K–8 Diagnostic Assessment

Oral Reading Fluency

- Fluency Passages for Grades K–8
- National Fluency Norms
Introduction

What Is Fluency?

Fluency is the critical bridge between two key elements of reading—decoding and comprehension. In its 2000 report, the National Reading Panel defined it as “the ability to read text quickly, accurately, and with proper expression.” Fluency has several dimensions. Successful readers must decode words accurately. But they must move beyond decoding and recognize words in connected text quickly and automatically. They must also read with expression in order to bring meaningful interpretation to the text. All three dimensions—accurate decoding, automaticity, and ability to read expressively—work together to create effective comprehension and overall success in reading.

In its 1994 study of reading, the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) established a clear connection between fluency and comprehension. NAEP defined fluency as the ease or “naturalness” of reading. It recognized certain key elements as contributing to fluency. These included the reader’s grouping or phrasing of words as shown through intonation, stress, and pauses and the reader’s adherence to the author’s syntax. They also included expressiveness as reflected by the reader’s interjection of a sense of feeling, anticipation, or characterization in oral reading. These elements are called prosody. When readers use appropriate volume, tone, emphasis, and phrasing, they give evidence of comprehension. They demonstrate that they are actively constructing meaning from the text.

Why Is Fluency Important?

Fluency is critical because it directly impacts the comprehension process. For years, teachers thought that if students could decode words accurately, they would become strong readers. Fluency, which has been referred to as a “neglected” aspect of reading, received little attention. Now it is recognized as one of the five critical components of reading.

Researchers have pointed out that people can successfully focus on only one thing at a time. They can, however, do more than one thing at a time if one of those things is so well learned that it can be done automatically. In its simplest form, reading can be seen as (1) word identification or decoding and (2) comprehension, or the active construction of meaning. Effective readers cannot focus on both of these processes at the same time. If a reader is focused almost entirely on decoding, that reader will have few resources left over for constructing meaning. Only when readers can read the words in connected text automatically are they free to focus their attention on making inferences, drawing conclusions, and applying other critical thinking skills associated with constructing meaning.

A fluent reader generally reads with speed and accuracy, but in addition usually displays these kinds of behaviors:

• Recognizes words automatically
• Applies graphophonic, semantic, and syntactic cues to recognize unfamiliar words
• Segments texts into meaningful chunks
• Emulates the sounds and rhythms of spoken language while reading aloud

A nonfluent reader, in contrast, may display these kinds of behaviors:
• Reads slowly and laboriously
• Processes text word-by-word in a choppy manner
• Frequently ignores punctuation
• Fails to use meaningful phrasing
• Shows little certainty when reading high-frequency words

Fluency does not mean only rapid reading. Occasionally, you will come across a nonfluent reader who is able to read text rapidly but fails to use appropriate phrasing. This reader often ignores meaning and punctuation. As a result, this reader struggles to answer questions about what has been read and fails to grasp the intent of the text.

Why Assess Fluency?

Students need to be fluent in order to be proficient readers. Their oral reading fluency can be improved through explicit training, but you need to assess their fluency level before you can determine what specific fluency-building activities and materials will be appropriate. In addition, students excel in reading when they are given opportunities to read as much connected text as possible at their independent level. Fluency assessment helps you determine what this level is.

The oral reading fluency assessments in this book answer this question: How many words can a student read aloud per minute and how many of these words are read correctly? This book also helps you observe reading performance beyond speed and accuracy by providing a rubric similar to the one developed by NAEP. This 4-level rubric on page 4 takes into account additional aspects of fluency, such as prosody.

How and When to Assess

Kindergarten Through Early First Grade

Until children can decode and automatically recognize many words by sight, they cannot be expected to read aloud effortlessly and expressively. That is why formally assessing their oral reading fluency at this early stage is not recommended. However, it is highly recommended that kindergarten children be involved in fluency-building activities, such as listening to books being read aloud and imitating auditory models of natural speech. Toward the end of kindergarten, children can be given opportunities to reread familiar, predictable, and decodable text to build fluency.

Some assessments for children at these grade levels are considered valuable. By assessing letter naming, phoneme segmentation, and sight word fluency during kindergarten and the early
part of Grade 1, teachers can determine what type of fluency-building activities and materials to provide. Assessments for these skill areas appear in other sections of this book.

**Midyear of Grade 1 Through Grade 8**

Curriculum-based assessment of oral reading fluency is administered by asking a student to do a timed reading of a carefully selected on-level passage. As the student reads, you follow along in a copy of the same text and record errors such as omissions, substitutions, misreadings, insertions of words or parts of words, and hesitations of more than three seconds. Self-corrections and repetitions are not considered errors. To calculate the number of words read correctly in one minute, subtract the number of errors from the total number of words read. This process should be repeated periodically throughout the school year to monitor growth.

**The Fluency Passages**

The fluency passages serve two purposes. They can be administered three times a year as benchmark tests to determine if students are on track. They can also be used every unit so that you can monitor progress and determine if students are meeting instructional goals.

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**Oral Fluency Scale**

**Prosody Rubric**

**Level 4**
- The student: reads in large, meaningful phrases; may occasionally repeat words or short phrases, but the overall structure and syntax of the passage is not affected; reads at an appropriate rate of speed with expressive interpretation.

**Level 3**
- The student: reads in three- and four-word phrases; reads primarily in phrases that preserve the passage’s syntax and structure; attempts to read expressively; generally reads at an appropriate rate of speed.

**Level 2**
- The student: reads mainly in two-word phrases, with some longer phrases and at times word-by-word; may group words awkwardly and not connect phrases to the larger context of the passage; reads sections of the passage excessively slowly or quickly.

**Level 1**
- The student: reads word-by-word, with some longer phrases; does not phrase meaningfully or with an appropriate rate of speed; reads the passage excessively slowly.
## Curriculum-Based Oral Reading Fluency Norms

Use these norms to interpret your students’ oral reading fluency abilities and to tailor instruction to their individual needs. Results are based on a one-minute timed sampling of students reading aloud. A more detailed chart appears on pages 102–103.

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Administering Fluency Assessments and Using the Fluency Record

Directions

Give a student a reading passage he or she has not seen before. Fluency assessments are always done as “cold reads”; that is, they are done with material that is new to the person being tested. Explain that you would like the student to read the passage out loud and then answer two questions about it. Then say: *When you are ready, you may begin.* Start your stopwatch when the student reads the first word.

1. Follow along on your copy of the passage as the student reads. Place a line through each word that is read incorrectly or omitted.
2. Place a check above each word that is read correctly.
3. If the student substitutes or mispronounces a word, put a line through the word and write the word the student said above it.
4. If the student does not correctly say the word within 3 seconds, say the word for the student and circle the word to mark it as incorrect. Self-corrections and repetitions are not marked as errors.
5. At the end of one minute, stop your stopwatch and place a bracket (]) after the last word read by the student.
6. Have the student finish reading the passage.
7. Read the comprehension questions to the student. Have the student answer the comprehension questions orally.

How to Score

Record the information for each student on the fluency record sheet for that passage.

1. Look at the number in the left margin of the passage, on the same line as the bracket. (Note: In hyphenated words, individual words are counted as one word.) Add to this number all the words before the bracket to figure out how many words the student was able to read in one minute.
2. Count each word you circled or put a line through. The total is the number of errors made. Subtract this number from the number of words read in one minute to arrive at the Oral Reading Fluency Rate, or Words Correct Per Minute score.
3. Use this formula to score Oral Reading Accuracy:
   \[
   \frac{\text{Total No. of Words Read} - \text{No. of Errors}}{\text{Total Number of Words Read}} \times 100
   \]
   An Oral Reading Accuracy Scoring Chart is also provided on the inside of the back cover to help you calculate the percentage.
Scoring Sample

The Oral Fluency Record Sheet is an assessment tool to help you record oral reading accuracy and important aspects of oral reading fluency. Information gathered from the fluency record sheet may be used to verify or clarify instructional decisions.

**Oral Reading Accuracy** is a percentage score based on the total number of words read and the number of errors noted. The student should read 97% or more of the words correctly. A scoring chart for measuring Oral Reading Accuracy is provided on the inside back cover for your convenience.

**Oral Reading Fluency** is a score that is equivalent to the total number of words read in one minute minus the number of errors made.

