

# The Geography Bee

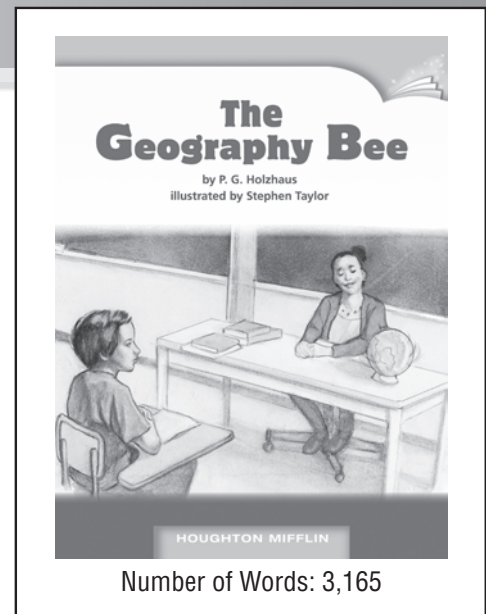
by P.G. Holzhaus

Fountas-Pinnell Level V

Realistic Fiction

### Selection Summary

After winning the class geography bee, Hector advances to the fifth-grade finals. Before the bee, he finds an envelope containing the questions and answers. He peeks at the material. After a struggle with his conscience, he makes an important decision, and learns a valuable lesson about himself.



## Characteristics of the Text

<b>Genre</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Realistic fiction</li> </ul>
<b>Text Structure</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Narrative text that spans a two-day period</li> <li>No chapters or section headings</li> <li>Problem/solution format</li> </ul>
<b>Content</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>World geography</li> <li>Decision-making</li> <li>Cheating</li> </ul>
<b>Themes and Ideas</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The consequences of cheating</li> <li>Choosing between right and wrong</li> </ul>
<b>Language and Literary Features</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Many words that relate to emotions</li> <li>Use of idioms</li> </ul>
<b>Sentence Complexity</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Complex sentences—phrases, clauses, compound</li> <li>Instances of split dialogue</li> <li>Many sentences of 20-plus words</li> </ul>
<b>Vocabulary</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Words related to world geography: <i>meridian, isthmus, atoll</i></li> <li>Proper nouns: <i>Ottawa, Falkland Islands, Rock of Gibraltar</i></li> </ul>
<b>Words</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Many words with 4-plus syllables</li> <li>Hyphenated adjectives</li> </ul>
<b>Illustrations</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Illustrations with no captions; show characters' emotions</li> </ul>
<b>Book and Print Features</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Sixteen pages, several with pages of full text</li> <li>Dense format</li> <li>Main character's thoughts in italicized sentences</li> </ul>

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# The Geography Bee

by P.G. Holzhaus

## Build Background

Help students use their knowledge about school competitions to visualize the text. Build interest by asking questions such as the following: *Have you heard of spelling bees? What happens in a spelling bee? Have you heard of geography bees? What kinds of questions might be in a geography bee?* Read the title and author and talk about the cover illustration. Tell students that this selection is realistic fiction about characters and events that could happen in real life.

## Introduce the Text

Guide students through the text, noting important ideas and helping with unfamiliar language and vocabulary so they can read the text successfully. Here are some suggestions:

**Page 3:** Explain that this is a story about Hector Peña (Pe nyah, the letter “ñ” is pronounced “nyuh,” as in canyon), a fifth-grade boy who competes in two geography bees. **Suggested language:** *Let’s look together at the illustration of Hector on page 3.* **Ask:** *This teacher, Mr. Adler, has an unkempt desk. What kind of desk is an unkempt desk?*

**Page 4:** Draw attention to the sentence: *“When the question comes, he thought, I’ll just stop the globe in the right place and the answer will be there.”* **Ask:** *Why do you think the author wrote this text in italics?* Tell students to look for other examples of Hector’s thoughts when they read. Hector’s thoughts are very important in this story.

**Page 16:** *Mr. Adler tells Hector I don’t believe in punishing people for making the right decision and correcting their mistakes.* **Ask:** *What do you think Mr. Adler’s view is on cheating and admitting a mistake?*

*Now go back to the beginning and learn about a tough decision Hector has to make.*

## Expand Your Vocabulary

**archipelago** – a large group of islands, p. 18

**atoll** - a ring like reef that nearly or entirely encloses a lagoon, p. 18

**dependency** – something dependent or subordinate , p. 5


**isthmus** – a narrow strip of land connecting two larger masses of land, p. 13

**lagoon** – a shallow body of water, p. 18

**meridian** – an imaginary great circle on the earth’s surface passing through the North and South geographic poles, p. 13

# Read

Have students read silently while you listen to individual students read aloud. Support their understanding of the text as needed.

