

Through the Tunnel

Short Story by Doris Lessing

 Video link at thinkcentral.com

VIDEO TRAILER  KEYWORD: HML9-354

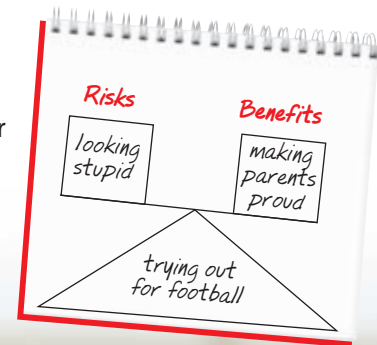
When is a **RISK** worth taking?

COMMON CORE

RL 1 Cite textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text. **RL 3** Analyze how complex characters develop over the course of a text. **RL 4** Analyze the cumulative impact of specific word choices on meaning. **L 4b** Identify patterns of word changes.

In “Through the Tunnel,” Jerry risks his personal safety. Sometimes people take such risks to prove something to themselves or others. The risks can be physical, emotional, or social. But when is an action too risky to attempt? More importantly, how do you calculate risk?

DISCUSS Think about a time when you or someone you know took a risk to prove something. Create a balance scale like the one shown to weigh that risk. In the base of the scale, write down the dangerous or risky activity. Jot down the risks in one box and the possible benefits in the other. Share your balance scale with your classmates, and discuss with them whether the possible benefits outweighed the risks of the behavior.



● TEXT ANALYSIS: SETTING AS SYMBOL

A **symbol** is a person, place, object, or activity that stands for something beyond itself. For example, a star often symbolizes hope or excellence. A handshake communicates goodwill.

In “Through the Tunnel,” various **settings** symbolize important ideas. As symbols, these settings help characterize Jerry by subtly revealing his thoughts about himself. As you read, think about what the beach, the bay, the tunnel, and the events that take place in each location might symbolize to Jerry and what these symbols tell you about his character.

● READING SKILL: ANALYZE DETAILS

In order to understand the symbolic significance of each setting in “Through the Tunnel,” you must analyze the **descriptive details** and pay attention to the larger meanings they imply. For example, the big beach is a familiar place where Jerry’s mother goes. What might this represent to Jerry? As you read, keep track of words and phrases from the text that describe each setting by using a chart similar to the one shown.

Beach	Bay	Tunnel
crowded familiar	wild and rocky	

Review: Draw Conclusions

▲ VOCABULARY IN CONTEXT

Lessing uses the numbered words in her story about coming of age. Try to match each word with a synonym. Then, in your *Reader/Writer Notebook*, write an example that shows the meaning of each vocabulary word you know.

- | | |
|-----------------|-----------------|
| 1. contrition | a. cliff |
| 2. incredulous | b. perseverance |
| 3. inquisitive | c. regret |
| 4. persistence | d. request |
| 5. promontory | e. questioning |
| 6. supplication | f. unbelieving |



Complete the activities in your **Reader/Writer Notebook**.

Doris Lessing

born 1919

Distinguished Writer

Doris Lessing has been celebrated as one of the 20th century’s “most powerful and compelling novelists.” In sheer size and variety, her body of work is impressive: over 45 books ranging from novels and short story collections to essays, a thus far two-volume autobiography, and a book about cats.

Crossing Boundaries

Born in Persia (now Iran), Lessing grew up on a farm in Southern Rhodesia (now Zimbabwe) with her British parents. As part of the small community of white settlers in Africa, she saw firsthand the injustices of white minority rule and racial segregation. In 1949, Lessing left Rhodesia for London to start a new life as a writer. Her first novel, *The Grass Is Singing* (1950), and many of her other early works are set in Rhodesia and deal critically with the colonial society she had known. Her best-known novel is *The Golden Notebook* (1962), a story about a woman writer in London struggling to come to terms with her life and times.

Child of Africa

Lessing insists, “Whatever I am, I have been made so by central Africa.” Her self-confidence, strength, and independence can be traced to her youth in the rough, unforgiving country of the African bush. There she could roam freely but, like other African children, had to deal at an early age with dangerous thunderstorms, droughts, snakes, scorpions, and insects. Survival—emotional, intellectual, and physical—is at the heart of her life and work.