**Prosody Rubric** is a rubric for evaluating oral reading performance. It groups observable behaviors into levels.

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### Oral Fluency Record Sheet

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<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Date</th>
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**Oral Reading Accuracy:** ________ %

**Oral Reading Fluency Score:** ________ words correct per minute

**Prosody Rubric:** (Circle Score) 1 2 3 4

**Comprehension Question Responses**

- #1
- #2

**Scoring Sample**

- Jane and Dean were best pals. They rode their bikes to school together. At recess, they always played on the same team.
- Jane and Dean like to race home at school and do their homework together. Then Pepper came along. Pepper was Jane's new black puppy. Dean felt bad because Jane spent all her time with Pepper now. Dean missed his best friend. One day, Dean sat on his front steps alone. He closed his eyes and thought about all the fun he and Jane used to have. Suddenly, something licked his face and
- Dean opened his eyes. Jane and Pepper had come to play. Now Dean had two best pals. 114

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**No. of words read correctly:** 92/114

**No. of errors made:** 3/114
The Bug

I see a bug. It has six legs.
It is red. It is very small.
It is fun to look at it.
The bug is very busy.
I see it go up a hill.
I see it come down.
I see it dig. I see it stop.
The sun is out now. It is a hot sun.
It is time for a nap.
The bug naps in the sun.
I will nap in the sun, too.

1. What is this story mostly about?
2. Why does the bug take a nap?
## Oral Fluency Record Sheet

Name: ____________________________  Date: ________________

Oral Reading Accuracy: ___________%  Circle: Fall Winter Spring
Oral Reading Fluency Score: _____________ words correct per minute
Prosody Rubric: (Circle Score) 1 2 3 4

### Comprehension Question Responses

**#1**

**#2**

### The Bug

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<td>It is fun to look at it.</td>
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<td>The bug is very busy.</td>
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<td>I see it go up a hill.</td>
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<td>The sun is out now. It is a hot sun.</td>
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<td>It is time for a nap.</td>
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<td>63</td>
<td>The bug naps in the sun.</td>
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<td>69</td>
<td>I will nap in the sun, too. <strong>76</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Number of words read: ___________  Number of errors made: ___________
Ben’s Birthday

Today is Ben’s birthday.
I am helping Mom make a cake.
We mix eggs and milk.
Then Mom adds more good things.
The batter is thick and white.
Mom puts the batter into a pan.
She puts the pan into the oven.
“I think Ben will like his cake,” I say.
Time passes. Then I think I smell smoke.
Is it the cake? Mom runs in. But the cake is fine.
Now we are ready for Ben’s birthday.
Dad picks Ben up to see his cake.
Ben smiles and claps his hands.
“You are one year old today!” we all say.

1. What is the story about?
2. Why couldn’t Ben bake the cake?
Ben’s Birthday

Today is Ben’s birthday.

4 I am helping Mom make a cake.
11 We mix eggs and milk.
16 Then Mom adds more good things.
22 The batter is thick and white.
28 Mom puts the batter into a pan.
35 She puts the pan into the oven.
42 “I think Ben will like his cake,” I say.
51 Time passes. Then I think I smell smoke.
59 Is it the cake? Mom runs in. But the cake is fine.
71 Now we are ready for Ben’s birthday.
78 Dad picks Ben up to see his cake.
86 Ben smiles and claps his hands.
92 “You are one year old today!” we all say.

Number of words read: ___________  Number of errors made: ___________
You and Your Shadow

Do you like to play with your shadow? You can use your hands to make pictures on a wall. You can make animal heads and funny shapes. Light makes the shadows. Light might hit you on one side. Your shadow would fall on the other side. When you are outside, sunlight makes shadows. The sun may make long shadows or short ones. In the morning and evening, the sun is low. Shadows are long. At noon, the sun is high. Shadows are short. Is your shadow in front of you? Then the light is behind you. Is your shadow behind you? Then the light is in front of you. You are never alone. You always have your shadow.

1. What makes shadows?

2. What would your shadow look like in the morning?
You and Your Shadow

Do you like to play with your shadow?

8  You can use your hands to make pictures on a wall.
19  You can make animal heads and funny shapes.
27  Light makes the shadows.
31  Light might hit you on one side.
38  Your shadow would fall on the other side.
46  When you are outside, sunlight makes shadows.
53  The sun may make long shadows or short ones.
62  In the morning and evening, the sun is low.
71  Shadows are long.
74  At noon, the sun is high. Shadows are short.
83  Is your shadow in front of you?
90  Then the light is behind you.
96  Is your shadow behind you?
101  Then the light is in front of you.
109  You are never alone. You always have your shadow. 118

Number of words read: __________  Number of errors made: __________
Our American Flag

Our flag is special to us. It stands for our country. It is red, white, and blue. The flag has 13 stripes. It has 50 stars. There were 13 states when our country was born. There are 50 states in our country now. We call our flag the Stars and Stripes. That is what we see when we look at the flag. Here are some rules about the flag. Fly the flag outside in good weather. Take the flag down at night. Take the flag inside when it rains. Never let the flag touch the ground. Follow these rules. They show that you are proud of your flag.

1. What does each star stand for on the flag?
2. How can you care for your flag?
Our American Flag

Our flag is special to us.

6  It stands for our country. It is red, white, and blue.
17  The flag has 13 stripes. It has 50 stars.
26  There were 13 states when our country was born.
35  There are 50 states in our country now.
43  We call our flag the Stars and Stripes.
51  That is what we see when we look at the flag.
62  Here are some rules about the flag.
70  Fly the flag outside in good weather.
77  Take the flag down at night.
83  Take the flag inside when it rains.
90  Never let the flag touch the ground.
97  Follow these rules.
100  They show that you are proud of your flag. 109

Number of words read: __________  Number of errors made: __________
The New Friend

Jane and Dean were best pals. They rode their bikes to school together every day. They were both in Mrs. Green’s class. At recess, they always played on the same baseball team. Jane and Dean liked to race home after school and do their homework together.

Then Pepper came along. Pepper was Jane’s new black puppy. Dean felt sad because Jane spent all her time with Pepper now. Dean missed his best friend.

One day, Dean sat on his front steps alone. He closed his eyes and thought about all the fun he and Jane used to have.

Suddenly, something licked his face, and Dean opened his eyes. Jane and Pepper had come to play. Now Dean had two best pals.

1. Why was Dean sad?
2. Why do you think Jane and Pepper came to play?
The New Friend

Jane and Dean were best pals. They rode their
9 bikes to school together every day. They were both
18 in Mrs. Green’s class. At recess, they always
26 played on the same baseball team. Jane and Dean
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61 spent all her time with Pepper now. Dean missed
70 his best friend.
73 One day, Dean sat on his front steps alone. He
83 closed his eyes and thought about all the fun he
93 and Jane used to have.
98 Suddenly, something licked his face, and Dean
105 opened his eyes. Jane and Pepper had come to
114 play. Now Dean had two best pals. 121

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<thead>
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<th>Number of words read:</th>
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Oral Fluency Record Sheet

Name __________________________ Date ______________________

Oral Reading Accuracy: __________%  Circle: Fall Winter Spring
Oral Reading Fluency Score: ______________ words correct per minute
Prosody Rubric: (Circle Score) 1 2 3 4

Comprehension Question Responses

#1 __________________________

#2 __________________________
Sharks

Sharks have lived on Earth for years and years. Today there are more than 350 different kinds. Sharks come in many sizes. The whale shark can be 36 feet in length. The smallest shark grows only to about 6 inches. Some sharks have big, sharp teeth. Others have very small teeth. But all sharks have one thing in common. They all must open their mouths to breathe. Sharks must keep their mouths open when they swim, or they will die.

Every year sharks are killed for many reasons. They get caught in fishing nets. Some are caught to be sold for shark meat or shark fin soup. Shark skin is sometimes used for belts. Other people hunt them because they think sharks are dangerous. Will sharks be around much longer?

1. How does a shark breathe?
2. Why are sharks in danger?
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Number of words read: ___________  Number of errors made: ___________
Fun for Marge

Marge the cat did not feel like chasing mice today. She wanted some fun for a change. Marge strolled across the street and into a schoolyard. She wanted to watch what the children were doing there.

Marge slid through the door and hid in a cardboard box. Not long after that, someone picked up the box. Marge swayed as she was carried through a narrow hall. Then the swaying stopped.

