

Fluency Supplement

Grade 6

GRADE 6 Core Knowledge Language Arts®



Core Knowledge®



Fluency Supplement

Grade 6

Core Knowledge Language Arts®



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Introduction

This *Fluency Supplement* was created to accompany Core Knowledge Language Arts (CKLA) materials for Grade 6. It consists of selections from a variety of genres including poetry, fiction, and informative text. These selections provide additional opportunities for students to practice reading with fluency and expression (prosody).

You may choose and use the selections at your discretion in any order.

Follow these guidelines to use selections in this Supplement.

- Before starting Lesson 1 in a unit, choose a selection and make sufficient copies for each student.
- Model reading the selection aloud to students.
- Students will take the selection home to practice reading aloud throughout the week, with the expectation that they be prepared to read the selection fluently and with prosody by the end of the week.
- Be sure to provide opportunities for different students to read aloud each week.

You will want to establish audience guidelines for students. Some ideas for audience guidelines include:

- Listen respectfully to your classmates.
- Listen without talking.
- Give your classmate(s) a round of applause and sincere compliments on their reading (e.g., “I liked it when you...”).

Included after each selection are several comprehension questions. Assess each student's comprehension of the selection by asking him or her to respond orally to the questions one on one with you.

Dear Family Member,

Throughout the school year, your child will bring home short text selections to practice reading. Your child should read the selection aloud each night to help him/her become increasingly fluent and able to read without hesitation. You or another family member may want to read the selection aloud first to model reading with fluency and expression. Later, your child may be called upon to practice reading the selection aloud in class.

Repeated readings of text help build reading fluency, which includes automatic word recognition, expression, accuracy, and speed. The goal of using these short text selections is to help your child continue to strengthen his/her reading skills.

Name: _____

TAKE-HOME

Date: _____

1. “A Drowsy Day”

by Paul Dunbar

The air is dark, the sky is gray,
The misty shadows come and go,
And here within my dusky room
Each chair looks ghostly in the gloom.
Outside the rain falls cold and slow—
Half-stinging drops, half-blinding spray.

Each slightest sound is magnified,
For drowsy quiet holds her reign;
The burnt stick in the fireplace breaks,
The nodding cat with start awakes,
And then to sleep drops off again,
Unheeding Towser at her side.

I look far out across the lawn,
Where huddled stand the silly sheep;
My work lies idle at my hands,
My thoughts fly out like scattered strands

Of thread, and on the verge of sleep—
Still half awake—I dream and yawn.

What spirits rise before my eyes!
How various of kind and form!
Sweet memories of days long past,
The dreams of youth that could not last,
Each smiling calm, each raging storm,
That swept across my early skies.

Half seen, the bare, gaunt-fingered boughs
Before my window sweep and sway,
And chafe in tortures of unrest.
My chin sinks down upon my breast;
I cannot work on such a day,
But only sit and dream and drowse.

Word Count: 193

Name: _____

QUESTIONS

Date: _____

Comprehension Questions

“A Drowsy Day”

Assess each student’s comprehension of the selection by asking him or her to respond orally to the following questions one on one with you:

1. **Literal** What is the setting of this poem?
» The poem takes place in a room on a rainy late afternoon.
2. **Inferential** What is causing the speaker to feel so sleepy?
» It is the end of the day (dusk). It is raining outside. The room is dark. The room is quiet.
3. **Evaluative** What do you feel when you read the first stanza? What words does the poet use that make you feel this way?
» Accept supported answers. The poem might make students feel gloomy, sad, or frightened. The words used to create this feeling are: dark, grey, misty shadows, ghostly, gloom, cold, slow, half-stinging, half-blinding.
4. **Evaluative** What does the speaker mean when he says “Each smiling calm, each raging storm, that swept across my early skies”? How does this relate to the rest of the poem?
» The speaker is dreaming of his past but he is using words that relate to weather.

Name: _____

TAKE-HOME

Date: _____

2. “The Tell-Tale” by Leila Lee

Emma, I’m sorry to observe
A trick you have, my dear,
Of listening to whate’er is said,
And telling all you hear.

I knew a little Judith Shove,
Who had this habit, too;
She was an active, sprightly girl,
About as old as you.

But what was said and done at home
She always minded well,
And, when she went abroad, the whole
She would be sure to tell.

People were cautious what they said
Where’er she chanced to come,
For well they knew that every word
Would straight be carried home.

The teacher who instructed her,
Had made this wholesome rule,
To punish every child who told
Of what was done in school.

But Judith loved to talk so well,
No rule could hold her long;
She could not bear to be restrained,
Nor learn to hold her tongue.

One day a scholar misbehaved,
This made the teacher fret,
And Judith told the whole affair
To every one she met.

But, when the active school-dame heard
Her laws were disobeyed,
To find the naughty tell-tale child,
A search she quickly made.

Judith well knew the fault was hers,
And greatly did she fear
To take the threatened punishment

Which she deserved to bear.

So, on her little sister she
Contrived the blame to lay,
And said she heard her tell the tale
At home that very day.

The little, frightened, trembling child
With truth the charge denied;
But Judith said, before the school,
That little Sallie lied.

And so she bore what would have been
The wicked Judith's due,—
The punishment for telling tales,
And speaking falsely, too.

Weeping and sobbing she went home,
Her little heart was full;
And Sallie was a child of truth,
So they believed the whole.

Papa made Judith go to school,

And there, before them all,
Own how deceitful she had been;
Then on her knees to fall
Before the dame and Sallie, too,
Their pardon to obtain,
And promise she would never do
So wickedly again.

But ever after, let her go
Abroad where'er she would,
The boys would hoot her as she passed,
And call her—Tattling Jude!