Remind students to use the Infer/Predict strategy  **TARGET STRATEGY** as they read. Tell them to use text clues to think about what might happen next as the story unfolds.

## Discuss and Revisit the Text

### Personal Response

Invite students to share their personal responses to the text.

**Suggested language:** *Did you expect the story to have a different ending? If so, how did you think it would end?*

### Ways of Thinking

As you discuss the text, help students understand these points:

Thinking Within the Text	Thinking Beyond the Text	Thinking About the Text
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Hector gave in to temptation and made a bad decision.</li><li>• Hector's conscience made him feel guilty, so he told Mr. Adler what he did.</li><li>• Hector was not punished, because he took responsibility for his actions and corrected his mistake.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• When faced with a difficult decision, one's conscience will often point to the right decision.</li><li>• Everyone makes mistakes. The important thing is how we handle our mistakes.</li><li>• How we respond to difficult situations often teaches us something about ourselves.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The sequence of the story is interrupted when Hector thinks back to his detention the previous spring.</li><li>• The author develops Mr. Adler's character in great detail.</li></ul>

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### Choices for Further Support

- **Fluency** Invite students to choose a passage from the text to present a readers' theater. Remind them to integrate the fluency dimensions of pausing, phrasing, stress, intonation, and rate as they read aloud. Point out the importance of rehearsing the text first so they don't stumble over difficult words they may encounter.
- **Comprehension** Based on your observations of the students' reading and discussion, revisit parts of the text to clarify or extend comprehension. Remind students to go back to the text to support their ideas.
- **Phonics/Word Work** Remind students that many English words came from other languages, including Greek and Latin. Help students focus on the origins of three such words in the selection. Point out the word *geography* in the title. Ask students to tell what they know about the Greek word parts *geo* (earth) and *graph* (write). Point out the word *gradually* on page 15. Explain that it comes from the Latin root *grad* that means "by steps." Then point out the word *thermos* on the same page. Explain that it comes from the Greek root *therme*, meaning "heat."

# Writing about Reading

## Critical Thinking

Have students complete the Critical Thinking questions on BLM 3.9.

## Responding

Have students complete the activities at the back of the book, using their Reader's Notebook. Use the instruction below as needed to reinforce or extend understanding of the comprehension skill.

## Target Comprehension Skill

**Compare and Contrast** ✓ **TARGET SKILL** Remind students that when they compare and contrast, they think about ways in which things are alike and how they are different. Model how to add details to the Graphic Organizer, using a "Think Aloud" like the one below

### Think Aloud

*The illustrations help readers compare and contrast Mr. Adler and Ms. Hernandez. The illustration of Mr. Adler's desk on page 3 shows us that he is disorganized. Add that detail to the diagram under "Mr. Adler."  
The illustration of Ms. Hernandez's desk on page 6 shows us that she is organized. Add that to the diagram under "Ms. Hernandez."*

## Practice the Skill

Have students compare and contrast characters in other stories they have read.

## Writing Prompt: Thinking Beyond the Text

Have students write a response to the prompt on page 6. Remind them that when they think beyond the text, they use their personal knowledge to reach new understandings.

## Assessment Prompts

- Why does the author describe Mr. Adler near the very beginning of the story?
- Which words and phrases on page 11 show that Hector regretted his decision to look in the envelope?
- What is an important message of this story?

# English Language Development

**Reading Support** Have students listen to the audio or online recordings. Make sure the text matches the students' reading level. Language and content should be accessible with regular teaching support.

**Idioms** The story includes an idiom. Read aloud the phrase on page 12, *Abby had tried to catch his eye several times*. Explain the meaning of *catch his eye*.

## Oral Language Development

Check student comprehension, using a dialogue that best matches your students' English proficiency. **Speaker 1** is the teacher, **Speaker 2** is the student.