In a flash, Marge was out of the box. She could not believe her eyes. All the children were running and chasing balls. Marge thought they were all pretending to be cats, and joined in the game.

Soon the children were chasing Marge, but she did not like this kind of fun. Marge ran down the hall and out the door. After that day, Marge thought chasing mice was just enough fun for a feline.

1. Why did Marge go to the schoolyard?
2. Why would Marge think the children were pretending to be cats?
Fun for Marge

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The White House

The White House is the home of the President of the United States. It is indeed a big, white house. A painter would need 570 gallons of white paint to cover all the outside walls!

The White House has 6 floors, 132 rooms, and 32 bathrooms. Some rooms are for the President’s family and friends. Other rooms are used as offices or for meetings. Parties and other celebrations are held in some rooms. The biggest room is the East Room. It is used for balls and parties. The President has small dinners in the Blue Room. Big dinners, on the other hand, take place in the State Dining Room.

You would enjoy a visit to the White House. The tour takes you to five of the rooms. You might even meet the President!

1. What is this story about?
2. Tell what three of the rooms in the White House are used for.
The White House

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You would enjoy a visit to the White House. The tour takes you to five of the rooms. You might even meet the President! 133

Number of words read: ___________  Number of errors made: ___________
A Birthday Party

Molly turned eight on Sunday. She did not expect a party because she knew her mom had millions of other things to do. But that morning her mom told Molly that they should take a walk in the park. When they got there, Molly saw her closest friends. Five girls and three boys all shouted, “Happy birthday!” Molly was really surprised. Her mom had planned everything. There were snacks. There were games to play. There was even a cake with eight candles.

After eating yummy snacks, the friends played games. Jack won a prize for making a funny face. Kate won a balloon for blowing the biggest bubble. Grace won marbles for hopping on one foot. Everyone got stickers just because they took part in a game.

Then the kids sang to Molly. She blew out the candles and everyone ate cake. Molly was so happy. She thanked all her friends for making her birthday special. She hugged and kissed her mom for giving her the best birthday ever.

1. Name two things that Molly did at her birthday party.
2. Why did Molly’s mom suggest that they walk in the park?
A Birthday Party

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Number of words read: ___________ Number of errors made: ___________
Fossils

Dinosaurs lived on Earth millions of years ago. Today we know a lot about them. How do we know so much? We learned about them from people who study the remains of dead plants and animals.

Fossils is the name we give to remains that have become hard and turned to stone. Not every plant or animal becomes a fossil when it dies. Some just dry up under the sun. Strong winds blow away others.

For a dead plant or animal to become a fossil, everything must be just right. Sand or mud has to cover the animal or plant quickly. That way, neither the wind nor the sun can destroy it. Then the sand or mud cover turns hard as a rock. Over time, the fossil takes shape.

To find fossils, we must dig for them. We might find a bone, a tooth, or part of a plant. We might even find a footprint! Every find is a clue that tells a little more about life many years ago.

1. How do people find fossils?

2. Why are the sun and the wind a problem when creating new fossils?
Fossils

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Number of words read: __________  Number of errors made: __________
Basketball on Wheels

Basketball is a challenging sport to play. Players need strength to move up and down the court and bounce the ball while they are on the move. They also need to be alert for the opportunity to pass. Basketball players cannot relax or let their attention stray for a second. People who play basketball work as a team and depend on each other for support. The same is true for people who play basketball from wheelchairs.

The United States has many basketball teams for children in wheelchairs. The children on these teams bounce the ball, pass, and shoot from their wheelchairs. They learn to move quickly in their chairs and keep track of the ball. They must also be good at passing and shooting. They need a lot of balance, energy, and upper-body strength. Just think how high the basketball hoop looks when you are sitting down.

Wheelchair basketball is an excellent way for children in wheelchairs to be on a team. These players show us we can all be strong if we make the effort.

1. Name three things that are needed by all kinds of basketball players.

2. Why is it important for children in wheelchairs to get the chance to play basketball?
Oral Fluency Record Sheet

Name ___________________________________________ Date __________________________

Oral Reading Accuracy: __________% Circle: Fall Winter Spring
Oral Reading Fluency Score: _______________ words correct per minute
Prosody Rubric: (Circle Score) 1 2 3 4
Comprehension Question Responses
#1 ____________________________________________
#2 ____________________________________________

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Wheelchair basketball is an excellent way for children in wheelchairs to be on a team. These players show us we can all be strong if we make the effort. 177

Number of words read: ___________ Number of errors made: ___________
The Pet Rock

Emma still has the pet rock she received for her birthday five years ago. It is still one of her favorite possessions. It is gray with fuzzy orange feet and a lavender tail. Its eyes are outlined in blue and white crayon, and its mouth is drawn in red crayon.

Rob brought the pet rock to Emma’s birthday party when she turned six. It was wrapped in a huge yellow box with an enormous bright red bow. When Emma opened the box, she found another box inside wrapped in sparkly green paper. Inside that box was another box wrapped in pink tissue paper. Finally, inside that box was her pet rock.

It was the best gift Emma got that year and the only one she still has from her sixth birthday. It was special and different because Rob had made it himself.

Emma keeps it on a shelf in her room next to the trophy she won at last year’s swim competition. When Emma looks at the rock, she remembers Rob, her party that year, and what friendship really means. It is still one of her best memories.

1. Why was Rob’s gift so special and different?
2. What was unusual about the way the pet rock was wrapped?
The Pet Rock

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The Giant Panda

The giant panda is an animal with a chubby, black-and-white body and black legs. Its head is large and round, and its white face has black patches around each eye.

Panda cubs are extremely tiny when they are born, weighing only about 5 ounces. As adults, however, giant pandas can weigh as much as 350 pounds.

Giant pandas live only in places where there are bamboo forests with plenty of bamboo shoots for them to eat. Because of this, they are found only on high mountain slopes in western and southwestern China. Giant pandas can spend 16 hours a day eating. In one year, a panda can eat more than 10,000 pounds of bamboo. Although the giant panda eats chiefly bamboo shoots, it sometimes eats other plants, fish, and small animals, too.

As a special gift to the people of the United States, China gave two giant pandas to a national zoo in Washington, D.C., in 1972. The pandas lived there for many years, eating bamboo shoots and making all of the zoo visitors laugh.

1. Where do giant pandas live?
2. Why were the giant pandas from China a good gift?
The Giant Panda

The giant panda is an animal with a chubby, black-and-white body and black legs. Its head is large and round, and its white face has black patches around each eye. Panda cubs are extremely tiny when they are born, weighing only about 5 ounces. As adults, however, giant pandas can weigh as much as 350 pounds.

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Number of words read: 177
Number of errors made: 0
One Birthday for All

Every family has traditions. Traditions are things people do year after year. Beth King’s family has many traditions they celebrate, but Beth’s favorite tradition is about birthdays.

Because Beth has so many aunts, uncles, and cousins, it is impossible to celebrate each birthday. So once a year, on the third Saturday in July, Beth’s relatives have one big birthday celebration for everyone. The adults stay at Beth’s grandparents’ house. The children sleep in tents on the lawn.

Everyone brings food and every meal is a feast. The cousins play soccer. Grandpa and the uncles sit on the wide porch and drink homemade lemonade. The aunts have a softball game. Everyone roots for their favorite team.

Afterwards, everyone eats hamburgers and fresh corn. At the end, Grandma brings out a big frosted cake.

Every year, after the family birthday celebration, Beth goes to bed and starts thinking about next year’s birthday party.

1. What is Beth’s favorite family tradition?
2. Why does the family have their birthday celebration in the summer?
Every family has traditions. Traditions are things people do year after year. Beth King’s family has many traditions they celebrate, but Beth’s favorite tradition is about birthdays. Because Beth has so many aunts, uncles, and cousins, it is impossible to celebrate each birthday. So once a year, on the third Saturday in July, Beth’s relatives have one big birthday celebration for everyone. The adults stay at Beth’s grandparents’ house. The children sleep in tents on the lawn. Everyone brings food and every meal is a feast. The cousins play soccer. Grandpa and the uncles sit on the wide porch and drink homemade lemonade. The aunts have a softball game. Everyone roots for their favorite team. Afterwards, everyone eats hamburgers and fresh corn. At the end, Grandma brings out a big frosted cake. Every year, after the family birthday celebration, Beth goes to bed and starts thinking about next year’s birthday party.
Ruiz’s Toy Chest

Ruiz is almost nine, and he has decided that he has outgrown his old toys. He goes to his toy chest and empties out all his old playthings. His wooden helicopter, some coloring books, his stuffed giraffe, his parrot puppet, and all his other old toys are spread around him on the floor.