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Online



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THROUGH THE Tunnel

DORIS LESSING

Going to the shore on the first morning of the vacation, the young English boy stopped at a turning of the path and looked down at a wild and rocky bay, and then over to the crowded beach he knew so well from other years. His mother walked on in front of him, carrying a bright striped bag in one hand. Her other arm, swinging loose, was very white in the sun. The boy watched that white, naked arm, and turned his eyes, which had a frown behind them, toward the bay and back again to his mother. When she felt he was not with her, she swung around. “Oh, there you are, Jerry!” she said. She looked impatient, then smiled. “Why, darling, would you rather not come with
10 me? Would you rather—” She frowned, conscientiously worrying over what amusements he might secretly be longing for, which she had been too busy or too careless to imagine. He was very familiar with that anxious, apologetic smile. **Contrition** sent him running after her. And yet, as he ran, he looked back over his shoulder at the wild bay; and all morning, as he played on the safe beach, he was thinking of it. **A**

Next morning, when it was time for the routine of swimming and sunbathing, his mother said, “Are you tired of the usual beach, Jerry? Would you like to go somewhere else?”

Analyze Visuals ▶

What elements of this painting are emphasized by its **composition**—the sizes, shapes, and arrangement of its parts?

contrition (kən-trīsh'ən)
n. a feeling of regret for doing wrong

A ANALYZE DETAILS

From what you've learned so far, what contrast exists between the beach and the bay?



“Oh, no!” he said quickly, smiling at her out of that unfailing impulse of
20 contrition—a sort of chivalry. Yet, walking down the path with her, he blurted
out, “I’d like to go and have a look at those rocks down there.”

She gave the idea her attention. It was a wild-looking place, and there was
no one there; but she said, “Of course, Jerry. When you’ve had enough, come
to the big beach. Or just go straight back to the villa, if you like.” She walked
away, that bare arm, now slightly reddened from yesterday’s sun, swinging.
And he almost ran after her again, feeling it unbearable that she should go by
herself, but he did not.

She was thinking, Of course he’s old enough to be safe without me. Have I
been keeping him too close? He mustn’t feel he ought to be with me. I must be
30 careful. **B**

He was an only child, eleven years old. She was a widow. She was de-
termined to be neither possessive nor lacking in devotion. She went
worrying off to her beach.

As for Jerry, once he saw that his mother had gained her beach,
he began the steep descent to the bay. From where he was, high up among
red-brown rocks, it was a scoop of moving bluish green fringed with white. As
he went lower, he saw that it spread among small **promontories** and inlets of
rough, sharp rock, and the crisper, lapping surface showed stains of purple
and darker blue. Finally, as he ran sliding and scraping down the last few yards,
40 he saw an edge of white surf and the shallow, luminous movement of water
over white sand, and, beyond that, a solid, heavy blue.

He ran straight into the water and began swimming. He was a good
swimmer. He went out fast over the gleaming sand, over a middle region
where rocks lay like discolored monsters under the surface, and then he was
in the real sea—a warm sea where irregular cold currents from the deep water
shocked his limbs. **C**

When he was so far out that he could look back not only on the little bay
but past the promontory that was between it and the big beach, he floated
on the buoyant surface and looked for his mother. There she was, a speck of
50 yellow under an umbrella that looked like a slice of orange peel. He swam back
to shore, relieved at being sure she was there, but all at once very lonely.

On the edge of a small cape that marked the side of the bay away from
the promontory was a loose scatter of rocks. Above them, some boys were
stripping off their clothes. They came running, naked, down to the rocks. The
English boy swam toward them, but kept his distance at a stone’s throw. They
were of that coast; all of them were burned smooth dark brown and speaking a
language he did not understand. To be with them, of them, was a craving that
filled his whole body. He swam a little closer; they turned and watched him
with narrowed, alert dark eyes. Then one smiled and waved. It was enough. In
60 a minute, he had swum in and was on the rocks beside them, smiling with a

B SETTING AS SYMBOL

Reread lines 21–30.
What might the beach
symbolize? The bay?

promontory
(pröm’ən-tôr’ē) *n.*
a high ridge of land
or rock jutting out into
a body of water

C ANALYZE DETAILS

Reread lines 42–46. Why
might Jerry consider this
area “the real sea”?

desperate, nervous **supplication**. They shouted cheerful greetings at him; and then, as he preserved his nervous, uncomprehending smile, they understood that he was a foreigner strayed from his own beach, and they proceeded to forget him. But he was happy. He was with them.