Word Count: 360

Name: _____

QUESTIONS

Date: _____

Comprehension Questions

“The Tell-Tale”

Assess each student’s comprehension of the selection by asking him or her to respond orally to the following questions one on one with you:

1. ***Literal*** Judith has done two things that were bad. What are they?
 - » Judith repeats something that happened in school even though it was against the rules and, when she is caught, she lies and says her younger sister is the one who told.
2. ***Inferential*** What is another word for tell-tale?
 - » A tell-tale is a tattler tale, or a gossip.
3. ***Evaluative*** Why is it a bad thing to talk about other people?
 - » Accept reasonable answers.

3. “How the Leaves Came Down ”

by Susan Coolidge

"I'll tell you how the leaves came down,
"The great Tree to his children said:
"You're getting sleepy, Yellow and Brown,
Yes, very sleepy, little Red.
It is quite time to go to bed."

"Ah!" begged each silly, pouting leaf,"
Let us a little longer stay;
Dear Father Tree, behold our grief!
'Tis such a very pleasant day,
We do not want to go away."

So, for just one more merry day
To the great Tree the leaflets clung,
Frolicked and danced, and had their way,
Upon the autumn breezes swung,
Whispering all their sports among—

"Perhaps the great Tree will forget,
And let us stay until the spring,

If we all beg, and coax, and fret.

"But the great Tree did no such thing;

He smiled to hear their whispering.

"Come, children, all to bed," he cried;

And ere the leaves could urge their prayer,

He shook his head, and far and wide,

Fluttering and rustling everywhere,

Down sped the leaflets through the air.

I saw them; on the ground they lay,

Golden and red, a huddled swarm,

Waiting till one from far away,

White bedclothes heaped upon her arm,

Should come to wrap them safe and warm.

The great bare Tree looked down and smiled.

"Good-night, dear little leaves," he said.

And from below each sleepy child

Replied, "Good-night," and murmured,

"It is so nice to go to bed!"

Word Count: 203

Name: _____

TAKE-HOME

Date: _____

4. “Song of Life”

by Charles MacKay

A traveler on a dusty road
Strewed acorns on the lea;
And one took root and sprouted up,
And grew into a tree.
Love sought its shade at evening-time,
To breathe its early vows;
And Age was pleased, in heights of noon,
To bask beneath its boughs.
The dormouse loved its dangling twigs,
The birds sweet music bore—
It stood a glory in its place,
A blessing evermore.

A little spring had lost its way
Amid the grass and fern;
A passing stranger scooped a well
Where weary men might turn.
He walled it in, and hung with care
A ladle on the brink;
He thought not of the deed he did,

But judged that Toil might drink.
He passed again; and lo! the well,
By summer never dried,
Had cooled ten thousand parchéd tongues,
And saved a life beside.

A nameless man, amid the crowd
That thronged the daily mart,
Let fall a word of hope and love,
Unstudied from the heart,
A whisper on the tumult thrown,
A transitory breath,
It raised a brother from the dust,
It saved a soul from death.
O germ! O fount! O word of love!
O thought at random cast!
Ye were but little at the first,
But mighty at the last.

Word Count: 205

Name: _____

QUESTIONS

Date: _____

Comprehension Questions

“Song of Life”

Assess each student’s comprehension of the selection by asking him or her to respond orally to the following questions one on one with you:

1. ***Literal*** In the first stanza, what caused the oak tree to grow?
» A traveler dropped an acorn which grew into a tree.
2. ***Literal*** In the last stanza, what was the action that helps other people?
» A person spoke in a positive manner about hope and love.
3. ***Inferential*** What does the line “Ye were but little at the first,/But mighty at the last” mean?
» Answers will vary, and may include: an act may seem small, but it can have great consequences.

Name: _____

TAKE-HOME

Date: _____

5. “Toys”

by Edgar Albert Guest

I can pass up the lure of a jewel to wear
With never the trace of a sigh,
The things on a shelf that I'd like for myself
I never regret I can't buy.
I can go through the town passing store after store
Showing things it would please me to own,
With never a trace of despair on my face,
But I can't let a toy shop alone.

I can throttle the love of fine raiment to death
And I don't know the craving for rum,
But I do know the joy that is born of a toy,
And the pleasure that comes with a drum
I can reckon the value of money at times,
And govern my purse strings with sense,
But I fall for a toy for my girl or my boy
And never regard the expense.

It's seldom I sigh for unlimited gold
Or the power of a rich man to buy;
My courage is stout when the doing without
Is only my duty, but I
Curse the shackles of thrift when I gaze at the toys

That my kiddies are eager to own,
And I'd buy everything that they wish for, by Jing!
If their mother would let me alone.

There isn't much fun spending coin on myself
For neckties and up-to-date lids,
But there's pleasure tenfold, in the silver and gold
I part with for things for the kids.
I can go through the town passing store after store
Showing things it would please me to own,
But to thrift I am lost; I won't reckon the cost
When I'm left in a toy shop alone.

Word Count: 273

Name: _____

QUESTIONS

Date: _____

Comprehension Questions

“Toys”

Assess each student’s comprehension of the selection by asking him or her to respond orally to the following questions one on one with you:

1. ***Inferential*** The speaker uses the word thrift. What does that mean?
» Thrift means to be careful about spending money.
2. ***Inferential*** In what way is the speaker thrifty?
» The speaker does not spend money on himself.
3. ***Literal*** What type of store makes it hard for the speaker to be thrifty?
» The speaker has trouble controlling how much money he spends in a toy store.
4. ***Literal*** Why does the speaker want to spend money in a toy store?
» He knows how much fun toys are. He likes to buy things for his children.