“I’ll bet the little kid next door would really enjoy playing with some of this stuff,” Ruiz thinks to himself as he looks at all of his old toys.

Ruiz picks up his stuffed giraffe with its black nose, orange stripes, long neck, and funny feet. He remembers how he used to pretend he was on the grassy plains of Africa riding on his giraffe.

“Maybe I’ll keep my giraffe after all,” thinks Ruiz, and he puts the giraffe back into the toy chest.

Ruiz peers into the toy chest. “My giraffe looks really lonely in there,” he thinks. “I’d better put the other toys back in so that he’ll have some more company.”

Ruiz collects all the other toys and puts them back into the toy chest. “I think I’ll keep all these old friends a little bit longer,” he says to himself.

1. Why does Ruiz plan to give away his old toys?
2. Why does Ruiz decide to keep his old giraffe?
Ruiz’s Toy Chest

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Number of words read: __________  Number of errors made: __________
Bill Peet, Writer and Artist

Bill Peet is a popular children’s writer and artist. Many of his books have animal characters because he loved to draw animals. The animals act like people and were often like people Bill Peet knew.

Before he began writing children’s books, Bill Peet wrote and drew illustrations for the movies. He worked on famous films like Peter Pan and Sleeping Beauty.

Many of Bill Peet’s books are very funny, but at the same time they talk about serious problems. In his book Farewell to Shady Glade, a group of animals has to leave its home because people want to put up buildings where they live. The animals lose their home, and the reader doesn’t know if they will find a new one.

Other books give lessons about life. The book Kermit the Hermit is about a selfish crab. After a boy rescues him, Kermit learns that it is important to share.

Through Bill Peet’s books, both children and adults get to see the world through new eyes. They get to laugh, but at the same time they get to learn important lessons about life.

1. Who is Bill Peet?
2. Why is Bill Peet an important writer?
Bill Peet, Writer and Artist

Bill Peet is a popular children’s writer and artist. Many of his books have animal characters because he loved to draw animals. The animals act like people and were often like people Bill Peet knew. Before he began writing children’s books, Bill Peet wrote and drew illustrations for the movies. He worked on famous films like *Peter Pan* and *Sleeping Beauty*. Many of Bill Peet’s books are very funny, but at the same time they talk about serious problems. In his book *Farewell to Shady Glade*, a group of animals has to leave its home because people want to put up buildings where they live. The animals lose their home, and the reader doesn’t know if they will find a new one.

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Through Bill Peet’s books, both children and adults get to see the world through new eyes. They get to laugh, but at the same time they get to learn important lessons about life.

Number of words read: ___________  Number of errors made: ___________
Deep Sleep

Making it through the winter is hard for many animals. Some animals and insects, like birds and butterflies, are able to migrate to warmer places. Other animals, such as bears, cannot make such a far move.

To survive the icy weather, many bears go to sleep. This sleep is called hibernation. Preparing for this deep sleep keeps bears busy throughout late summer and fall. During this time, they must eat a lot of berries and fish. The food helps them gain at least 40 pounds a week. They must store enough body fat because they have to live off this fat while asleep.

For its long sleep, a bear finds a cave or hollow log. Its heart rate may drop from 40 to 10 beats a minute. Most bears start hibernating in early October. When they wake up around April or May, they are very hungry. Be very careful if you know there are bears near where you are living. You would not want to be in the path of a hungry bear.

1. Why do bears sleep during the winter?
2. Why are bears especially dangerous in the spring?
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Number of words read: _________  Number of errors made: _________
How Skunk Got His Stripes

Skunk did not always have white stripes. Long ago, he was all black. He was black from the tip of his nose to the end of his tail. At night, this was a big problem for the other animals. They could not see Skunk coming.

“We have to solve this problem!” said Bobcat. Skunk had sprayed him just the night before with his scent.

“It is not my fault,” said Skunk. “You animals come crashing through my home in the middle of the night. You scare me half to death. What do you expect me to do?”

“I have an idea,” said Fawn shyly. Everyone turned to the youngster in surprise. “Perhaps we should give Skunk white spots like mine. Then we could see him in the dark.”

Even Skunk thought this was a fine solution. So Bobcat borrowed a bucket of white paint from a farmer’s barn. Squirrel said he would paint spots on Skunk.

Squirrel started painting Skunk’s back. But then he came to Skunk’s tail. He saw that his tail was too bushy for polka dots. The animals decided that stripes would work just as well. And to this day, all skunks have striped tails.

1. What problem were the animals trying to solve?
2. What was Squirrel’s solution?
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Play Ball

What do baseball players need? To start with, they need a bat and ball. A baseball bat is long and round. Most bats are made of ash wood. The bat cannot be longer than 46 inches. It cannot be thicker than $2\frac{3}{4}$ inches at any point. A baseball is small, hard, and round. It weighs about 5 ounces. It has a tiny cork ball at the center. Layers of rubber and yarn are tightly wrapped around this ball. The cover of the ball is made of two pieces of white cowhide. These are sewn together with thick red thread.

Next, players need a special padded leather glove. They also need shoes with spikes on the soles. The spikes help them stop and start quickly.

At bat, players wear a batting helmet. This is a special hard cap. The helmet protects batters in case they are hit in the head with the ball.

In baseball, a pitcher pitches the ball to a catcher. Catchers have special equipment to protect them. They wear a metal mask over their faces. They also wear padded cloth covers over their chests. To protect their legs, they wear hard shin guards.

Baseball can be safe and fun. Are you ready to play ball?

1. What is a baseball made of?
2. Why do baseball players wear special clothing?
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Baseball can be safe and fun. Are you ready to play ball? 209

Number of words read: ________  Number of errors made: ________
Climbing the Walls

Jill’s dad loved rock climbing. He took many trips to the mountains. He wanted Jill to come with him. But first Jill had to learn about climbing.

Jill was excited. She and her dad found a climbing wall in town. Jill put on a helmet and climbing shoes. Then she put on ropes and other gear. Jill’s ropes were fastened to the floor. From there, they went around her dad’s waist. Then, they went up to the top of the wall.

“I will hold the rope tight,” her dad said. “You will be safe. Just go slowly.”

Jill looked up at the wall. She saw places for her hands and feet. The top looked far away.

Jill started up. She went from spot to spot. She reached out with her hands. She pushed hard with her feet. At last, she was near the top.

“I can’t climb this last bit,” she called down.

“Just try,” her dad called back. “I’m holding you.”

Jill took hold of something small with her hand. She bent down. Then she jumped. Her hand felt the top of the wall. She pulled herself up. She had made it.

“Will you ever do that again?” asked her dad after Jill got back down.

“Oh, yes!” said Jill. “That was great!”

1. What is this story mostly about?
2. Do you think Jill felt safe the whole time she was climbing? Why?
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Number of words read: 214
Number of errors made: ________
Up, Up, and Away

For thousands of years, people dreamed of flying. They tried many things. Nothing seemed to work.

Then in 1783, two brothers in France got a new idea. They were watching smoke. They noticed the way smoke moves up from a fire. It does not seem to come back down. The brothers filled paper bags with smoke. They watched as the smoke moved the bags into the air.

The brothers decided to make a big balloon. They filled it with smoke. When it was full, they let it go. Up, up it went.

Next, the brothers built another balloon. This time they attached a basket to the balloon. In September 1783, they were ready. They put a rooster, a duck, and a sheep in the basket. They filled the balloon with hot air and let it go. Up it went, this time with passengers. Then, high above the earth, the warm air cooled. The balloon floated back to the ground. The three animals had taken a round-trip air flight.

Two other Frenchmen watched these events. They decided to become the first people to fly. They built a big blue and gold balloon. In November 1783, the balloon carried them over the city of Paris.

Today we take air travel for granted. But not too long ago, flight was still a mystery and a challenge.

