

PART I: READING

- 1.1** Read the passage about Frank Serpico. Check (✓) the word that best describes Frank Serpico. There is only one right answer.

Frank Serpico's childhood dream came true in 1959 when he joined the New York City Police Department. Serpico became a secret policeman. He was assigned to fight organized crime in New York. However, he discovered that many of the secret policemen he worked with were in fact criminals themselves. They profited from illegal gambling and drug dealing. Serpico's partners tried to persuade him to join in the deception by promising a share of the profits. They confidently assured him their criminal activities were foolproof. After all, who would suspect a police officer of being a criminal? When Serpico refused to participate, however, his partners turned to outright threats.¹ Serpico decided to tell his supervisors at the NYPD the truth about his partners, but his stories were dismissed as tall tales.

- _____ A. confident
_____ B. corrupt
_____ C. deceptive
_____ D. honest

- 1.2** Now read the entire story. Use the information to choose the correct answers.

Serpico Tells the Truth

Frank Serpico's childhood dream came true in 1959 when he joined the New York City Police Department. Serpico became a secret policeman. He was assigned to fight organized crime in New York. However, he discovered that many of the secret policemen he worked with were in fact criminals themselves. They profited from illegal gambling and drug dealing. Serpico's partners tried to persuade him to join in the deception by promising a share of the profits. They confidently assured him their criminal activities were foolproof. After all, who would suspect a police officer of being a criminal? When Serpico refused to participate, however, his partners turned to outright threats. Serpico decided to tell his supervisors at the NYPD the truth about his partners, but his stories were dismissed as tall tales.

¶ Serpico then began to suspect that his supervisors already knew about the corruption.² They were trying to manipulate him. He wondered if there was a big cover-up. His quest to fight corruption began to seem insurmountable. His fellow police officers didn't believe him. They were afraid to help him or were a part of the

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¹ **threat:** a promise of violence

² **corruption:** dishonest or immoral behavior

problem themselves. He decided to tell the truth about the NYPD to *The New York Times*. A huge story about police corruption was published in 1970.

The next year, Serpico's corrupt partners sought revenge for the betrayal. They abandoned him while he was trying to arrest a drug dealer in a Brooklyn apartment building. Serpico was shot and left to die. He was saved by a neighbor in the building and rushed to the hospital. His experience there was overwhelming. His corrupt partners continued to threaten him if he told the truth about the shooting. However, the chief of police and the mayor visited Serpico and promised to protect him. Later that year, Serpico spoke publicly about his experience. He said, "We create an atmosphere in which the honest officer fears the dishonest officer, and not the other way around." Serpico's experience led to an effort to end police corruption in the NYPD.

Although he never fully recovered from the shooting and had to retire from police work, Serpico had a major public influence. In 1973, a movie was made about him starring actor Al Pacino. During filming, Pacino asked Serpico, "Frank, why did you do it?" Serpico replied, "Well, Al, I don't know. I guess I would have to say it would be because . . . if I didn't, who would I be when I listened to a piece of music?"

Check (✓) the best answer.

1. Secret policemen are assigned to fight _____ crime in New York.
 A. foolproof
 B. insurmountable
 C. corrupt
 D. organized
2. Serpico tried to tell _____ about the corrupt police officers.
 A. the mayor
 B. the chief of police
 C. his partner
 D. his supervisor
3. Frank Serpico was threatened by other police officers because he _____.
 A. became a secret policeman
 B. did not participate in illegal acts
 C. did not share his illegal profits
 D. was manipulating his partner

4. Serpico told his story to *The New York Times* in _____.
- _____ A. 1959
_____ B. 1960
_____ C. 1970
_____ D. 1973
5. Frank Serpico had to retire from the NYPD because he _____.
- _____ A. could not perform his duties anymore
_____ B. lied to *The New York Times*
_____ C. was afraid of his corrupt partners
_____ D. was making a movie with Al Pacino
6. What does Frank mean when he says, "If I didn't [tell the truth], who would I be when I listened to a piece of music?"
- _____ A. He would be confused when he listened to music.
_____ B. He wouldn't know what the music was if he lied.
_____ C. He wouldn't respect himself if he lied.
_____ D. He wouldn't like listening to music if he lied.

- 1.3** Read "There Is Such a Thing as Truth" from *NorthStar: Reading and Writing 5, Unit 2*. Use the information from this reading and "Serpico Tells the Truth" to complete the activity. The first one has been done for you.

There Is Such a Thing as Truth

by Errol Morris

I believe in truth. And in the pursuit of truth. When I was 10 years old, I asked a neighborhood kid who was older than me, "Which city is further west: Reno, Nevada, or Los Angeles?" The correct answer is Reno, Nevada. But he was convinced it was the other way around.

He was so convinced that Los Angeles was west of Reno that he was willing to bet me two bucks.¹ So I went into the house to get my Rand McNally atlas. The kid looked at the atlas and said, "The map is drawn funny." It wasn't. Was his argument that the map didn't preserve east, west, north and south? What kind of map would that be? I showed him if you trace down the 120-degree west line of longitude—which runs almost directly through Reno, Nevada—you end up in the Pacific Ocean, somewhere west of Los Angeles.