6. “My Antonia”

by Willa Cather

On Christmas morning, when I got down to the kitchen, the men were just coming in from their morning chores--the horses and pigs always had their breakfast before we did. Jake and Otto shouted ‘Merry Christmas!’ to me, and winked at each other when they saw the waffle-irons on the stove. Grandfather came down, wearing a white shirt and his Sunday coat. Morning prayers were longer than usual. He read the chapters from Saint Matthew about the birth of Christ, and as we listened, it all seemed like something that had happened lately, and near at hand. In his prayer he thanked the Lord for the first Christmas, and for all that it had meant to the world ever since. He gave thanks for our food and comfort, and prayed for the poor and destitute in great cities, where the struggle for life was harder than it was here with us. Grandfather’s prayers were often very interesting. He had the gift of simple and moving expression. Because he talked so little, his words had a peculiar force; they were not worn dull from constant use. His prayers reflected what he was thinking about at the time, and it was chiefly through them that we got to know his feelings and his views about things.

At about four o’clock a visitor appeared: Mr. Shimerda, wearing his rabbit-skin cap and collar, and new mittens his wife had knitted. He had come to thank us for the presents, and for all grandmother’s kindness to his family. Jake and Otto joined us from the basement and we sat about the stove, enjoying the deepening grey of the winter afternoon and the atmosphere of comfort and security in my

grandfather's house. This feeling seemed completely to take possession of Mr. Shimerda. He sat still and passive, his head resting against the back of the wooden rocking-chair, his hands relaxed upon the arms. He said almost nothing, and smiled rarely; but as he rested there we all had a sense of his utter content.

As it grew dark, I asked whether I might light the Christmas tree before the lamp was brought. When the candle-ends sent up their conical yellow flames, all the coloured figures from Austria stood out clear and full of meaning against the green boughs. Mr. Shimerda rose, crossed himself, and quietly knelt down before the tree, his head sunk forward. His long body formed a letter 'S.' I saw grandmother look apprehensively at grandfather. He was rather narrow in religious matters, and sometimes spoke out and hurt people's feelings. There had been nothing strange about the tree before, but now, with some one kneeling before it--images, candles... Grandfather merely put his finger-tips to his brow and bowed his venerable head, thus Protestantizing the atmosphere.

At nine o'clock Mr. Shimerda lighted one of our lanterns and put on his overcoat and fur collar. He stood in the little entry hall, the lantern and his fur cap under his arm, shaking hands with us. When he took grandmother's hand, he bent over it as he always did, and said slowly, 'Good woman!' He made the sign of the cross over me, put on his cap and went off in the dark. As we turned back to the sitting-room, grandfather looked at me searchingly. 'The prayers of all good people are good,' he said quietly.

Word Count: 561

Name: _____

QUESTIONS

Date: _____

Comprehension Questions

“My Antonia”

Assess each student’s comprehension of the selection by asking him or her to respond orally to the following questions one on one with you:

1. **Literal** What is special about today?
 - » Today is Christmas Day.
 - » **Inferential** What does the speaker mean when he says that his grandfather's words are "not worn dull from constant use"?
 - » Grandfather says little. When he does say something, people listen.
3. **Inferential** Why are the narrator and his grandmother concerned about Grandfather's reaction to Mr. Shimerda kneeling by the tree?
 - » They know grandfather has specific views on prayer and are afraid he might confront Mr. Shimerda because Mr. Shimerda is not praying the same way that grandfather prays.
4. **Inferential** What does grandfather mean by "the prayers of all good people are good"? What does that tell us about how he feels about Mr. Shimerda?
 - » Grandfather thinks that Mr. Shimerda is a good man.

7. “What Katy Did”

by Susan Coolidge

Mrs. Knight's school, to which Katy and Clover and Cecy went, stood quite at the other end of the town from Dr. Carr's. It was a low, one-story building and had a yard behind it, in which the girls played at recess. Unfortunately, next door to it was Miss Miller's school, equally large and popular, and with a yard behind it also. Only a high board fence separated the two playgrounds.

Mrs. Knight was a stout, gentle woman, who moved slowly, and had a face which made you think of an amiable and well-disposed cow. Miss Miller, on the contrary, had black eyes, with black corkscrew curls waving about them, and was generally brisk and snappy. A constant feud raged between the two schools as to the respective merits of the teachers and the instruction. The Knight girls for some unknown reason, considered themselves genteel and the Miller girls vulgar, and took no pains to conceal this opinion; while the Miller girls, on the other hand, retaliated by being as aggravating as they knew how. They spent their recesses and intermissions mostly in making faces through the knot-holes in the fence, and over the top of it when they could get there, which wasn't an easy thing to do, as the fence was pretty high. The Knight girls could make faces too, for all their gentility. Their yard had one great advantage over the other: it possessed a woodshed, with a climbable roof, which commanded Miss Miller's premises, and upon this the girls used to sit in rows, turning up their noses at the next yard, and irritating the foe by

jeering remarks. "Knights" and "Millerites," the two schools called each other; and the feud raged so high, that sometimes it was hardly safe for a Knight to meet a Millerite in the street; all of which, as may be imagined, was exceedingly improving both to the manners and morals of the young ladies concerned.

One morning, not long after the day in Paradise, Katy was late. She could not find her things. Her algebra, as she expressed it, had "gone and lost itself," her slate was missing, and the string was off her sun-bonnet. She ran about, searching for these articles and banging doors, till Aunt Izzie was out of patience.

"As for your algebra," she said, "if it is that very dirty book with only one cover, and scribbled all over the leaves, you will find it under the kitchen-table. Philly was playing before breakfast that it was a pig: no wonder, I'm sure, for it looks good for nothing else. How you do manage to spoil your school-books in this manner, Katy, I cannot imagine. It is less than a month since your father got you a new algebra, and look at it now--not fit to be carried about. I do wish you would realize what books cost!

"About your slate," she went on, "I know nothing; but here is the bonnet-string;" taking it out of her pocket.