1. What is this passage mainly about?
2. Explain what makes the balloons rise.
Up, Up, and Away

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The Great Wall of China

One of the wonders of the world stands in China. It is the Great Wall of China. The Great Wall is the longest structure ever built. It is about 4,600 miles long.

The Chinese built the wall as protection against enemies. It was started more than 2,500 years ago. Workers made big piles of dirt. They pounded the dirt until it was very hard. They would use this hard dirt to build the wall. Over time the wall crumbled. It was rebuilt again and again.

Often, the wall did not work. For example, in the 1200s, enemies climbed over it to conquer China.

Today, people see the wall that went up between 1368 and 1644. This wall went up during the Ming Dynasty. At first, the Ming built the old way. They piled and pounded dirt. But rain and wind destroyed these walls. The builders turned to stone and brick. These walls took longer to build. They cost more, too. But they lasted longer.

The new wall had towers. Soldiers lived in some of them. They sent signals from others. For signals, they built fires. They used smoke during the day. At night they used flames. People far away could get ready for an attack.

Today, the wall is crumbling. No one knows how much longer it will stand. Rain and wind break parts of the wall. Some people take bricks. Others write on the wall. The wall once protected China. Now China must protect the wall.

1. What is special about the Great Wall of China?
2. Why was the Great Wall built?
The Great Wall of China

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protected China. Now China must protect the wall. 247
The Little Brother

Anna thought her little brother was a real pest. He sat on her bed while she gossiped on the telephone. He watched her as she did her homework. He sat on the floor at her feet as she watched TV. Matt was three years old. Anna knew he loved her. She loved him, too, but enough was enough.

One afternoon, Anna was sitting at her tiny desk in the corner of the family room. She was trying to finish her math homework. Matt kept asking her questions about the spiral notebook she was using. He also wanted to know about the numbers that she was writing. And why, he asked, did she use her eraser so often? Finally, Anna pleaded with her mother for some help. She just wanted some peace and quiet.

Anna’s mother smiled. Then she asked Anna if she would like it if her friends always shooed her away. Anna suddenly saw that Matt was her friend, as well as her brother. She gave him a crayon and a piece of notebook paper. Then she made room for him at her desk.

1. What did Anna’s little brother do to annoy her?
2. How did Anna’s mother help her see her brother differently?
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Number of words read: __________ Number of errors made: __________
Moons

Many years ago, Native Americans did not have calendars to tell them what month or day it was. Instead, they had the moon. By keeping track of the time it took for the moon to go from one full moon phase to the next, they measured their days.

Each phase was called a moon, and each moon was about the length of a month. During a moon, the Native Americans looked at leaves on the trees. They noted how cold the winds were, and what the Earth looked like around them. They observed what color the rabbits’ fur was, and if choke cherries were on the bushes. Then they named that moon phase for what they saw and felt.

March might be the Moon of the Long Rains to a Native American living in the Northeast. To a Native American in a dry climate, March might be the Moon of the Desert Blooms. Moons could also be named after feasts and ceremonies, such as the moon of Summer Encampment. Children learned about the moons from their elders, and looked forward to what each new moon would bring.

1. How did Native Americans keep track of what month or day it was?
2. How did Native Americans decide what to name a moon phase?
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Number of words read: __________  Number of errors made: __________
Before and Now

You do not have to be Columbus to be interested in traveling to new places. Many people living today are just as curious as Columbus once was. These brave people leave their beloved homelands behind and move to new countries to live. These people are called *immigrants*, and they show extraordinary courage! Try to imagine leaving everything you know and love behind, and moving to a place you have never even seen before. Perhaps your parents or grandparents did just that. Maybe you are an immigrant yourself.

But what about the countries left behind? What did they look like? If you know any immigrants, ask them if they have any old photographs you can look at. What would you see in those photos? What would the automobiles look like, the buildings, even the clothes the people wore? What would these things tell you about the other place the person had lived? If you do not know anyone who has moved to this country, or you do not have any photos to look at, you can go to your local library. Look up travel books and videos. If you are extremely lucky, you may know someone who kept a diary or journal describing what life was like where they came from. This type of keepsake will help bring the old country and the new one together.

1. What is this passage mostly about?
2. Why might people move to a new country?
Before and Now

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Number of words read: ___________ Number of errors made: ___________
Why Winter Comes

Centuries ago, people noticed that Earth was warm and green some of the time and bitter cold at other times. This was a cycle that repeated itself over and over. To explain these changes, ancient people told stories. There were myths to explain just about every cycle in nature. Some stories explained why the sun disappeared each night and reappeared each morning. Other myths told what caused the moon to wax and wane.

Why winter arrived each year is explained in one myth about a Greek goddess named Demeter. The myth said that Demeter had a beautiful daughter named Persephone. Hades, the god of the underworld, snatched Persephone and brought her to his kingdom. Demeter was so depressed by her daughter’s sudden disappearance that she caused Earth to become cold and barren. Nothing grew during the time that Persephone was in the underworld.

Demeter begged Hades to return her daughter. Eventually, Hades gave in and allowed the girl to return to her mother. But Demeter had to promise that Persephone would spend part of every year with him. When she saw Persephone again, Demeter was overjoyed, and she allowed plants to grow again.

This was an early explanation of why winter arrived each year. Winter was the time that Persephone had to go back to the underworld.

1. What is the author’s purpose for writing this passage?
2. According to this myth, what causes winter?
Oral Fluency Record Sheet

Name_________________________________________ Date____________________

Oral Reading Accuracy: __________%
Oral Reading Fluency Score: ________________ words correct per minute
Prosody Rubric: (Circle Score) 1 2 3 4

Comprehension Question Responses
#1 ____________________________________________
#2 ____________________________________________

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the underworld. 217

Number of words read: ____________  Number of errors made: ____________
Tim and his family are raising a special puppy named Luke. Luke is a German shepherd. He was born at the guide dog center. With his three brothers and sisters, he will become a guide dog. He will learn how to help blind people.

Guide dogs help blind people cross busy streets. They help them walk inside stores and buy groceries. They help them in restaurants and on buses.

Luke’s brothers and sisters are named Lark, Lisa, and Len. Why do all the names begin with the same letter? It helps the center keep track of Luke and the group.

Luke will grow up with Tim and his family. He will learn about riding in cars and living with people. When he is fourteen months old, he will go back to the center. There he will learn to obey commands. He will learn words such as “left,” “right,” and “sit.” He will also learn to keep his mind on his work. Most dogs are distracted by sounds, smells, and other animals. Luke will learn to concentrate on leading his partner.

At Luke’s graduation, Tim will meet Luke’s new partner. He will be sad to say goodbye. But he will be happy for Luke. He will be a loving helper. His eyes will become special eyes for someone who needs him.

1. What is the role of Tim and his family in Luke’s life?
2. What is a guide dog’s job mostly about?
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The Kite Contest

Jed and his little brother Tom were at the park for the kite contest. The contestant whose kite stayed up the longest would win.

The boys waited to hear their numbers. Kites swooped and soared above them. Some stayed up for a long time. Others dropped to the grass almost immediately. Finally the boys’ numbers were called. Jed raced to the open field, but Tom stood still.

“I can’t,” he mumbled as he dropped his kite.

Jed thought for a moment. Then he went over and picked up Tom’s kite. “I’ll fly both of them,” he said.

Jed began to run, and both kites soared into the sky. Then unexpectedly the wind jerked at Jed’s kite, and the kite ripped. “My kite can’t fly now,” thought Jed. He dropped the string to his kite, and the kite fell to the ground. But he still had Tom’s kite. He kept on running.

Suddenly the whistle blew. The contest was over. The boys met near the judge’s stand to hear who had won.

“There are three winners,” the judge announced. “First place goes to number 21. Second place goes to number 9. Third place goes to number 35.”

“Number 35!” Jed shouted. “That’s me.” He jumped up and ran quickly to the judge.

“You’re the one who flew two kites,” the judge said. “Great job!” He handed him a green ribbon.

“It was really my brother’s kite,” Jed said shyly. “I’m going to share this prize with him.”

1. What did a contestant need to do to win the contest?
2. What was unusual about the way Jed won his ribbon?
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Number of words read: ________  Number of errors made: ________
When You Snooze, You Lose

Carlos detested getting up in the morning. He rarely felt awake until sometime in the afternoon. By dinnertime, he was prepared for anything. By bedtime, he was unbelievably energized. Unfortunately for Carlos, school starts in the morning.

