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How Can Fluency Instruction Using Readers' Theater And Paired Reading Impact Reading Comprehension In The Third Grade Classroom?

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HOW CAN FLUENCY INSTRUCTION USING READERS’ THEATER AND PAIRED READING IMPACT READING COMPREHENSION IN THE THIRD GRADE CLASSROOM?

By

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A capstone submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts in Literacy Education.

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St. Paul, MN

May 2018

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To the many past, present, and future students who have and will continue to influence my life…
“The more that you read, the more things you will know.
The more that you learn, the more places you’ll go.”

-Dr. Seuss, I Can Read With My Eyes Shut!
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Thank you to those who were helpful, supportive, and encouraging throughout this arduous journey. Life truly is a grand adventure.
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CHAPTER ONE

Introduction

As I drew closer to completing the requirements for a graduate level degree, it was necessary for me to choose a topic for my capstone thesis. This topic should increase my knowledge and understanding of literacy and it should improve my skills as an educator. After much consideration, I selected as my topic, *How can fluency instruction, using readers’ theater and paired reading, impact reading comprehension in the third grade classroom?*

Chapter One of this thesis explains my drive to improve my skills as a professional educator. Reflecting on my strengths and weaknesses has allowed me to see an area of instruction that needed improvement. It is my hope that the reader of this paper will appreciate my struggle as I sought for the missing link that may be preventing many of my students from meeting or exceeding the state standards assessments each year. It is my goal to always improve my skills, which helps the children that are placed in my classroom each and every school year.

My Love of Children

I have always loved being around children. Children are naturally innocent and at times, brutally honest. I appreciate their resiliency. I have known children who have come from tough situations, but they have risen above their hardships and succeeded in school. As I consider the abilities of successful students, there is often a common factor. They read well. Proficient reading is the key that unlocks the door to learning in all other academic subjects. Without being proficient in reading, a student will struggle. I want to
be certain that I am providing my students with ample opportunities and experiences that will encourage them to become skillful and adept readers.

Recently, my school district has invested a tremendous amount of money in curriculum, training, and technology. I have received new curriculum for guided reading, spelling, and writing. In addition to these materials, we have one-to-one devices with numerous apps for our students’ use. Training has also been provided. I have seen amazing growth in my classroom. However, when the high stakes testing takes place each spring, the results have left me disappointed and frustrated. I have asked myself repeatedly, Why are so many of my students, who are reading at or above grade level, unable to pass our state tests in the spring? What am I missing?

During an elective class through Hamline University, Developing Elementary Readers, I was required to read an article published in *The Reading Teacher* entitled, “A Focus on Fluency: How One Teacher Incorporated Fluency with Her Reading Curriculum,” by Lorraine Wiebe Griffith and Timothy V. Rasinski (2004). As I read about Griffith’s experiences in the classroom I felt as though she were describing my classroom and my experiences. I began to feel excitement as I considered this could be my missing link! It is through this article I began to wonder. What impact does fluency have on comprehension? This experience has motivated me to use as my research question, *How can fluency instruction, using readers’ theater and paired reading, impact reading comprehension in the third grade classroom?*
Lifelong Reader

I have vivid memories of wanting to read and write. I remember wishing I could read as my mother read my brother’s same requested story over and over again. I wondered how he could never tire of the same, “I think I can, I think I can” phrase used repeatedly in this book. It was so boring! However, I loved to hear my mother read. I also recall sitting on my grandmother’s back steps creating what I hoped would be cursive letters in a notebook and asking my aunt, “Are any of these cursive?” She would look at the loops and scribbles pointing out a cursive e or l.

It was sometime between kindergarten and first grade I learned to read. The *Dick and Jane* series, written by William S. Gray and Zerna Sharp, were my favorite books. I remember being so proud that I was a reader. *Dick and Jane* led to more complex reading and I soon discovered I truly loved to read!