Beginning/Early Intermediate	Intermediate	Early Advanced/ Advanced
<b>Speaker 1:</b> What did Hector do when he found the envelope?	<b>Speaker 1:</b> What was inside the envelope that Hector found?	<b>Speaker 1:</b> How did Hector become interested in geography?
<b>Speaker 2:</b> looked in it	<b>Speaker 2:</b> Questions and answers to the geography bee were inside.	<b>Speaker 2:</b> He played a geography game in detention.
<b>Speaker 1:</b> What was in the envelope?	<b>Speaker 1:</b> What did Hector tell Mr. Adler before the fifth-grade geography bee?	<b>Speaker 1:</b> What does this sentence mean in the story: "Hector's brain was in the middle of a heated debate with itself."?
<b>Speaker 2:</b> questions and answers	<b>Speaker 2:</b> He told him that he had found the envelope and had looked inside.	<b>Speaker 2:</b> It means he couldn't make up his mind.
<b>Speaker 1:</b> Did Hector cheat in the fifth-grade geography bee?		
<b>Speaker 2:</b> no		

### Responding

**TARGET SKILL** Compare and Contrast How are Mr. Adler and Ms. Hernandez similar? In what ways are they different? Copy and complete the Venn diagram below.

Mr. Adler    Both    Ms. Hernandez

**Write About It**

**Text To Self** Hector, the main character in *The Geography Bee*, is faced with a difficult decision—whether or not to cheat. Think of a time when you were faced with a difficult decision about right and wrong. Write several paragraphs explaining what happened.

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Name \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

**Lesson 3**  
BLACKLINE MASTER 3.3

### Critical Thinking

**Read and answer the questions.** Possible responses shown.

- Think within the text** What does Abby mean when she says she can cheer for Hector now without feeling guilty?  
She can relax knowing he did the right thing.
- Think within the text** What is written on the envelope Mr. Adler drops?  
"Fifth Grade Geography Bee Questions and Answers"
- Think beyond the text** Compare and contrast what happens when Hector turns in the questions with what might have happened if he did not.  
By turning in the questions, Hector winds up becoming a better student, which might not have otherwise happened. He also keeps Abby's friendship and respect. Perhaps the punishment would have been worse if he hadn't told the truth.
- Think about the text** Explain the author's purpose for writing the story.  
The author wants to show that being honest is the best way to do things, and that doing your best is more important than winning.

**Making Connections** Hector participates in a geography bee. Create a challenging bee of your own, including questions and answers.

**Write your answer in your Reader's Notebook.**

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# The Geography Bee

## Thinking Beyond the Text

Think about the questions below. Then write your answer in two or three paragraphs.

Remember that when you think beyond the text, you use your personal knowledge to reach new understandings.

This sentence about Hector appears at the end of the story: “He’d set out to learn everything he could about the world and ended up learning even more about himself.”

What important things did Hector learn about himself? How do you think he felt about the discoveries he made? Support your answer with details from the story.



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Name \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

# Critical Thinking

## The Geography Bee Critical Thinking

Read and answer the questions.

1. **Think within the text** What does Abby mean when she says she can cheer for Hector now without feeling guilty?

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2. **Think within the text** What is written on the envelope Mr. Adler drops?

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3. **Think beyond the text** Compare and contrast what happens when Hector turns in the questions with what might have happened if he did not.

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4. **Think about the text** Explain the author's purpose for writing the story.

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**Making Connections** Hector participates in a geography bee. Create a challenging bee of your own, including questions and answers.

**Write your answer in your Reader's Notebook.**

# The Geography Bee • LEVEL V

**The Geography Bee**  
Running Record Form

page	Selection Text	Errors	Self-Corrections
3	Hector could hear Mr. Adler searching gingerly through a precarious stack of papers on his unkempt desk. Everyone liked Mr. Adler and thought he was a great teacher. The man was like a walking world atlas. However, he also seemed to be incredibly disorganized and was constantly misplacing things. Once last year, he'd lost his car keys and ridden his bike to school for a week. Then he accidentally stumbled across the keys in the faculty fridge in the teacher's lounge. Somehow he'd left them in the cheese drawer. Finding the second sheet of geography questions might take a while.		
	Comments:	<b>Accuracy Rate</b> (# words read correctly/100 × 100) _____ %	<b>Total Self-Corrections</b> _____

Behavior	Code	Error
Read word correctly	✓ cat	0
Repeated word, sentence, or phrase	Ⓢ cat	0
Omission	̄ cat	1

Behavior	Code	Error
Substitution	cut cat	1
Self-corrects	cut <sup>sc</sup> cat	0
Insertion	the ^ cat	1
Word told	Ⓣ cat	1