Carlos’s dad resented having to wake him up ten times each morning. So his parents bought Carlos an alarm clock that had an especially loud buzz for an alarm. They informed him that getting up was now his responsibility.

The first morning, the buzz was deafening. Carlos woke up terrified. Then he realized it was simply his new alarm clock. He decided that he did not need such an earsplitting signal. Happily, he lowered the sound level.

The next morning, Carlos continued sleeping through the quiet buzz. He missed breakfast, missed the bus, and had to hustle off to school on his own two legs.

It was raining, but Carlos forgot to close his backpack. His homework got drenched and fell apart in his hands. He also forgot his lunch money as he sprinted out of the apartment. So Carlos had no lunch and then stayed after school to redo his homework. He missed the bus again and plodded home in the drizzling rain.

As soon as Carlos entered his apartment, he raced to his room and turned up the volume on his alarm. Sleeping late was just not worth it.

1. Why did Carlos’s parents get him an alarm clock?
2. What lesson did Carlos learn?
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Number of words read: __________  Number of errors made: __________
Mr. Lazy-Bones

Matt Kroger was incredibly lazy. He was so lazy that sometimes at dinnertime he would still be lounging in his pajamas. Putting on regular clothes was too much work, and so was tying shoes, combing hair, or striding up a one-story flight of stairs instead of taking the elevator. Matt focused on avoiding any kind of activity. But Matt loved money, so when Mrs. Tinsley asked him to walk her dog Coco, Matt grabbed the opportunity. Five dollars for a ten-minute walk was a terrific deal.

When he asked me to accompany him, I thought, “Why not? I have nothing better to do anyway.”

One dog eventually led to two, because Matt discovered that walking a second pooch was like getting paid double for an identical amount of work. Then we were asked to walk a third and a fourth dog.

While strolling with the dogs, we thought, “Why not take on a paper route as well?”

“It would be like free money,” Matt declared. “It won’t take us any more time because we have to go around the neighborhood every day anyway.”

That’s right. We delivered newspapers while we walked the four dogs. Never mind that our ten-minute walk now required an investment of more than an hour. The laziest kid in the universe had become the hardest working one of all.

1. Why did Matt decide to start walking dogs?
2. What lesson did Matt learn in this story?
Mr. Lazy-Bones

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Making a Home in a New Place

Every year, millions of people move to the United States from other countries. To move from one country to another is called *immigration*. Immigrants come from all over the world, and they have many different reasons for packing up their belongings and seeking a home in a new country. They may be looking for better jobs, or they may be fleeing from a land where their freedom was denied. Natural disasters may have forced them to leave. Maybe they are looking for the chance to have a better education. Whatever their reasons, they leave behind friends, a way of life, and many memories.

After an immigrant family moves to the United States, they may decide not to stay in the same city they first arrived at. Many immigrants first try to establish themselves near other family members who had immigrated earlier. Sooner or later, the new immigrants may discover that they would have better opportunities elsewhere. They might prefer living in another town, or even another state.

At the beginning of the last century, for instance, many immigrants came from Europe on vessels that landed in New York City. Quite a few of them remained there. But millions of them headed elsewhere, traveling by train, boat, or car.

Today, a family may travel conveniently by plane. However, they still face the same old-fashioned challenge of making a home in a strange place. A family may move a number of times before they eventually find an appropriate place to live.

1. Why do people immigrate?
2. What are some of the decisions new immigrants need to make?
Making a Home in a New Place

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Number of words read: ___________    Number of errors made: ___________
The Last Frontier

Many people claim that space is the last frontier. By this they mean that every country on Earth has already been discovered and explored. To be true explorers, they say, we must journey to distant planets.

While it may be true that space is an open frontier, plenty of frontier still exists here on our planet. This is because the deepest spots of our planet, deep areas beneath the oceans, are still unexplored. The average depth of the world’s oceans is 12,200 feet, but parts of the ocean plunge much deeper. The deepest known spot is in the western Pacific and is 36,198 feet below sea level.

Divers can go only so far with the deep sea breathing equipment we have today. To really reach the ocean’s depths, people need to travel in special vehicles especially built for underwater exploration. Only a handful of people have done that.

We know that plant life is rare deep below the ocean’s surface. That’s because sunlight is necessary for plant survival and solar rays can penetrate only about 660 feet below the surface of the water. Deeper than that, the waters are completely dark and plants are unable to survive. Many sea creatures depend on plants for food. What can we assume then about animal activity in the deep water?

We know that some animals have adapted to life in the dark by becoming luminous, giving off a glow. Other creatures have become scavengers, feeding on whatever drops to the ocean floor. But these are just scattered pieces of information. Perhaps one day you will become an underwater explorer and uncover even more secrets of the deep sea.

1. In the author’s opinion, what really is the last frontier?
2. Why don’t we know more about life at the bottom of the ocean?
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Odysseus was a distinguished Greek hero celebrated in many legends. One of these legends tells about an adventure Odysseus had while sailing home from Troy.

Odysseus knew that he and his crew would have to pass perilously close to the island of the Sirens. The Sirens were a dangerous group of singers whose voices were extremely beautiful. Every time a ship got close to the island, the Sirens would deliberately stand on a hilltop, waving and singing rhythmically. The ship’s crew would forget about steering and head directly for the beautiful melody. Before long, their boat would crash and break against the rocky shore.

Odysseus was a man with common sense. He did not want his boat to be destroyed by the Sirens. He came up with a good plan. He instructed his crew to plug their ears with wax while the ship was steering past the island. Then the crew would not be able to hear the song, and the boat would be safe.

But Odysseus yearned to hear the Siren’s song. So he thought of another scheme. He had the crew strap him tightly to the mast. Then, as the crew rowed near the island, Odysseus listened to the most beautiful music imaginable. He struggled in vain to get free, to throw himself into the water and swim toward the Sirens. Finally, the boat passed the island. The sailors took the wax out of their ears and loosened the knots tying Odysseus. He was exhausted, but safe.

1. What danger did Odysseus face near the island of the Sirens?
2. Why did the crew tie Odysseus to the mast?
**Oral Fluency Record Sheet**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Date</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

**Oral Reading Accuracy:** _________%  
**Oral Reading Fluency Score:** ____________ words correct per minute  
**Prosody Rubric:** (Circle Score) 1 2 3 4  
**Comprehension Question Responses**

1. 

2. 

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**Odysseus and the Sirens**

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Number of words read: ____________  
Number of errors made: ____________
Egyptian Writing

Egyptian picture writing, or hieroglyphics, began almost 5,000 years ago. At first, the Egyptians just drew pictures to stand for objects. For example, the sun was a circle with a dot in it. A house was a small rectangle. Over time, it became too difficult to come up with a new picture for each word. So the Egyptians began to combine words to make sounds. For example, the Egyptian word for “go out” sounds like the words for “house” and “sun.” Writers just combined these two pictures when they needed to write the word that means “go out.”

Over the centuries, the ability to understand Egyptian writing was lost. Experts puzzled over Egyptian texts without any idea of what they meant. Then, in 1799, an officer in the French army found the Rosetta Stone in Egypt. The strange black stone had three sections of writing carved into it. The first section was a story in Greek. The other two sections were translations of the same story into Egyptian picture writing. Using these translations, experts quickly decoded the Rosetta Stone. Using what they deciphered, they soon solved the puzzle of Egyptian hieroglyphics.

Picture writing was used for thousands of years. But by 1000 B.C., the Phoenicians, a people who also lived in the Middle East, created a less clumsy writing system. Instead of combining pictures to make sounds, they developed an alphabet. Each letter in the alphabet stood for a sound. To form words, several sounds were blended together. The alphabet that we use today comes from the original Phoenician alphabet.

1. How is ancient Egyptian writing different from the way we write?
2. What is the importance of the Rosetta Stone?
Egyptian Writing

Egyptian picture writing, or hieroglyphics, began almost 7,500 years ago. At first, the Egyptians just drew pictures to stand for objects. For example, the sun was a circle with a dot in it. A house was a small rectangle. Over time, it became too difficult to come up with a new picture for each word. So the Egyptians began to combine words to make sounds. For example, the Egyptian word for “go out” sounds like the words for “house” and “sun.” Writers just combined these two pictures when they needed to write the word that means “go out.”