"Oh, thank you!" said Katy, hastily sticking it on with a pin.

Word Count: 513

Comprehension Questions

“What Katy Did”

Assess each student’s comprehension of the selection by asking him or her to respond orally to the following questions one on one with you:

1. **Literal** How are Mrs. Knight and Miss Miller similar and how are they different?
 - » Mrs. Knight and Mrs. Miller both run schools for girls. Mrs. Knight is large and slow in her movements. Miss Miller moves quickly.
2. **Literal** How do the girls from Mrs. Knight’s school compare themselves to Miss Miller’s girls?
 - » The girls from Mrs. Knight’s school consider themselves polite and respectful and the girls from Miss Miller’s school as unsophisticated and crude.
3. **Evaluative** Do you think Katy is a good student? Why or why not?
 - » Accept supported answers. Katy is late for school. She has lost the things she needs for class. She does not take care of her school books.

8. “Anne of Green Gables”

by L. M. Montgomery

It was broad daylight when Anne awoke and sat up in bed, staring confusedly at the window through which a flood of cheery sunshine was pouring and outside of which something white and feathery waved across glimpses of blue sky.

For a moment she could not remember where she was. First came a delightful thrill, as something very pleasant; then a horrible remembrance. This was Green Gables and they didn't want her because she wasn't a boy!

But it was morning and, yes, it was a cherry-tree in full bloom outside of her window. With a bound she was out of bed and across the floor. She pushed up the sash--it went up stiffly and creakily, as if it hadn't been opened for a long time, which was the case; and it stuck so tight that nothing was needed to hold it up.

Anne dropped on her knees and gazed out into the June morning, her eyes glistening with delight. Oh, wasn't it beautiful? Wasn't it a lovely place? Suppose she wasn't really going to stay here! She would imagine she was. There was scope for imagination here.

A huge cherry-tree grew outside, so close that its boughs tapped against the house, and it was so thick-set with blossoms that hardly a leaf was to be seen. On both sides of the house was a big orchard, one of apple-trees and one of cherry-trees, also showered over with blossoms; and their grass was all sprinkled with

dandelions. In the garden below were lilac-trees purple with flowers, and their dizzily sweet fragrance drifted up to the window on the morning wind.

Below the garden a green field lush with clover sloped down to the hollow where the brook ran and where scores of white birches grew, upspringing airily out of an undergrowth suggestive of delightful possibilities in ferns and mosses and woodsy things generally. Beyond it was a hill, green and feathery with spruce and fir; there was a gap in it where the gray gable end of the little house she had seen from the other side of the Lake of Shining Waters was visible.

Off to the left were the big barns and beyond them, away down over green, low-sloping fields, was a sparkling blue glimpse of sea.

Anne's beauty-loving eyes lingered on it all, taking everything greedily in. She had looked on so many unlovely places in her life, poor child; but this was as lovely as anything she had ever dreamed.

She knelt there, lost to everything but the loveliness around her, until she was startled by a hand on her shoulder. Marilla had come in unheard by the small dreamer.

"It's time you were dressed," she said curtly.

Marilla really did not know how to talk to the child, and her uncomfortable ignorance made her crisp and curt when she did not mean to be.

Anne stood up and drew a long breath.

“Oh, isn’t it wonderful?” she said, waving her hand comprehensively at the good world outside.

“It’s a big tree,” said Marilla, “and it blooms great, but the fruit don’t amount to much never—small and wormy.”

Word Count: 523

Comprehension Questions

“Anne of Green Gables”

Assess each student’s comprehension of the selection by asking him or her to respond orally to the following questions one on one with you:

1. **Literal** What does Anne think about Green Gables?

» Anne thinks Green Gables is wonderful.

2. **Inferential** How long has Anne been at Green Gables? How do you know?

» Anne arrived the night before. Because she is waking up there in the morning, and she has never seen the place before.

3. **Inferential** What was Anne's life like before she came to Green Gables? Use the text to support your answer.

Anne had a hard life. The line “She had looked on so many unlovely places in her life, poor child,” tells the reader that Anne has not experienced such a beautiful place.

4. **Evaluative** What does it tell you about Anne that she can imagine that she will stay at Green Gables?

» Accept reasonable answers. Anne is a child who dreams of a better place. She is optimistic and has a strong imagination.

9. “The Boxcar Children” Part 1

by Gertrude Chandler Warner

(Adaptation)

When Jess opened her eyes it must have been about ten o'clock in the morning. She sat up and looked all around her. She could see dimly the opening where they had come into the woods. She looked around to see that her family was still safely by her. Then she looked up at the sky. At first she thought it must still be night, and then she realized that the darkness was caused by an approaching storm.

"Whatever, *whatever* shall we do now?" demanded Jess of the air.

She got up and looked in every direction for shelter. She even walked quite a little way into the woods, and down a hill. And there she stood, not knowing what to do next.

"I shall have to wake Henry up," she said at last. "Only how I hate to!"

As she spoke she glanced into the forest, and her feet felt as if they were nailed to the ground. She could not stir. Faintly outlined among the trees, Jess saw an old freight or box car. Her first thought was one of fear; her second, hope for shelter. As she thought of shelter, her feet moved, and she stumbled toward it.

It really was a freight car. She felt of it. It stood on rusty broken rails which were nearly covered with dead leaves. Then the thunder cracked overhead. Jess came

to her usual senses and started back for Henry, flying like the wind. He was awake, looking anxiously overhead. He had not noticed that Jess was missing.

"Come!" panted Jess. "I've found a place! Hurry! hurry!"

Henry did not stop to ask questions. He picked up Benny, telling Violet to gather up the hay. And then they ran headlong through the thick underbrush in Jess' wake, seeing their way only too well by the sharp flashes of lightning.