They began diving again and again from a high point into a well of blue sea between rough, pointed rocks. After they had dived and come up, they swam around, hauled themselves up, and waited their turn to dive again. They were big boys—men, to Jerry. He dived, and they watched him; and when he swam around to take his place, they made way for him. He felt he was accepted and
70 he dived again, carefully, proud of himself.

Soon the biggest of the boys poised himself, shot down into the water, and did not come up. The others stood about, watching. Jerry, after waiting for the sleek brown head to appear, let out a yell of warning; they looked at him idly and turned their eyes back toward the water. After a long time, the boy came up on the other side of a big dark rock, letting the air out of his lungs in a sputtering gasp and a shout of triumph. Immediately the rest of them dived in. One moment, the morning seemed full of chattering boys; the next, the air and the surface of the water were empty. But through the heavy blue, dark shapes could be seen moving and groping.

80 Jerry dived, shot past the school of underwater swimmers, saw a black wall of rock looming at him, touched it, and bobbed up at once to the surface, **D** where the wall was a low barrier he could see across. There was no one visible; under him, in the water, the dim shapes of the swimmers had disappeared. Then one, and then another of the boys came up on the far side of the barrier of rock, and he understood that they had swum through some gap or hole in it. He plunged down again. He could see nothing through the stinging salt water but the blank rock. When he came up the boys were all on the diving rock, preparing to attempt the feat again. And now, in a panic of failure, he yelled up, in English, “Look at me! Look!” and he began splashing and kicking
90 in the water like a foolish dog.

They looked down gravely, frowning. He knew the frown. At moments of failure, when he clowned to claim his mother’s attention, it was with just this grave, embarrassed inspection that she rewarded him. Through his hot shame, feeling the pleading grin on his face like a scar that he could never remove, he looked up at the group of big brown boys on the rock and shouted, “*Bonjour! Merci! Au revoir! Monsieur, monsieur!*”¹ while he hooked his fingers round his ears and waggled them.

Water surged into his mouth; he choked, sank, came up. The rock, lately weighted with boys, seemed to rear up out of the water as their weight was
100 removed. They were flying down past him, now, into the water; the air was full of falling bodies. Then the rock was empty in the hot sunlight. He counted one, two, three. . . .

supplication
(sŭp’lĭ-kā’shən) *n.* a
humble request or prayer

D GRAMMAR AND STYLE

Reread lines 80–81.
Notice how Lessing uses
a **compound predicate** to
concisely describe several
actions taking place.

1. *Bonjour! Merci! Au revoir! Monsieur, monsieur!* (bôn-zhōōr’ mĕr-sĕ’ ô’rĕ-vvār’ mĕ-syœ’ mĕ-syœ’)
French: Good day! Thank you! Goodbye! Sir, sir!

Analyze Visuals ▶

How would you describe the **mood** of this painting? What elements of color, content, and composition contribute to this mood?

At fifty, he was terrified. They must all be drowning beneath him, in the watery caves of the rock! At a hundred, he stared around him at the empty hillside, wondering if he should yell for help. He counted faster, faster, to hurry them up, to bring them to the surface quickly, to drown them quickly—anything rather than the terror of counting on and on into the blue emptiness of the morning. And then, at a hundred and sixty, the water beyond the rock was full of boys blowing like brown whales. They swam back to the shore
110 without a look at him.

He climbed back to the diving rock and sat down, feeling the hot roughness of it under his thighs. The boys were gathering up their bits of clothing and running off along the shore to another promontory. They were leaving to get away from him. He cried openly, fists in his eyes. There was no one to see him, and he cried himself out. **E**

It seemed to him that a long time had passed, and he swam out to where he could see his mother. Yes, she was still there, a yellow spot under an orange umbrella. He swam back to the big rock, climbed up, and dived into the blue pool among the fanged and angry boulders. Down he went, until he
120 touched the wall of rock again. But the salt was so painful in his eyes that he could not see. **F**

He came to the surface, swam to shore, and went back to the villa to wait for his mother. Soon she walked slowly up the path, swinging her striped bag, the flushed, naked arm dangling beside her. “I want some swimming goggles,” he panted, defiant and beseeching.

She gave him a patient, **inquisitive** look as she said casually, “Well, of course, darling.”

But now, now, now! He must have them this minute, and no other time. He nagged and pestered until she went with him to a shop. As soon as she had
130 bought the goggles, he grabbed them from her hand as if she were going to claim them for herself, and was off, running down the steep path to the bay.

