

## **Building Language Skills with The Seattle Times**

Date: **Thursday, May 25, 2017**

Article: **Fidget Spinner that's a cut above the rest**

Print Replica: **Saturday, May 20, 2017**

Section: **MAIN, A1**

### **Standard:**

#### CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RI.5.10

By the end of the year, read and comprehend informational texts, including history/social studies, science, and technical texts, at the high end of the grades 4-5 text complexity band independently and proficiently.

### **Key Ideas and Details:**

#### CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RI.4.1

Refer to details and examples in a text when explaining what the text says explicitly and when drawing inferences from the text.

#### CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RI.4.3

Explain events, procedures, ideas, or concepts in a historical, scientific, or technical text, including what happened and why, based on specific information in the text.

### **Objective:**

Students will practice their reading skills to explore how the author uses reasoning and evidence to support specific points in the text by using deeper level questions and connecting the content to their personal lives.

### **Vocabulary:**

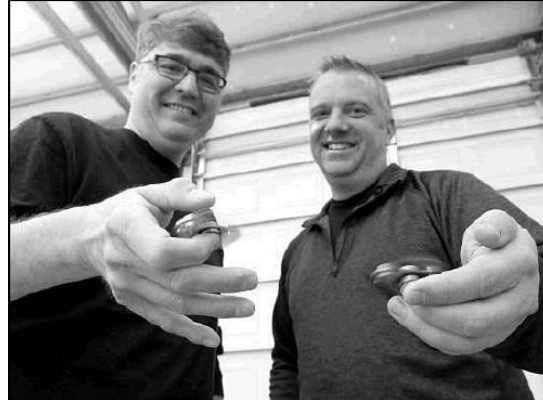
Look up the definitions for the following word. First, write what you think the highlighted word means, then look up the definition and write it in the space provided, using your own words.

“McCoskery and his partner in the firm, Paul de Herrera, believe they will prosper, but they’ll have to survive the cheap knockoffs and the short life span of **fads**.”

### ***Fad guess:***

### ***Fad definition:***

## Pre-Reading Questions:



- What are these gadgets?
- Do you have a fidget spinner? Does it help you concentrate in class better? Why or why not?
- Are they distracting to you or those around you?
- Do your teachers allow them in your class? What are the rules for using them at school?
- Why have they become so popular?

## Building Language Skills:

*Visualizing* text is a proven way that improves reading comprehension. Have students close their eyes and listen carefully. Have them think deeply about the words described in the statement.

The teacher will read the following information to the class, taken from the article.

***“These are people with disposable income. They like very nice things and they want the best of everything, and the exclusivity of something nobody else has,” McCoskery says.***

***Patrick Lynn, a Los Angeles television producer who used to be with American Idol Productions, is one such buyer. He owns two brass versions that cost \$139 and \$350.***

***The Torqbar feels solid in your hands. The metal edges are smoothed out. The ball-bearing assembly makes no noise.***

***“I love this thing. It’s an amazing piece of engineering,” he says. “My Torqbars spin outward of six minutes each. It’s almost perfectly balanced.”***

Have students share their thoughts. ***What images did you visualize? What emotions or thoughts arise? What is disposable income?***

## **Comprehension:**

1. What is a fidget spinner?
2. Right now, the market is flooded with crates of imitations, most from where?
3. Some versions of fidget spinners currently occupies all of Amazon's Top 20 best-selling toys and games; McCoskery's products are not among them as they can't compete on what?
4. What did Forbes magazine call the Torqbar?
5. What makes the Torqbar different?
6. Initially, McCoskery found buyers among people who look for the best and newest gadgets. He sold his first Torqbar in September 2015 online for about \$\_\_\_\_\_, and by the next year it was a full-fledged website.
7. These days, the Torqbar is sold in versions that begin at \$\_\_\_\_\_ and can reach \$\_\_\_\_\_ for custom-made ones in which the buyer chooses the material and finish on the metal.
8. How did McCoskery come up with this idea?
9. There's plenty of room for argument when it comes to spinners. After all, in \_\_\_\_\_, a Brooklyn resident applied for a spinning-toy patent.
10. In the fad-toy business, many customers are willing to forgo the high-end version if they can get what?
11. On the internet, fidget spinners have been touted as helping individuals with autism or ADHD curb anxiety and become more focused. Why are experts wary?
- 12.

## **Post-Reading Class Discussion or Journal Writing Assignment:**

***Steve Faktor is founder of the IdeaFaktory in New York, an "innovation incubator."***

- What do you think an innovation incubator is?
- Have you ever designed something new or thought of a new idea for a product?

***Allen Ashkenazie is executive vice president of Almar Sales in New York City, a supplier of toys to such retailers as Wal-Mart and Toys 'R' Us.***

***He says that by the end of May his company will have shipped out 45 million fidget spinners that retail from \$5 to \$25 each.***

***"The market demand of speed and velocity surpasses any product that we've seen in our 50-year history," he says.***

***Ashkenazie predicts fidget-spinner sales will start spinning down by the beginning of the 2018 school year. How long a fad lasts, he says, is measured “in weeks ... a year is a long time.”***

- Can you think of any other fad toys/products?
- Do you think sales will slow down in 2018, as Ashkenazie predicts? Why or why not?

***There have been reports of fidget spinners being banned in schools because they’ve become so distracting. Some teachers in this area have banned them in their classrooms.***

- Can these be distracting in school? Why or why not?
- Can you see how it can distract from student learning and that teachers are now banning them? Can you see it from a teacher’s perspective?

***“But that’s the low end of the market, we’re on the high-end,” says de Herrera.***

***The Rubik’s Cube, Frisbees, yoyos are still around, they say. “We believe we’re on that track.”***

- Do you think the more expensive version of the spinners will always be popular? Why or why not?
- Will they truly end up a fad toy? Why or why not?
- Would you or your parents pay \$139-\$800 for an upscale spinner because of the materials that were used? Why or why not?