"It's beginning to sprinkle!" gasped Henry.

"We'll get there, all right," Jess shouted back. "It's not far. Be all ready to help me open the door when we get there!"

By sheer good fortune a big tree stump stood under the door of the freight car, or the children never could have opened it. As it was, Jess sprang on the stump and Henry, pausing to lay Benny down, did likewise. Together they rolled back the heavy door about a foot.

"That's enough," panted Jess. "I'll get in, and you hand Benny up to me."

"No," said Henry quietly. "I must see first if any one is in there."

"It will rain!" protested Jess. "Nothing will hurt me."

But she knew it was useless to argue with Henry, so she hastily groped in the bag for the matches and handed them to her brother. It must be confessed that Jess held her breath while Henry struck one and peered about inside the car.

"All's well!" he reported. "Come in, everybody!"

Violet passed the hay up to her brother, and crawled in herself. Then Jess handed Benny up like a package of groceries and, taking one last look at the angry sky and waving trees, she climbed in after him.

The two children managed to roll the door back so that the crack was completely closed before the storm broke. But at that very instant it broke with a vengeance. It seemed to the children that the sky would split, so sharp were the cracks of thunder. But not a drop of rain reached them in their roomy retreat. They could see nothing at all, for the freight car was tightly made, and all outside was nearly as black as night. Through it all, Benny slept on.

Word Count: 605

Name: _____

QUESTIONS

Date: _____

Comprehension Questions

“The Boxcar Children”

Assess each student’s comprehension of the selection by asking him or her to respond orally to the following questions one on one with you:

1. **Literal** Who are the characters in this reading?
 - » The characters are the children Jess, Henry, Violet, and Benny.
2. **Literal** What is Jess looking for when she finds the boxcar?
 - » Jess is looking for shelter from the approaching storm.
3. **Inferential** Why are the children in the woods by themselves?
 - » Accept reasonable answers. They might be running away, or they might not have any family so they have to care of themselves.
4. **Evaluative** Do you think the boxcar is a good shelter?
 - » Answers may vary, but could include that it is a good shelter because it protects the children from the weather, it looks abandoned so it might not belong to anyone else, it is a safe hiding place.

10. “The Boxcar Children” Part 2

by Gertrude Chandler Warner

(Adaptation)

"Keep still!" whispered Jess.

Benny obeyed. The three children were as motionless as stone images, huddled inside the freight car. Jess opened her mouth in order to breathe at all, her heart was thumping so wildly. She watched like a cat through the open door, in the direction of the rustling noise. And in a moment the trembling bushes parted, and out crawled a dog. He was an Airedale and was pulling himself along on three legs, whimpering softly.

Jess drew a long breath of relief, and said to the children, "It's all right. Only a dog. But he seems to be hurt."

At the sound of her voice the dog lifted his eyes and wagged his tail feebly. He held up his front foot.

"Poor doggie," murmured Jess soothingly, as she clambered out of the car. "Let Jess see your poor lame foot." She approached the dog carefully, for she remembered that her mother had always told her never to touch a strange dog unless he wagged his tail.

But this dog's tail was wagging, certainly, so Jess bent over without fear to look at the paw. An exclamation of pity escaped her when she saw it, for a stiff, sharp thorn

had been driven completely through one of the cushions of the dog's foot, and around it the blood had dried.

"I guess I can fix that," said Jess briskly. "But taking the thorn out is going to hurt you, old fellow."

The dog looked up at her as she laid his paw down, and licked her hand.

"Come here, Violet and Benny," directed Jess.

She took the animal gently in her lap and turned him on his side. She patted his head and stroked his nose with one finger, and offered him the rest of her bread crust, which she had put in her apron pocket. The dog snapped it up as if he were nearly starved. Then she held the soft paw firmly with her left hand, and pulled steadily on the thorn with her right hand. The dog did not utter a sound. He lay motionless in her lap, until the thorn suddenly let go and lay in Jess' hand.

"Good, good!" cried Violet.

"Wet my handkerchief," Jess ordered briskly.

Violet did so, dipping it in the running brook. Jess wrapped the cool, wet folds around the hot paw, and gently squeezed it against the wound, the dog meanwhile trying to lick her hands.

"We'll s'prise Henry, won't we?" laughed Benny delightedly. "Now we got a dog!"

Word Count: 422

Comprehension Questions

“The Boxcar Children”

Assess each student’s comprehension of the selection by asking him or her to respond orally to the following questions one on one with you:

1. **Literal** In the line: "Poor doggie," murmured Jess soothingly, as she clambered out of the car"; what is the car?
 - » The car is the boxcar. The children are huddled in a freight car. The title of the selection is "The Boxcar Children."
2. **Inferential** How did the dog feel about the children when he first saw them? How do you know?
 - » The dog is happy to see the children. He wags his tail.
3. **Literal** How did the children help the dog?
 - » They removed the thorn from the dog's foot.
4. **Evaluative** Do you think it was a good idea for the children to touch the dog? Support your answer.
 - » Answers may vary. Yes, the dog is in pain and needs help. No, just because his tail is wagging doesn't mean he is friendly, or the dog might bite the children when they pull on the thorn.

11. “Why the Cat Always Falls Upon Her Feet”

by Florence Holbrook

Some magicians are cruel, but others are gentle and good to all the creatures of the earth. One of these good magicians was one day traveling in a great forest. The sun rose high in the heavens, and he lay down at the foot of a tree. Soft, green moss grew all about him. The sun shining through the leaves made flecks of light and shadow upon the earth. He heard the song of the bird and the lazy buzz of the wasp. The wind rustled the leafy boughs above him. All the music of the forest lulled him to slumber, and he closed his eyes.

