Chapter Focus Question
How is a transition a change that happens over time?

Reading 1: Literature
Novel
Behind the Mountains
by Edwidge Danticat

Reading 2: Content: Science
Informational text: Science Textbook
Changes of state are physical changes

Chapter 1

Objectives

Reading Strategies
- Identify main ideas;
- Identify cause and effect

Listening and Speaking
- Tell a story about a time of transition

Grammar
- Learn the present and past progressive tenses

Writing
- Write a descriptive essay

Behind the Mountains

About the Reading

Behind the Mountains is a story about Celiane, a young girl who comes to the United States from Beau Jour, Haiti. Celiane adjusts to her new home and new challenges while holding on to memories of her life in Haiti.

Build Background
Haiti

Haiti is a country that is located on the western side of a large island in the Caribbean Sea. It is a mountainous country with deep forests, beautiful beaches, large cities, and small villages.

The official language of Haiti is French, but most people speak a language called Haitian Creole. It is based on French and various African languages. In Behind the Mountains, Celiane and her father use their knowledge of Haitian Creole to help them better understand some of the English words they hear in the United States.

Use Prior Knowledge
Understand Proverbs

Proverbs are sayings that express common truths. These sayings are a little like puzzles: they don’t seem to make sense until you apply them to an experience.

Edwidge Danticat uses part of a Haitian proverb in the title of her book Behind the Mountains. The proverb is: “Behind the mountains are more mountains.” It expresses the idea that life is filled with obstacles, or problems—some that you can see in front of you, and some that are beyond those you can see.

With a partner, explain the proverbs below using your own experiences and your understanding of the words in the proverbs.

1. An apple a day keeps the doctor away. (Clue: Apples are good for you.)
2. Laughter is the best medicine. (Clue: Medicine helps people feel better.)
3. Many hands make light work.
4. No man is an island.

Academic Vocabulary

support
deduce
contrast
participate

Academic Content

The geography, people, and language of Haiti
The states of matter
The first time I met Kim, my impression of her was that she wasn’t a friendly person. I thought she was quarrelsome because she argued about everything. However, her arguments were fluid. People saw how intelligent she was. She soon made a slew of friends. Reluctantly, I became one myself. Now we don’t try to outshine each other at all. We’re best friends!

Practice Vocabulary

Complete the sentences with the correct Key Vocabulary words.

1. The ____ friends finally stopped arguing and forgot their differences.
2. I bought a ____ of vegetables at the farmers market, including a lot of tomatoes, broccoli, and carrots.
3. The speaker wanted to make a good ____ so he was careful to use correct English during his speech.
4. She planned to ____ the other girls by creating the best report.
5. The ballet dancer’s ____ moves were a pleasure to watch as she danced across the stage.
6. The little boy did not have time to read all his books. He ____ returned the last book to the library.

Use Vocabulary Independently

Identify an antonym, or a word or phrase that means the opposite, for each of the Key Vocabulary words. Use a dictionary to check your work.

Academic Vocabulary

Vocabulary for the Reading Strategy

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Word</th>
<th>Explanation</th>
<th>Sample Sentence</th>
<th>Visual Cue</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>support</td>
<td>verb</td>
<td>to agree with, advocate, or back up with information</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>deduce</td>
<td>verb</td>
<td>to reach a conclusion by reasoning</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The researcher looked for information to support his opinion in order to convince the others.
The scientist tries to deduce a result using information she learned while performing experiments.

Draw a picture and write a sentence for each word.

Reading Strategy

Identify Main Ideas

The main idea of a reading is the most important, or central, idea. Supporting details include any information that supports the main idea and helps you understand it. In many stories, the author does not state the main idea directly. As a reader, you can deduce the main idea first, then examine all the details that the author gives you. After you read, you will use the graphic organizer below to find the main ideas in Behind the Mountains.

1. As you read, deduce what the main idea of each page is. Write it down in the box on the left.
2. Note details that support the main idea. Those will go in the box on the right.
Behind the Mountains
by Edwidge Danticat

1. The school is in a gray concrete building, facing a *slew* of giant *housing complexes*, which Papa said are called “projects.” The projects are so tall that they look like mountains with windows.

2. We went directly to the main office, where teachers and school administrators were sitting behind desks, performing different tasks to prepare for the school day. Papa stood quietly facing the desks, waiting for one of the administrators to look up. Finally, a man walked over to us.

3. Papa’s English was not nearly as *fluid* as the man’s was. Still, Papa managed to explain why we were there. In his *quick-fire* speech, the man asked about my *vaccination* and medical papers. (“Vaccination” and “medical” are similar words in Creole as in English.) When Papa handed him the papers, the man walked back to his desk and picked up a form. He filled in some of the form, then gave Papa the rest to finish.

4. The man called someone else over, an older woman. The woman looked down at the form and told us in Creole that I had been assigned to Class 8M5. Papa asked what room that was. She said she would take us.

Meet the Author

Edwidge Danticat was born in Port-au-Prince, Haiti, in 1969. She moved to Brooklyn, New York, when she was 12. In Haiti, storytelling plays an important role in the local culture, and both storytelling and reading influenced Danticat’s growth as a writer. She wrote her first short story at age 9 and has since written a number of novels, produced a film about Haiti, and taught creative writing at New York University and the University of Miami.

Reading Focus Questions

As you read, think about these questions.
1. How does Celiane’s experience relate to the theme of “transitions”?
2. What do you think was the author’s purpose for writing this novel?
3. Is Celiane’s experience on her first day of school a common experience? Why or why not?

Checkpoints

1. Explain what *theme* means in your own words.
2. What are the characteristics of a narrator called?

**Reading Strategy**

**Identify Main Ideas**

Look at paragraph 3. Which details support the main idea that Papa’s English is actually very good?

**Reading Check**

1. **Recall facts** What does Celiane (the narrator) see that look like “mountains with windows”?
2. **Deduce** Why does the man in paragraph 4 ask a woman to help Papa and Celiane?
3. **State your opinion** In your opinion, were Papa and Celiane given a pleasant welcome at Celiane’s new school? Explain your answer.

**Workbook page 71**

**Independent Practice CD-ROM/Online**

**Unit 2  •  Chapter 1**