Jerry swam out to the big barrier rock, adjusted the goggles, and dived. The impact of the water broke the rubber-enclosed vacuum, and the goggles came loose. He understood that he must swim down to the base of the rock from the surface of the water. He fixed the goggles tight and firm, filled his lungs, and floated, face down, on the water. Now, he could see. It was as if he had eyes of a different kind—fish eyes that showed everything clear and delicate and wavering in the bright water.

Under him, six or seven feet down, was a floor of perfectly clean, shining
140 white sand, rippled firm and hard by the tides. Two grayish shapes steered there, like long, rounded pieces of wood or slate. They were fish. He saw them nose toward each other, poise motionless, make a dart forward, swerve off, and come around again. It was like a water dance. A few inches above them the water sparkled as if sequins were dropping through it. Fish again—myriads of

E DRAW CONCLUSIONS

Why is Jerry upset? Cite details that support your answer.

F ANALYZE DETAILS

What do the specific words used to describe the boulders in line 119 suggest about the tunnel?

inquisitive (ĭn-kwĭz'ĭ-tĭv)
adj. curious; inquiring



minute fish, the length of his fingernail, were drifting through the water, and in a moment he could feel the innumerable tiny touches of them against his limbs. It was like swimming in flaked silver. The great rock the big boys had swum through rose sheer out of the white sand—black, tufted lightly with greenish weed. He could see no gap in it. He swam down to its base.

150 Again and again he rose, took a big chestful of air, and went down. Again and again he groped over the surface of the rock, feeling it, almost hugging it in the desperate need to find the entrance. And then, once, while he was clinging to the black wall, his knees came up and he shot his feet out forward and they met no obstacle. He had found the hole.

He gained the surface, clambered about the stones that littered the barrier rock until he found a big one, and, with this in his arms, let himself down over the side of the rock. He dropped, with the weight, straight to the sandy floor. Clinging tight to the anchor of stone, he lay on his side and looked in under the dark shelf at the place where his feet had gone. He could see the hole.

160 It was an irregular, dark gap; but he could not see deep into it. He let go of his anchor, clung with his hands to the edges of the hole, and tried to push himself in.

He got his head in, found his shoulders jammed, moved them in sidewise, and was inside as far as his waist. He could see nothing ahead. Something soft and clammy touched his mouth; he saw a dark frond moving against the grayish rock, and panic filled him. He thought of octopuses, of clinging weed. He pushed himself out backward and caught a glimpse, as he retreated, of a harmless tentacle of seaweed drifting in the mouth of the tunnel. But it was enough. He reached the sunlight, swam to shore, and lay on the diving rock.

170 He looked down into the blue well of water. He knew he must find his way through that cave, or hole, or tunnel, and out the other side. **G**

First, he thought, he must learn to control his breathing. He let himself down into the water with another big stone in his arms, so that he could lie effortlessly on the bottom of the sea. He counted. One, two, three. He counted steadily. He could hear the movement of blood in his chest. Fifty-one, fifty-two. . . . His chest was hurting. He let go of the rock and went up into the air. He saw that the sun was low. He rushed to the villa and found his mother at her supper. She said only “Did you enjoy yourself?” and he said “Yes.”

180 All night the boy dreamed of the water-filled cave in the rock, and as soon as breakfast was over he went to the bay.

That night, his nose bled badly. For hours he had been underwater, learning to hold his breath, and now he felt weak and dizzy. His mother said, “I shouldn’t overdo things, darling, if I were you.”

That day and the next, Jerry exercised his lungs as if everything, the whole of his life, all that he would become, depended upon it. Again his nose bled at night, and his mother insisted on his coming with her the next day. It was

G DRAW CONCLUSIONS

Reread lines 155–171. How does Jerry’s perception of the tunnel change? What does this tell you about him?

a torment to him to waste a day of his careful self-training, but he stayed with her on that other beach, which now seemed a place for small children, a place where his mother might lie safe in the sun. It was not his beach. **H**

190 He did not ask for permission, on the following day, to go to his beach. He went, before his mother could consider the complicated rights and wrongs of the matter. A day's rest, he discovered, had improved his count by ten. The big boys had made the passage while he counted a hundred and sixty. He had been counting fast, in his fright. Probably now, if he tried, he could get through that long tunnel, but he was not going to try yet. A curious, most unchildlike **persistence**, a controlled impatience, made him wait. In the meantime, he lay underwater on the white sand, littered now by stones he had brought down from the upper air, and studied the entrance to the tunnel. He knew every jut and corner of it, as far as it was possible to see. It was as if he
200 already felt its sharpness about his shoulders.