As the magician lay asleep, a great serpent came softly from the thicket. It lifted high its shining crest and saw the man at the foot of the tree. "I will kill him!" it hissed. "I could have eaten that cat last night if he had not called, 'Watch, little cat, watch!' I will kill him, I will kill him!"

Closer and closer the deadly serpent moved. The magician stirred in his sleep. "Watch, little cat, watch!" he said softly. The serpent drew back, but the magician's eyes were shut, and it went closer. It hissed its war-cry. The sleeping magician did not move. The serpent was upon him—no, far up in the high branches of the tree above his head the little cat lay hidden. She had seen the serpent when it came from the thicket.

She watched it as it went closer and closer to the sleeping man, and she heard it

hiss its war-cry. The little cat's body quivered with anger and with fear, for she was so little and the serpent was so big. "The magician was very good to me," she thought, and she leaped down upon the serpent.

Oh, how angry the serpent was! It hissed, and the flames shot from its eyes. It struck wildly at the brave little cat, but now the cat had no fear. Again and again she leaped upon the serpent's head, and at last the creature lay dead beside the sleeping man whom it had wished to kill.

When the magician awoke, the little cat lay on the earth, and not far away was the dead serpent. He knew at once what the cat had done, and he said, "Little cat, what can I do to show you honor for your brave fight? Your eyes are quick to see, and your ears are quick to hear. You can run very swiftly. I know what I can do for you. You shall be known over the earth as the friend of man, and you shall always have a home in the home of man. And one thing more, little cat: you leaped from the high tree to kill the deadly serpent, and now as long as you live, you shall leap where you will, and you shall always fall upon your feet."

Word Count: 490

Comprehension Questions**“Why the Cat Always Falls Upon Her Feet”**

Assess each student’s comprehension of the selection by asking him or her to respond orally to the following questions one on one with you:

1. ***Literal*** Why does the little cat save the magician from being bitten by the serpent?
» The magician saved the cat from the serpent the day before.
2. ***Inferential*** What two things does the magician give the cat when he awakes?
» The magician says that the cat will always have a home in the home of humans and the cat will always land on its feet when he leaps.
3. ***Literal*** Why does the serpent want to kill the man?
» The serpent wants to kill the man because he stopped the serpent from killing and eating the cat the day before.
4. ***Evaluative*** Do you think this is really why cats land on their feet? What would be another lesson you could learn from this story?
» This is not a true story but it does have a message. Accept reasonable answers, such as there are rewards for good deeds, we should help each other, and even when you are scared you can do brave things.

11. “American Indian Stories”

by Zitkala-Sa

"Where is your mother, my little grandchild?" were his first words.

"My mother is soon coming back from my aunt's tepee," I replied.

"Then I shall wait awhile for her return," he said, crossing his feet and seating himself upon a mat.

At once I began to play the part of a generous hostess. I turned to my mother's coffeepot.

Lifting the lid, I found nothing but coffee grounds in the bottom. I set the pot on a heap of cold ashes in the centre, and filled it half full of warm Missouri River water. During this performance I felt conscious of being watched. Then breaking off a small piece of our unleavened bread, I placed it in a bowl. Turning soon to the coffeepot, which would never have boiled on a dead fire had I waited forever, I poured out a cup of worse than muddy warm water. Carrying the bowl in one hand and cup in the other, I handed the light luncheon to the old warrior. I offered them to him with the air of bestowing generous hospitality.

"How! how!" he said, and placed the dishes on the ground in front of his crossed feet. He nibbled at the bread and sipped from the cup. I sat back against a pole watching him. I was proud to have succeeded so well in serving refreshments to a guest all by myself. Before the old warrior had finished eating, my mother

entered. Immediately she wondered where I had found coffee, for she knew I had never made any, and that she had left the coffeepot empty. Answering the question in my mother's eyes, the warrior remarked, "My granddaughter made coffee on a heap of dead ashes, and served me the moment I came."

They both laughed, and mother said, "Wait a little longer, and I shall build a fire." She meant to make some real coffee. But neither she nor the warrior, whom the law of our custom had compelled to partake of my insipid hospitality, said anything to embarrass me. They treated my best judgment, poor as it was, with the utmost respect. It was not till long years afterward that I learned how ridiculous a thing I had done.

Word Count: 380

Comprehension Questions

“American Indian Stories”

Assess each student’s comprehension of the selection by asking him or her to respond orally to the following questions one on one with you:

1. **Literal** What does the speaker do when the old warrior comes to the door?
» She serves him coffee and bread.
2. **Literal** What does the speaker do that is so ridiculous?
» She tries to make coffee on a cold stove.
3. **Inferential** What is the old warrior telling her mother when he says, "My granddaughter made coffee on a heap of dead ashes, and served me the moment I came."
» He tells mother that the speaker made the coffee on a stove that was not hot, which was a mistake. But he is also praising the speaker when he tells mother that the speaker provided hospitality as soon as he arrived which is the proper and honorable thing to do.
4. **Evaluative** Do you think mother and the warrior do the right thing by not pointing out the speaker’s mistake?
» Accept reasonable answers. They do the right thing because the speaker knew that she should be a good hostess to the warrior. She has never been a hostess on her own and she does the best she can.

13. “Irving Berlin”

by Core Knowledge Staff

In the late 1930s, World War II loomed large on the horizon. Irving Berlin never lost his gratitude at being an American citizen. Even though he had experienced prejudice as an immigrant, he still considered America his home. He wanted to write a song to show his pride in being an American. He made attempts at writing a new song but nothing worked. He went back to his trunk and pulled out a song he had written 18 years earlier during World War I. His musical secretary at the time had called the song too sentimental and no one would want to hear it. The song no one wanted to hear was “God Bless America.” The song became an instant classic. Even then it was met with prejudice. Outcries railed that an immigrant would dare write such words. None of it mattered. It was the song of hope America needed.