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Number of words read: ___________  Number of errors made: ___________
Once a man was walking down the road toward his village. He was not paying attention to anything around him. This man considered himself a scholar of life. He was always deep in thought. He liked to think about important things. He did not put his mind to ordinary problems. If it wasn’t impossible, or at least very complicated, he didn’t care about it at all.

This man spent all day looking out over the ocean, and he only noticed things he thought were useful. He didn’t notice the beauty of the ocean. The only things he considered were sharks and shipwrecks. He didn’t notice the clear blue sky. He was thinking about all the storms that must have been churning far away. He did not notice the wonderful songs of the birds. He only thought about how many of their nests had been robbed. He didn’t notice the playful animals swinging through the branches or rustling in the grass. He only wondered whether or not the great cats were on the prowl. That was the kind of man he was.
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As we drove home Papa did not say a word. With both hands on the wheel, he stared at the dirt road. My older brother, Roberto, was also silent. He leaned his head back and closed his eyes. Once in a while he cleared from his throat the dust that blew in from outside.

Yes, it was that time of year. When I opened the front door to the shack, I stopped. Everything we owned was neatly packed in cardboard boxes. Suddenly I felt even more the weight of hours, days, weeks, and months of work. I sat down on a box. The thought of having to move to Fresno and knowing what was in store for me there brought tears to my eyes.

That night I could not sleep. I lay in bed thinking about how much I hated this move.

A little before five o’clock in the morning, Papa woke everyone up.
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It’s probably no surprise to Rowling’s fans that many children buy the books with their own money. Or that they wear out flashlight batteries reading the books after lights-out. And, no surprise here, even readers who dislike thick books have read Harry Potter not once or twice but a dozen times. For many fans, the books are far better than watching TV or staring at a computer screen.

When the fifth book in the series, *Harry Potter and the Order of the Phoenix*, was published in June 2003, it created a lot of excitement. There were Potter parties complete with owls, cloaks, and butterbeer. Kids wore their Potter pajamas. They even wanted to sleep in a “cupboard under the stairs,” as Harry is forced to do by his creepy adopted family on Privet Drive. Some families ordered two or three books so that everyone could read the book at the same time. At close to 900 pages, *Harry Potter and the Order of the Phoenix* is the longest children’s book there is. It was the best seller online only two hours after it was possible for computer users to order copies of it.
The Real Magic of Harry Potter

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from *Harriet Tubman: Conductor on the Underground Railroad* by Ann Petry

Harriet Tubman could have told them that there was more involved in this matter of running off slaves than signaling the would-be runaways by imitating the call of a whippoorwill, or a hoot owl, far more involved than a matter of waiting for a clear night when the North Star was visible.

In December, 1851, when she started out with the band of fugitives that she planned to take to Canada, she had been in the vicinity of the plantation for days, planning the trip, carefully selecting the slaves that she would take with her. She had announced her arrival in the quarter by singing the forbidden spiritual—“Go Down, Moses, ‘way down to Egypt Land”—singing it softly outside the door of a slave cabin, late at night. The husky voice was beautiful even when it was barely more than a murmur borne on the wind.

Once she made her presence known, word of her coming spread from cabin to cabin. The slaves whispered to each other, ear to mouth, mouth to ear, “Moses is here.” “Moses has come.” “Get ready. Moses is back again.”
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Number of words read: _________  Number of errors made: _________
from The Monsters Are Due on Maple Street
by Rod Serling

NARRATOR’S VOICE. Maple Street. Six-forty-four p.m. on a late September evening. [A pause.] Maple Street in the last calm and reflective moment . . . before the monsters came!

[The camera slowly pans across the porches again. We see a man screwing a light bulb on a front porch, then getting down off the stool to flick the switch and finding that nothing happens. Another man is working on an electric power mower. He plugs in the plug, flicks on the switch of the power mower, off and on, with nothing happening. Through the window of a front porch, we see a woman pushing her finger back and forth on the dial hook. Her voice is indistinct and distant, but intelligible and repetitive.]

WOMAN. Operator, operator, something’s wrong on the phone, operator!

[MRS. BRAND comes out on the porch and calls to STEVE.]

MRS. BRAND. [Calling.] Steve, the power’s off. I had the soup on the stove and the stove just stopped working.

WOMAN. Same thing over here. I can’t get anybody on the phone either. The phone seems to be dead.

[We look down on the street as we hear the voices creep up from below, small, mildly disturbed voices highlighting these kinds of phrases:]

VOICES.

Electricity’s off.

Phone won’t work.

Can’t get a thing on the radio.

My power mower won’t move, won’t work at all.

Radio’s gone dead!
The Monsters Are Due on Maple Street

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My power mower won’t move, won’t work at all.

Radio’s gone dead! 230

Number of words read: ___________  Number of errors made: ___________
It was on the afternoon of the day of Christmas Eve, and I was in Mrs. Prothero’s garden, waiting for cats, with her son Jim. It was snowing. It was always snowing at Christmas. December, in my memory, is white as Lapland, though there were no reindeers. But there were cats. Patient, cold, and callous, our hands wrapped in socks, we waited to snowball the cats. Sleek and long as jaguars and horrible-whiskered, spitting and snarling, they would slink and sidle over the white back-garden walls, and the lynx-eyed hunters, Jim and I, fur-capped and moccasined trappers from Hudson Bay, off Mumbles Road, would hurl our deadly snowballs at the green of their eyes.

The wise cats never appeared. We were so still, Eskimo-footed arctic marksmen in the muffling silence of the eternal snows—eternal, ever since Wednesday—that we never heard Mrs. Prothero’s first cry from her igloo at the bottom of the garden. Or, if we heard it at all, it was, to us, like the far-off challenge of our enemy and prey, the neighbour’s polar cat. But soon the voice grew louder. “Fire!” cried Mrs. Prothero, and she beat the dinner-gong.

And we ran down the garden, with the snowballs in our arms, toward the house; and smoke, indeed, was pouring out of the dining-room, and the gong was bombilating, and Mrs. Prothero was announcing ruin like a town crier in Pompeii. This was better than all the cats in Wales standing on the wall in a row. We bounded into the house, laden with snowballs, and stopped at the open door of the smoke-filled room.
Something was burning all right; perhaps it was Mr. Prothero, who always slept there after midday dinner with a newspaper over his face. But he was standing in the middle of the room, saying, “A fine Christmas!” and smacking at the smoke with a slipper. “Call the fire brigade,” cried Mrs. Prothero as she beat the gong.

“They won’t be there,” said Mr. Prothero, “it’s Christmas.”

There was no fire to be seen, only clouds of smoke and Mr. Prothero standing in the middle of them, waving his slipper as though he were conducting.

“Do something,” he said.

And we threw all our snowballs into the smoke—I think we missed Mr. Prothero—and ran out of the house to the telephone box.

“Let’s call the police as well,” Jim said.

“And the ambulance.”

“And Ernie Jenkins, he likes fires.”
A Child’s Christmas in Wales

It was on the afternoon of the day of Christmas Eve, and I was in Mrs. Prothero’s garden, waiting for cats, with her son Jim. It was snowing. It was always snowing at Christmas. December, in my memory, is white as Lapland, though there were no reindeers. But there were cats. Patient, cold, and callous, our hands wrapped in socks, we waited to snowball the cats. Sleek and long as jaguars and horrible-whiskered, spitting and snarling, they would slink and sidle over the white back-garden walls, and the lynx-eyed hunters, Jim and I, fur-capped and moccasined trappers from Hudson Bay, off Mumbles Road, would hurl our deadly snowballs at the green of their eyes.

The wise cats never appeared. We were so still, Eskimo-footed arctic marksmen in the muffling silence of the eternal snows—eternal, ever since Wednesday—that we never heard Mrs. Prothero’s first cry from her igloo at the bottom of the garden. Or, if we heard it at all, it was, to us, like the far-off challenge of our enemy and prey, the neighbour’s polar cat. But soon the voice grew louder. “Fire!” cried Mrs. Prothero, and she beat the dinner-gong.

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“And the ambulance.”

“And Ernie Jenkins, he likes fires.”

