

Pronunciation

Suppose you are unsure about how to say a word. You can use a dictionary to determine the **pronunciation**.

Look at these examples from a dictionary.

This part tells you how to pronounce the word.

na•ture /ˈneɪtʃər/ *noun* Nature means things like rivers, trees, and animals.

Pronunciation Key:

hat/**hæt**/ got/**gɒt**/ father/ˈfɑðər/
box/ˈ**b**aks/ cake/**k**erk/ fruit/ˈf**r**uɪt/

The symbol **ei** tells you to say the **a** in **nature** the same way you say the **a** in **cake**.

Try It Together

Use the dictionary entries to complete the items. For the second item, look at the pronunciation key above, too.

com•pe•ti•tion /ˌkæmpəˈtɪʃən/ *noun* A competition is a contest or struggle between two or more people or animals.

pos•i•tive /ˈpɒzətɪv/ *adjective* Something that is positive is good for you.

1. When you say competition, you stress the _____ part.

- A first
- B second
- C third
- D fourth

2. You say the o in positive the same way you say the a in _____.

- A hat
- B cake
- C wash
- D nature



NATIONAL
GEOGRAPHIC
EXCLUSIVE

Making Connections Now read about an explorer who works to keep a **river ecosystem** healthy.

Genre A **human interest feature** gives facts about someone. It tells what the person does and cares about.



Megafish Man

by **Michael Sandler**



▲ Zeb Hogan [left]
with a river stingray

The telephone rang. Zeb Hogan got the news. A fisherman in Cambodia had caught a giant **river** stingray. Soon, Zeb was **headed** there by plane. “These catches are so **rare**, I don’t want to miss out on any of them,” he says.

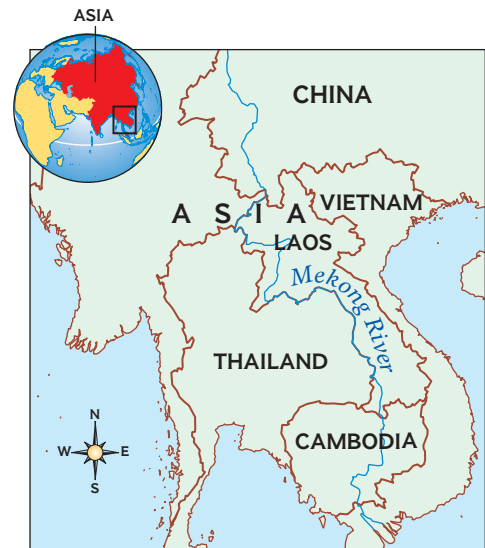
Megafish Man a man interested in very large fish
headed on his way
rare special; unusual

► Before You Continue

1. **Ask Questions** What questions do you have about Mr. Hogan? How will your questions help you as you read on?
2. **Use Text Features** What helps you figure out what a stingray is?

Monsters of the Mekong

Zeb is an **aquatic ecologist**. He is always searching for megafish. Megafish are aquatic monsters that grow to at least 6.5 feet (2 meters) or 220 pounds (100 kg). He studies the megafish that live in the Mekong **River** in Southeast Asia. Many megafish live in this river and the smaller rivers that **flow** into it.



▲ The Mekong River flows through Southeast Asia.

Megafish



▲ giant skeetfish



▲ giant stingray



▲ giant carp

Mekong the Mekong **River**
aquatic ecologist scientist who studies
water animals and how they live
flow go



species types
indication sign
thrived lived well

Why is Zeb so interested in megafish? By studying megafish, we can learn a lot about the health of an aquatic **ecosystem**. “If you still have these giant fish **species** in the **river**, it’s a good **indication** that the river is healthy,” he says.

For centuries, the Mekong’s fish of all sizes **thrived** in clean water. There were so many fish, Cambodians often said, “Where there is water, there are fish.”

◀ People in Cambodia fish in the Mekong River.

► Before You Continue

1. **Make Inferences** What details in the text help the reader understand whether these “aquatic monsters” are helpful or harmful?
2. **Clarify** What do **levels**, or numbers, of megafish tell about the health of a **river**?

A River in Trouble

Today, however, fewer and fewer big fish are found in the Mekong. To Zeb, it's a warning. Something is **out of balance**.

Overfishing is one cause of fewer fish. **Pollution** is another. Soon there may be fewer smaller fish, too. This will hurt people who need the fish for food.

A woman sells fish at the market. ▶

▼ People weigh a giant catfish. There are few left.



out of balance not right

Overfishing People taking too many fish from the **river**

Pollution Dirty water



▲ Zeb Hogan (left, with cap) looks at a stingray. It was caught by a fisherman.

Zeb wants to make Mekong waters healthy again. In Cambodia, he **set up a program**. When fishermen catch megafish, they give them to Zeb. He lets the fish go and **tracks their movements**.

This program **benefits** both the fishermen and the fish. It also helps Zeb learn how to better protect megafish and the **river** so many people and animals **depend on**. ❖

set up a program made a plan
tracks their movements watches where they go
benefits is good for; helps
depend on need to help them live

► Before You Continue

1. **Cause/Effect** Why are fewer big fish found in the Mekong **River** today than in the past?
2. **Goal/Outcome** What is Mr. Hogan's goal? What has he done to try to reach that goal?

Key Words

competition

drought

ecosystem

food chain

level

nature

negative

positive

resources

river

Compare Ecosystems

List five facts about the **ecosystem** in “When the Wolves Returned” or “Megafish Man.” Look back at the selection to locate facts about:

- where the ecosystem is
- what the natural features are
- what animals live in the ecosystem
- why it was or is out of balance

Find a partner who wrote about the other ecosystem. Use your lists to create a comparison chart.

Comparison Chart

Yellowstone Park	Mekong River
Is in the United States	Is in Cambodia

Now discuss your chart. What is different about the two ecosystems? What is the same?

Talk Together

What happens when ecosystems lose their balance? Think about the article and the feature. Use **Key Words** in your discussion.

Compound Sentences

You can use the words *and*, *but*, or *or* to put two sentences together. When you make a **compound sentence**, put a comma (,) before *and*, *but*, or *or*.

Grammar Rules Compound Sentences

• Use and to join two ideas that are alike.	The wolves hunt coyotes, and the coyotes hunt squirrels.
• Use but to join two ideas that show a difference.	The fox is little, but the bear is big.
• Use or to show a choice between two ideas.	We can visit a national park, or we can go to the beach.

Read Compound Sentences

Read these sentences about Yellowstone Park. Identify two compound sentences. Point to the word in each sentence that joins the ideas.

Yellowstone is a special place. Geysers shoot steam up into the air, and waterfalls spill over rocks. You can look at these natural wonders, or you can watch the animals.

Write Compound Sentences



Look at the picture of the beaver on page 126. Write a compound sentence to go with the picture. Read your sentence to a partner.