When America entered World War II, Berlin was in his fifties. Too old to serve in the armed forces, he nonetheless wanted to honor his country. He wrote a revue called “This is the Army.” “This is the Army” formed its own unit and toured all during the war. Berlin wrote a song called “What the Well-dressed Man will wear in Harlem.” He insisted that Black soldiers perform the number. This made “This is the Army” the only integrated unit in the army for the duration of the war.

Berlin himself performed in “This is the Army.” He sang a song which had made him famous during WWI, “Oh, How I Hate to Get Up in the Morning.” It was a great moral booster for the soldiers. “This is the Army” raised 9 million dollars in relief effort for families who had lost loved ones during the war.

Hollywood made a movie of “This is the Army” in which Berlin sang his song. As he was in rehearsal one of the stagehands was heard to say, “If the guy who wrote this song heard this, he’d roll over in his grave!” Berlin wasn’t much of a singer.

In 1945 Irving Berlin was awarded the Medal of Merit for his work in World War II. He later said that was the biggest emotional experience of his life and nothing ever topped it.

Word Count: 386

Name: _____

QUESTIONS

Date: _____

Comprehension Questions

“Irving Berlin”

Assess each student’s comprehension of the selection by asking him or her to respond orally to the following questions one on one with you:

1. **Literal** What did Irving Berlin do to be awarded the Medal of Merit?
 - » Berlin wrote a revue and toured during World War II to entertain the United States soldiers.
2. **Evaluative** Why would this deserve a medal?
 - » Answers will vary and might include: Berlin's revue had patriotic songs meant to boost the morale of soldiers. Being a soldier is very stressful and watching the revue would be entertaining to the troops and give them something else to think about. Performing in a war zone is dangerous, so Berlin was risking his life to bring this entertainment to the troops. His revue was the only integrated unit in the army during the war.
3. **Literal** Why were some people critical of the song “God Bless America”?
 - » They felt an immigrant should not write song lyrics like this.
4. **Literal** Why did Irving Berlin write the song “God Bless America”?
 - » Irving Berlin wanted to show his gratitude to America for allowing him to become an American citizen. He was proud to be an American citizen

NAME: _____

TAKE-HOME

DATE: _____

14. “My Escape From Slavery”

by Frederick Douglass
(Adaptation)

Though I was not a murderer fleeing from justice, I felt perhaps quite as miserable as such a criminal. The train was moving at a very high rate of speed, but to my anxious mind it was moving far too slowly. Minutes were hours, and hours were days during this part of my flight.

After Maryland, I was to pass through Delaware — another slave State, where slave-catchers generally awaited their prey. It was not in the interior of the State, but on its borders, that these human hounds were most vigilant and active. The heart of no fox or deer, with hungry hounds on his trail in full chase, could have beaten more anxiously than did mine from the time I left Baltimore till I reached Philadelphia.

The passage of the Susquehanna River at Havre de Grace made by ferry-boat. On board, I met a young colored man by the name of Nichols, who came very near betraying me. He was a "hand" on the boat. Instead of minding his business, he insisted upon asking me dangerous questions as to where I was going, and when I was coming back. I got away as soon as I could, and went to another part of the boat.

Once across the river, I encountered a new danger. Only a few days before, I

had been at work in Mr. Price's shipyard in Baltimore, under the care of Captain McGowan. On the meeting of the two trains, the one going south stopped on the track just opposite to the one going north. Captain McGowan sat at a window where he could see me. He would certainly have recognized me had he looked at me but for a second. Fortunately, the trains soon passed each other on their respective ways. But this was not my only hair-breadth escape. A German blacksmith whom I knew well was on the train with me, and looked at me very intently, as if he thought he had seen me somewhere before. I really believe he knew me, but had no heart to betray me. At any rate, he saw me escaping and held his peace.

My free life began on the third of September, 1838. On the morning of the fourth of that month, after an anxious and most perilous but safe journey, I found myself in the big city of New York, a FREE MAN. For the moment, the dreams of my youth and the hopes of my manhood were completely fulfilled. The bonds that had held me to "old master" were broken. No man now had a right to call me his slave or assert mastery over me. I have often been asked how I felt when first I found myself on free soil. There is scarcely anything in my experience about which I could not give a more satisfactory answer. A new world had opened upon me. I lived more in that one day than in a year of my slave life. It was a time of joyous excitement.

Word Count: 504

Comprehension Questions**“My Escape From Slavery”**

Assess each student’s comprehension of the selection by asking him or her to respond orally to the following questions one on one with you:

1. ***Inferential*** What is Frederick Douglass doing that makes him feel like a criminal?
 - » Douglass is traveling north illegally so that he can be a free man and not a slave anymore.
2. ***Inferential*** Why is Douglass nervous every time he sees someone he knows on the train or when the man on the ferry-boat asks him questions?
 - » Douglass is afraid that he will be turned in to the authorities.
3. ***Evaluative*** Which of the following is the most likely thing that could happen to Douglass if he is caught? He will be killed; he will be questioned and released; he will be put in jail, or he will be returned to his master for punishment. Explain your answer.
 - » Douglass would most likely be returned to his master because he is property of the master. It will be up to the master as to how to punish Douglass.

SSSS

NAME: _____

TAKE-HOME

DATE: _____

15. "Insect Adventures"

By J. Henri Fabre and Louise Seymour Hasbrouck

I wished to know something more about my Mason-bees. I had heard that they knew how to find their nests even if carried away from them. One day I managed to capture forty Bees from a nest under the eaves of my shed, and to put them one by one in screws of paper. I asked my daughter Algae to stay near the nest and watch for the return of the Bees. Things being thus arranged, I carried off my forty captives to a spot two and a half miles from home.

