Build a small word-family map with **sign** and **signal** at the center. If appropriate for the group, add related words such as *signature* or *signify* and notice what happens to the **g** sound.



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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