Number of words read: ___________   Number of errors made: ___________
from *Charles*
by Shirley Jackson

The day my son Laurie started kindergarten he renounced corduroy overalls with bibs and began wearing blue jeans with a belt; I watched him go off the first morning with the older girl next door, seeing clearly that an era of my life was ended, my sweet-voiced nursery-school tot replaced by a long-trousered, swaggering character who forgot to stop at the corner and wave good-bye to me.

He came home the same way, the front door slamming open, his cap on the floor, and the voice suddenly become raucous shouting, “Isn’t anybody here?”

At lunch he spoke insolently to his father, spilled his baby sister’s milk, and remarked that his teacher said we were not to take the name of the Lord in vain.

“How was school today?” I asked, elaborately casual.

“All right,” he said.

“Did you learn anything?” his father asked.

Laurie regarded his father coldly. “I didn’t learn nothing,” he said.
The day my son Laurie started kindergarten he renounced corduroy overalls with bibs and began wearing blue jeans with a belt; I watched him go off the first morning with the older girl next door, seeing clearly that an era of my life was ended, my sweet-voiced nursery-school tot replaced by a long-trousered, swaggering character who forgot to stop at the corner and wave good-bye to me. He came home the same way, the front door slamming open, his cap on the floor, and the voice suddenly become raucous shouting, “Isn’t anybody here?” At lunch he spoke insolently to his father, spilled his baby sister’s milk, and remarked that his teacher said we were not to take the name of the Lord in vain. “How was school today?” I asked, elaborately casual. “All right,” he said. “Did you learn anything?” his father asked. Laurie regarded his father coldly. “I didn’t learn nothing,” he said. 158
Listen, there was a time when you couldn’t even go to the rest room around this school without a pass. And I’m not talking about those little pink tickets made out by some teacher. I’m talking about a pass that could cost anywhere up to a buck, sold by Monk Klutter.

Not that Mighty Monk ever touched money, not in public. The gang he ran, which ran the school for him, was his collection agency. They were Klutter’s Kobras, spelled out in nailheads on six well-known black plastic windbreakers.

Monk’s threads were more . . . subtle. A pile-lined suede battle jacket with lizard-skin flaps over tailored jeans and a pair of ostrich-skin boots, brassed-toed and suitable for kicking people around. One of his Kobras did nothing all day but walk a half step behind Monk, carrying a fitted bag with Monk’s gym shoes, a roll of restroom passes, a cashbox, and a switchblade that Monk gave himself manicures with at lunch over at the Kobras’ table.
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from Aunt Millicent
by Mary Steele

Grandma pondered a moment. “Now that you mention it, she did. She did indeed. I thought we’d have to chain her up sometime! We lived near the edge of town, you’ll remember, and Millie would look out towards the paddocks and hills and say that she wanted to know what was over the horizon, or where the birds were flying to, or where the clouds came from behind the hills. We never knew where she’d be off to next—but she certainly ended up in the right job! I’m so glad she became an explorer. If I were a bit younger and had better feet, I might even go and join her. It would be most interesting to see the Cameroons. It’s full of monkeys, I believe.”

“Was Aunt Millicent good at geography at school?” Nerissa remembered to ask.

“Let me think—yes, she must have been because one year she won a prize for it, and the prize was a book called Lives of the Great Explorers.”
Aunt Millicent

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“Let me think—yes, she must have been because one year she won a prize for it, and the prize was a book called Lives of the Great Explorers.” 168

Number of words read: __________   Number of errors made: __________
Before birth, nerve cells in the brain undergo a phase in which they multiply and grow rapidly. Then the brain gets rid of cells that aren’t needed. Giedd’s studies show that brain cells undergo a second phase of change that starts in childhood and lasts until the early twenties. Unlike the earlier phase, which changes the number of nerve cells, the second one changes the number of connections between the nerve cells.

When a child is between 6 and 12 years old, nerve cells become bushier. Each nerve cell branches out to other nerve cells. These branches carry signals between the cells. This process peaks when girls are about 11 and boys are about 12 ½. Then some of the branches are slowly thinned out over several years.

At the same time, a fatty layer covers the branches of the nerve cells that remain. With each passing year, the fatty coverings thicken, much like tree rings. During this time, a person’s brain has fewer fast connections. It’s a trade-off. The brain becomes more efficient but is probably losing its potential for learning and its ability to recover from trauma.
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Centuries of Whaling

When Vikings roamed the Atlantic Ocean long ago, one of the greatest prizes they sought were whales. Way back in the 1100s, the struggle between whale and sailor was a fairly even one, but over time, whaling methods grew more and more advanced. By the middle 1800s, whaling had become a big business.

Norwegian whalers, the modern relatives of the Vikings, were among the leaders in whaling technology. In 1863, a Norwegian sea captain created a new type of whaling ship. The 82-foot-long boat was sleek and swift, fast enough to catch up with even the fastest swimming whale. It also had bomb harpoons. These harpoons were tipped with bombs that would explode inside the whale. They caused death much sooner than ordinary harpoons. Suddenly, the seas were even more dangerous than ever for whales.

By the late 1800s, many whale species were endangered. The numbers of both the right whale and the bowhead whale dropped sharply. Because these whales were slower than the new boats, they were easy to kill. Sadly, millions of whales were slaughtered before a ban on whaling was agreed upon in 1982. Since then, whaling has been prohibited and successfully suppressed.

But almost all kinds of whales still suffer because of the extensive whaling in the past. Some whales, like the gray whale, have recovered quite nicely. Their numbers continue to grow. Others, like the northern right whale, continue to be in danger of extinction. At the present time, fewer than 400 northern right whales exist in the whole world. Only time will tell if whales can survive the effects of centuries of whaling.

1. What is the passage mostly about?
2. What finally stopped widespread whaling?
When Vikings roamed the Atlantic Ocean long ago, one of the greatest prizes they sought were whales. Way back in the 1100s, the struggle between whale and sailor was a fairly even one, but over time, whaling methods grew more and more advanced. By the middle 1800s, whaling had become a big business.

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Number of words read: ________ Number of errors made: ________
from I Have a Dream
by Martin Luther King, Jr.

It is obvious today that America has defaulted on this promissory note in so far as her citizens of color are concerned. Instead of honoring the sacred obligation, America has given the Negro people a bad check, a check which has come back marked “insufficient funds.” We refuse to believe that there are insufficient funds in the great vaults of opportunity of this nation. And so we’ve come to cash this check, a check that will give us upon demand the riches of freedom and the security of justice.

We have also come to this hallowed spot to remind America of the fierce urgency of now. This is no time to engage in the luxury of cooling off or take the tranquilizing drug of gradualism. Now is the time to make real the promises of democracy; now is the time to rise from the dark and desolate valley of segregation to the sunlit path of racial justice; now is the time to lift our nation from the quicksands of racial injustice to the solid rock of brotherhood; now is the time to make justice a reality for all God’s children.
I Have a Dream

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Number of words read: ___________   Number of errors made: ___________
2005 National Fluency Norms

Jan Hasbrouck and Gerald Tindal completed an extensive study of oral reading fluency in 2004. The results of their study are published in a technical report entitled, “Oral Reading Fluency: 90 Years of Measurement,” which is available on the University of Oregon’s Web site, brt.uoregon.edu/tech_reports.htm.

This table shows the oral reading fluency rates of students in Grades 1 through 8 as determined by Hasbrouck and Tindal’s data.

You can use the information in this table to draw conclusions and make decisions about the oral reading fluency of your students. Students scoring below the 50th percentile using the average score of two unpracticed readings from grade-level materials need a fluency-building program. In addition, teachers can use the table to set the long-term fluency goals for their struggling readers.

Average weekly improvement is the average words per week growth you can expect from a student. It was calculated by subtracting the fall score from the spring score and dividing the difference by 32, the typical number of weeks between the fall and spring assessments. For Grade 1, since there is no fall assessment, the average weekly improvement was calculated by subtracting the winter score from the spring score and dividing the difference by 16, the typical number of weeks between the winter and spring assessments.

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<th>Grade</th>
<th>Percentile</th>
<th>Fall WCPM*</th>
<th>Winter WCPM*</th>
<th>Spring WCPM*</th>
<th>Avg. Weekly Improvement**</th>
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*WCPM = Words Correct Per Minute
## Oral Reading Fluency Data

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<th>Grade</th>
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<th>Fall WCPM*</th>
<th>Winter WCPM*</th>
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<th>Avg. Weekly Improvement**</th>
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**Average words per week growth**