I had to mark each captive with a mixture of chalk and gum arabic before I set her free. It was no easy business. I was stung many times, and sometimes I forgot myself and squeezed the Bee harder than I should have. As a result, about twenty out of my forty Bees were injured. The rest started off, in different directions at first; but most of them seemed to me to be making for their home.

Meanwhile a stiff breeze sprang up, making things still harder for the Bees. They must have had to fly close to the ground; they could not possibly go up high and get a view of the country.

Under the circumstances, I hardly thought, when I reached home, that the Bees would be there. But Algae greeted me at once, her cheeks flushed with excitement:

"Two!" she cried. "Two arrived at twenty minutes to three, with a load of

pollen under their bellies!” I had released my insects at about two o’clock; these first arrivals had therefore flown two miles and a half in less than three quarters of an hour, and lingered to forage on the way.

As it was growing late, we had to stop our observations. Next day, however, I took another count of my Mason-bees and found fifteen with a white spot as I had marked them. At least fifteen out of the twenty then had returned, in spite of having the wind against them, and in spite of having been taken to a place where they had almost certainly never been before. These Bees do not go far afield, for they have all the food and building material they want near home. Then how did my exiles return? What guided them? It was certainly not memory, but some special faculty which we cannot explain, it is so different from anything we ourselves possess.

Word Count: 406

Name: _____

QUESTIONS

Date: _____

Comprehension Questions

“Insect Adventures”

Assess each student’s comprehension of the selection by asking him or her to respond orally to the following questions one on one with you:

1. **Literal** Where is the Mason-bees' nest located?
 - » The bees’ nest is under the eaves of the author’s shed.
2. **Literal** What is the author trying to discover in his experiment?
 - » The author wants to see if the Mason-bees can find their way back to their nest when they are taken two and a half miles away.
3. **Evaluative** How could the author expand his experiment?
 - » Accept reasonable answers. The author could move the nest and see if the bees can find the nest. The author could release the bees three, four, or five miles away and see if they can find the nest.

16. “The Childhood of Rome”

by Louise Lamprey

Suddenly there was a crash as if the earth had cracked in two. Everything turned black. The air was filled with smoke and dust and ashes raining down from the sky. Marcia caught up her little sister and the baskets together and groped her way to the door. Her mother darted out to drag them in and barred the door against the unknown terrors outside. The boys and their father were under the cattle shed, with the stout timber brace against the door; it had been made to keep out wild beasts. In the roar of the tumult outside the loudest shout could not have been heard.

The terrific detonations above were heavier than any thunder that ever rolled down the valley, sharper than any blows of a giant hammer. The earth trembled and rocked under foot. Then came a pounding from all sides at once, like the trampling of frantic herds. An avalanche of dust and cinders came through the smoke hole and put out the fire. Part of the roof had fallen in, for they could hear stones tumbling down on the earth floor. Through the opening they saw a crimson glow spreading over the sky. Only the beams in one corner, the corner where the mother and her children were, still held firm.

At last the rain of ashes was over, the stones no longer fell, and it was light enough for them to see each other’s faces. They had no way of knowing how long they had crouched there in the dark, but they had been there all night. The house

had no windows and only one door. Now the father and the boys were trying to get the door open against a heap of fallen roof beams and thatch and stones and ashes and broken furniture. In a minute or two they got it far enough open to let them in.

Whatever the strange and terrible outbreak of the Mountain of Fire could have meant, the people had no thought of abandoning the land. Within a few days they were repairing or rebuilding their huts and returning to the habits of their daily life. Centuries might pass, more than one such calamity might befall the village, but there would still be men living on the same spot where their forefathers lived, on the slopes of the Mountain of Fire.

All the same, a great change had taken place, and they felt it more as time went on. They began to see that the land that had once brought forth food for them all would not now feed them with any such abundance. They would be lucky if they could secure enough food to keep them alive. Some of the fields were burned over by the lava stream; some were ruined by the dammed-up river. Cattle and sheep had been killed or had run away. Much of the grain and wool and other provision for the future had been destroyed. It was a very hard winter.

Yet rather than leave their homes and be strangers and outcasts without a country, they endured cold and scarcity and every kind of discomfort, even suffering. Outside the land they knew were unknown terrors,—races who did not speak their language or worship their gods; soil whose ways they did not understand, and very likely far worse troubles than had come upon them here. Most of the people

simply made up their minds that what must be, they must endure, because anything else would only be a change for the worse.

There were a few, however, who did not take this view. The first to suggest that some might go away was Marcus Colonus. He spoke of it to a little group of his friends while they were in the forest cutting wood. Sylvius, whose wife and children were killed when the stones fell, and Urso the shaggy hunter, who never feared anything, man or beast, and Muraena the metal-worker, a restless fellow who knew that he could get a living wherever men used plows and weapons, all agreed that if Colonus went they would go.

Word Count: 686

Name: _____

QUESTIONS

Date: _____

Comprehension Questions

“The Childhood of Rome”

Assess each student’s comprehension of the selection by asking him or her to respond orally to the following questions one on one with you:

1. **Literal** Where does this story take place?

» The story takes place in a village on the slopes of a mountain.

2. **Inferential** What is the Mountain of Fire? How do you know?

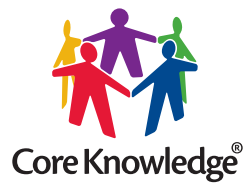
» The phrases "rain of ashes" and "lava stream" are clues that the Mountain of Fire is a volcano.

3. **Literal** Why is this a hard winter?

» This is a hard winter because the village does not have enough food. The fields have been flooded and covered with lava. The cattle and sheep are dead or have run away. Much of the grain and wool and other provisions have been destroyed.

4. **Evaluative** Do you think you would stay in the village or would you find a new place to live? Support your answer.

» Accept reasonable answers.



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