He sat by the clock in the villa, when his mother was not near, and checked his time. He was **incredulous** and then proud to find he could hold his breath without strain for two minutes. The words "two minutes," authorized by the clock, brought close the adventure that was so necessary to him.

In another four days, his mother said casually one morning, they must go home. On the day before they left, he would do it. He would do it if it killed him, he said defiantly to himself. But two days before they were to leave—a day of triumph when he increased his count by fifteen—his nose
210 bled so badly that he turned dizzy and had to lie limply over the big rock like a bit of seaweed, watching the thick red blood flow on to the rock and trickle slowly down to the sea. He was frightened. Supposing he turned dizzy in the tunnel? Supposing he died there, trapped? Supposing—his head went around, in the hot sun, and he almost gave up. He thought he would return to the house and lie down, and next summer, perhaps, when he had another year's growth in him—*then* he would go through the hole.

But even after he had made the decision, or thought he had, he found himself sitting up on the rock and looking down into the water; and he knew that now, this moment, when his nose had only just stopped bleeding, when his head was still sore and throbbing—this was the moment when he would
220 try. If he did not do it now, he never would. He was trembling with fear that he would not go; and he was trembling with horror at that long, long tunnel under the rock, under the sea. Even in the open sunlight, the barrier rock seemed very wide and very heavy; tons of rock pressed down on where he would go. If he died there, he would lie until one day—perhaps not before next year—those big boys would swim into it and find it blocked. **I**

He put on his goggles, fitted them tight, tested the vacuum. His hands were shaking. Then he chose the biggest stone he could carry and slipped over the

H SETTING AS SYMBOL

What does the big beach symbolize to Jerry now? Cite details in this paragraph that support your interpretation.

persistence (pər-sĭs'təns)

n. the act of refusing to stop or be changed

incredulous (ĭn-krĕj'ə-ləs)

adj. doubtful; disbelieving

I ANALYZE DETAILS

Reread lines 205–225. How dangerous is the tunnel? Point out details that reveal this.



Ice Blue (1981), Susan Shatter. Oil on canvas, 40" × 90". Private collection. Courtesy of the Fischback Gallery, New York.

edge of the rock until half of him was in the cool, enclosing water and half in
the hot sun. He looked up once at the empty sky, filled his lungs once, twice,
230 and then sank fast to the bottom with the stone. He let it go and began to
count. He took the edges of the hole in his hands and drew himself into it,
wriggling his shoulders in sidewise as he remembered he must, kicking himself
along with his feet.

Soon he was clear inside. He was in a small rock-bound hole filled with
yellowish-gray water. The water was pushing him up against the roof. The roof
was sharp and pained his back. He pulled himself along with his hands—fast,
fast—and used his legs as levers. His head knocked against something; a sharp
pain dizzied him. Fifty, fifty-one, fifty-two. . . . He was without light, and the
water seemed to press upon him with the weight of rock. Seventy-one, seventy-
240 two. . . . There was no strain on his lungs. He felt like an inflated balloon, his
lungs were so light and easy, but his head was pulsing.

He was being continually pressed against the sharp roof, which felt slimy
as well as sharp. Again he thought of octopuses, and wondered if the tunnel
might be filled with weed that could tangle him. He gave himself a panicky,



convulsive kick forward, ducked his head, and swam. His feet and hands moved freely, as if in open water. The hole must have widened out. He thought he must be swimming fast, and he was frightened of banging his head if the tunnel narrowed.

A hundred, a hundred and one. . . . The water paled. Victory filled him.
250 His lungs were beginning to hurt. A few more strokes and he would be out. He was counting wildly; he said a hundred and fifteen, and then, a long time later, a hundred and fifteen again. The water was a clear jewel-green all around him. Then he saw, above his head, a crack running up through the rock. Sunlight was falling through it, showing the clean, dark rock of the tunnel, a single mussel shell, and darkness ahead.