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¹ a buck: a dollar

He replied that lines of longitude don't cross the ocean. What? I told him that the lines of longitude were there to indicate how far west or east some location was, regardless of whether it was on land or on sea. There was one insurmountable problem, however. He was bigger than I was.

I drew a number of conclusions from this story. There is such a thing as truth, but we often have a vested interest in² ignoring it or outright denying it. Also, it's not just thinking something that makes it true. Truth is not relative. It's not subjective. It may be elusive or hidden. People may wish to disregard it. But there is such a thing as truth and the pursuit of truth: trying to figure out what has really happened, trying to figure out how things really are.

Almost 15 years ago, I stumbled on³ a story about an innocent man, a man who had been sentenced to die in the Huntsville, Texas, electric chair. And through hard work, luck and a certain amount of pathological obsession, I was able to make the movie *The Thin Blue Line* and to help get him out of prison.

What kept me going was the belief that there had to be answers to the questions "Did he do it?" "Was he guilty or innocent?" "If he didn't do it, who did?" and that I could find an answer to these questions through investigating.

It's not that we find truth with a big "T." We investigate and sometimes we find things out and sometimes we don't. There's no way to know in advance. It's just that we have to proceed as though there are answers to questions. We must proceed as though, in principle, we can find things out—even if we can't. The alternative is unacceptable.

I will never know whether the neighborhood kid really didn't understand the logic of my argument about Reno, Nevada. Or whether he understood it completely and just didn't want to admit it. Or whether he understood it and just didn't want to pay up. I'll never know.

All I know is I never got my two dollars.

² a vested interest in (something): a selfish motive

³ stumbled on: discovered by accident

Statements	Errol Morris	Frank Serpico	Both
The truth needs to be exposed.			✓
1. There are people who choose to disregard the truth.			
2. The truth may cause us pain sometimes.			
3. The truth cannot always be found through investigation.			

PART 2: VOCABULARY

- 2.1** Read the e-mail from Frank to his wife. Use the words from the box to fill in the blanks. Not all of the words will be used.

betrayal	insurmountable	manipulate	quest
cover up	interaction	outright	tall tales

Hi Dora!

I went to the movie about me today, and it was amazing to see my life on the screen.

I mean I remembered all of the _____ my supervisor made up and

1.

the trouble he went through to _____ the crimes. It just seems so

2.

unreal. I also thought about how my partners tried to _____ me and

3.

keep me from telling the truth. They were _____ threatening me and

4.

keeping me from doing my job. However, with you by my side, I have a new

_____, and that's to make sure no other police officers are corrupt.

5.

- 2.2** Decide if the boldfaced words have a positive connotation, a negative connotation, or neither. Check (✓) the correct answer.

1. **deception**

_____ A. Positive _____ B. Negative _____ C. Neither

2. **creativity**

_____ A. Positive _____ B. Negative _____ C. Neither

3. **betrayal**

_____ A. Positive _____ B. Negative _____ C. Neither

4. **persuade**

_____ A. Positive _____ B. Negative _____ C. Neither

5. **delusions**

_____ A. Positive _____ B. Negative _____ C. Neither

PART 3: SKILLS FOR WRITING

3.1 Complete the sentences using **the more, the less, the better, or the bigger**. You may use some phrases more than once.

The more money we spend on training the police forces, the better they should be at fighting crime.

1. _____ we tell the truth, the better we begin to feel about ourselves.
2. The less we seek the truth, _____ we will continue to live in deception.
3. _____ the lie, the better the chance it will cause more trouble.
4. The more we try to be honest, _____ people will trust and believe us.
5. The bigger the liar, _____ he or she can be trusted by others.

3.2 Check (✓) the five statements that are good thesis statements.

- _____ 1. Lying is never the right choice for many reasons.
- _____ 2. Many studies show that people do not look at you when they lie.
- _____ 3. Learning to tell the truth at a young age helps us face the world with confidence, honesty, and strength of character.
- _____ 4. Parents must expect their children to be honest at home, at school, and with their friends.
- _____ 5. My neighbor says she always punishes her children if they lie.
- _____ 6. In this essay, the writer will discuss truth.
- _____ 7. Not learning from our mistakes hurts us in three important ways.
- _____ 8. When I found the money on the street, I considered several ways of acting.

PART 4: WRITING**An Introductory Paragraph with a Thesis Statement (20 minutes)**

Write an introductory paragraph to an essay about a time when you told the truth. Give your opinion about why it was an advantage for you to tell the truth in this situation.

- Describe the situation and the truth you told.
- Include a hook and go from general to specific statements.
- End with a thesis statement that gives your attitude, opinion, or point of view.
- Use the vocabulary and grammar from Unit 2.

Unit 2 Vocabulary Words					
betrayal	deception	foolproof	manipulate	outright	quest
cover up	elusive	insurmountable	overwhelming	persuade	tall tales
Unit 2 Grammar: Using Double Comparatives to Show Cause-Effect Relationships					
• <i>The more</i> social the species, <i>the more</i> intelligent it is.					