He was at the end of what he could do. He looked up at the crack as if it were filled with air and not water, as if he could put his mouth to it to draw in air. A hundred and fifteen, he heard himself say inside his head—but he had said that long ago. He must go on into the blackness ahead, or he would
260 drown. His head was swelling, his lungs cracking. A hundred and fifteen, a hundred and fifteen pounded through his head, and he feebly clutched at rocks

Language Coach

Derivations Many words are derived, or generated, from the addition of prefixes or suffixes to a common root. The Latin root *-sci-* (“knowledge”) gives rise to many related words, such as *science* and *scientific*. Reread lines 263–264. Which words in these lines are related through *-sci-*?

in the dark, pulling himself forward, leaving the brief space of sunlit water behind. He felt he was dying. He was no longer quite conscious. He struggled on in the darkness between lapses into unconsciousness. An immense, swelling pain filled his head, and then the darkness cracked with an explosion of green light. His hands, groping forward, met nothing; and his feet, kicking back, propelled him out into the open sea.

He drifted to the surface, his face turned up to the air. He was gasping like a fish. He felt he would sink now and drown; he could not swim the few feet
270 back to the rock. Then he was clutching it and pulling himself up onto it. He lay face down, gasping. He could see nothing but a red-veined, clotted dark. His eyes must have burst, he thought; they were full of blood. He tore off his goggles and a gout of blood went into the sea. His nose was bleeding, and the blood had filled the goggles.

He scooped up handfuls of water from the cool, salty sea, to splash on his face, and did not know whether it was blood or salt water he tasted. After a time, his heart quieted, his eyes cleared, and he sat up. He could see the local boys diving and playing half a mile away. He did not want them. He wanted
280 nothing but to get back home and lie down.

In a short while, Jerry swam to shore and climbed slowly up the path
280 to the villa. He flung himself on his bed and slept, waking at the sound of feet on the path outside. His mother was coming back. He rushed to the bathroom, thinking she must not see his face with bloodstains, or tearstains, on it. He came out of the bathroom and met her as she walked into the villa, smiling, her eyes lighting up.

“Have a nice morning?” she asked, laying her hand on his warm brown shoulder a moment.

“Oh, yes, thank you,” he said.

“You look a bit pale.” And then, sharp and anxious, “How did you bang
290 your head?”

“Oh, just banged it,” he told her.

She looked at him closely. He was strained; his eyes were glazed-looking. She was worried. And then she said to herself, Oh, don’t fuss! Nothing can happen. He can swim like a fish.

They sat down to lunch together.

“Mummy,” he said, “I can stay under water for two minutes—three minutes, at least.” It came bursting out of him.

“Can you, darling?” she said. “Well, I shouldn’t overdo it. I don’t think you ought to swim any more today.”

300 She was ready for a battle of wills, but he gave in at once. It was no longer of the least importance to go to the bay. 🐬

Comprehension

- 1. Recall** Describe Jerry's age and family situation.
- 2. Summarize** What happens between Jerry and the older boys?
- 3. Clarify** Why is it so important for Jerry to swim through the tunnel? Explain what he is trying to prove.

COMMON CORE

RL 1 Cite textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text. **RL 3** Analyze how complex characters develop over the course of a text. **RL 4** Analyze the cumulative impact of specific word choices on meaning.

Text Analysis

- 4. Identify Conflicts** Identify the external and internal conflicts Jerry faces in the story. How are these conflicts resolved?
- 5. Analyze Suspense** Reread lines 234–267. How does Lessing build suspense in this passage? What other techniques does she use to build suspense in this story? Give examples to support your answers.
- 6. Analyze Relationships** Explain Jerry's relationship with his mother. How has their relationship changed by the end of the story?
- 7. Analyze Details** Look over the chart you made as you read. What are the major differences between the big beach and the bay? What does each place symbolize to Jerry?
- 8. Interpret Setting as Symbol** What does Jerry's swim through the tunnel symbolize? Cite descriptions of the tunnel, its connection to the older boys, and Jerry's feelings about the tunnel to support your interpretation.
- 9. Draw Conclusions About Motive** Does Jerry accomplish what he wants by swimming through the tunnel? To decide, create a chart, briefly describing Jerry before and after his swim.
- 10. Evaluate** Do the benefits of Jerry's accomplishment outweigh the risks? Base your decision on evidence from the story, such as Jerry's preparation, as well as on your own knowledge and experience.

Before, Jerry is ...	After, Jerry is ...
<p><i>anxious to please his mother</i></p> <p><i>lonely</i></p>	

Text Criticism

- 11. Critical Interpretations** The critic Martha Duffy once praised Lessing for the “unsparing clarity and frankness” of her writing. What evidence do you find in “Through the Tunnel” to support this assessment of Lessing's work?

When is a RISK worth taking?

How would you decide if the potential rewards of a risk are worth taking the risk?

Vocabulary in Context

▲ VOCABULARY PRACTICE

Drawing on your understanding of the words, write *true* or *false* for each item.

1. If you feel **contrition** for something you did, you feel proud of your actions.
2. You should not live on a **promontory** if you are afraid of heights.
3. An **inquisitive** child will rarely ask why.
4. You might hear a **supplication** at a prayer service.
5. A person shows **persistence** by repeating a job until she gets it right.
6. If you are **incredulous** about a friend's advice, you likely will ignore it.

WORD LIST

contrition
incredulous
inquisitive
persistence
promontory
supplication

ACADEMIC VOCABULARY IN WRITING

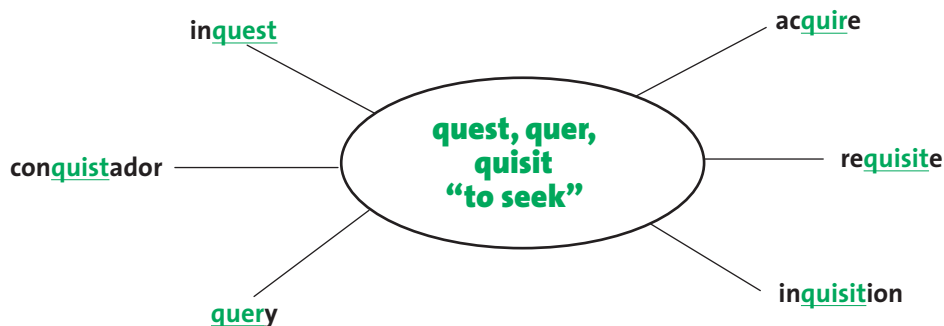
- aspect
- circumstance
- contribute
- distinct
- perceive

Which changes in Jerry does his mother **perceive** during their beach vacation? Which changes does she *not* perceive? Answer these questions in a paragraph, using at least one Academic Vocabulary word from the list.

VOCABULARY STRATEGY: THE LATIN ROOTS *quest*, *quer*, AND *quisit*

The word *inquisitive* contains the root of the Latin word *quaerere*, meaning “to seek.” Common forms of this root include *quest*, *quer*, and *quisit*. When the Latin prefix *in-* (“into”) and the suffix *-ive* (“tending toward a specific action”) are added to *quisit*, they make the word *inquisitive*, which literally means “inclining to seek into.” Remembering the meaning of *quest*, *quer*, and *quisit* will help you understand words in this family, which you are likely to encounter in many contexts. In history classes, for example, you may read about the Spanish conquistadors.

PRACTICE Try your hand at writing a definition for each of these words in the *quest*, *quer*, and *quisit* family. Use a dictionary to confirm your definitions. Then, for each word, write a sentence that shows its meaning.



COMMON CORE

L4d Verify the preliminary determination of the meaning of a word.

Interactive Vocabulary **THINK central**

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Language

◆ GRAMMAR AND STYLE: Write Concisely

Review the **Grammar and Style** note on page 359. Like Lessing, you can use **compound predicates** to make your writing more concise and improve the flow of your sentences.

A predicate indicates what a subject is or does or what happens to the subject. By combining predicates, you can avoid writing a series of short, choppy sentences that begin with the same noun or pronoun.

Here is an example of how Lessing uses this technique:

He looked up once at the empty sky, filled his lungs once, twice, and then sank fast to the bottom with the stone. He let it go and began to count.
(lines 229–231)

Notice how the revisions in blue improve sentence flow.

STUDENT MODEL

I think Jerry's mom is a responsible parent. She pays attention to Jerry. She tries to figure out what he wants. He wants her to give him more freedom. She knows he is a good swimmer. She decides to let him go to the bay.

READING-WRITING CONNECTION



Further explore the characters in “Through the Tunnel” by responding to the writing prompt below. Then use the **revising tip** to improve your writing.

WRITING PROMPT

Short Constructed Response: Analysis

Do you think Jerry's mother is right to trust him by himself? Consider the **risks** Jerry takes, as well as his success, and then write a **one- or two-paragraph response** that explains your answer.

REVISING TIP

Review your response. Have you used compound predicates to connect related ideas? If not, revise your writing.

COMMON CORE

L1 Demonstrate command of the conventions of standard English grammar and usage. **L3** Apply knowledge of language to make effective choices for meaning or style.

Interactive
Revision



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