As I reflect upon my life of reading, I realize reading was not always enjoyable. Upper elementary grade teachers often required reading that I rarely found interesting. The only real enjoyable reading for me was when the teacher would read aloud or when we could read a book of our choice after we had completed our assignments. Junior high and senior high school often had much of the same dull and wearisome reading. Rarely did an English teacher assign a book I found engaging. I believe this led me to reading less and the love of reading escaped me for a time.

My undergraduate classes for my elementary teaching degree required that I take a children’s literature course. I was required to read numerous self selected children’s books from various genres. Reading was once again interesting and often times
delightful! This reconnection with reading and my newly acquired understanding of the importance of reading fueled my desire for my own children to become skillful readers. Many hours were spent huddled together at bedtime as I read until one or all of us would fall asleep.

My three children are now adults. They have different interests and reasons for reading, but all read well. I am certain their abilities to read well helped them to be successful in school and will continue to be beneficial as they pursue their goals and careers. I am pleased that I have been able to help them to develop such strong reading skills and will forever be grateful for teachers who helped them to become successful readers.

My Professional Journey

When my youngest child started preschool I knew it was time for me to start teaching full-time. I had been substitute teaching and working as a Title One teacher, but I longed for my own classroom.

More than twenty years of teaching has included teaching in the following areas: substitute teaching, Title One, special education, Kindergarten, and first through fourth grades. All of these positions have given me opportunities to work with students who have possessed various ability levels and needs. It is through these opportunities that I have learned the importance of differentiation. I have learned why teachers must determine where an individual is academically through observation and assessments. I have also learned that individualized plans and goals must be developed so that students are striving to be at grade level and beyond.
Several years of working in the primary grades and working with students who struggled to read have caused me to become very familiar with the process of learning to read. I understand that students typically learn to identify letters and sounds. This leads to learning words and eventually putting these words together to read sentences. I did not completely understand the importance of small groups and differentiation until my district was looking at purchasing new reading curriculum. I found the idea of differentiation to be intriguing and looked forward to learning a better way to teach!

My school administration sent several teachers to a reading workshop. It was this experience that opened my eyes to teaching reading in a much more effective and enjoyable way for the students and the teacher. I was taught about *The Daily 5* method of reading instruction developed by Gail Boushey and Joan Moser (2006/2014). This method called for students to be grouped by ability levels for small groups of guided reading and word work, but it also encouraged students with various abilities to work together while reading with a friend. It was possible to have five different activities going on every day simultaneously during a reading and writing block of time as students were working on reading to themselves, reading with a friend, listening to reading, working on word work, or working on writing, while others were working with the teacher. Although learning to manage this type of routine became a bit chaotic at times, once it was in place it was amazing to behold!

Later, I was introduced to *The Daily CAFÉ* by Boushey and Moser (2009). *The Daily CAFÉ* focuses on the importance of teaching specific reading strategies. These newly discovered methods and resources excited me and I couldn’t wait to try them in
my classroom. I returned energized and ready to work! Students were assessed and put into groups. Then we started to work! I immediately fell in love with teaching in this manner. My students and I were working well together and we were seeing wonderful progress.

I then started looking into *Words Their Way* by Bear, Invernizzi, Templeton, and Johnston (2012). This resource explained a differentiated method of spelling and vocabulary instruction. My administration granted permission for me to attend training for *Words Their Way* if I would be willing to share my newly acquired knowledge with my colleagues. I left that training thinking, “Wow! Why would anyone teach spelling in the traditional way?” It took one semester to prove the value of individualized spelling lists to me and I shared my experience with all who wanted to know about individualized spelling.

My school district had added new curriculum and various online teaching aids. There seemed to be an endless amount of new material to wade through. However, I did not recall spending much time on learning how to teach fluency! Again I asked myself, *How can fluency instruction, using readers’ theater and paired reading, impact reading comprehension in the third grade classroom?* Was this the instructional piece that I could be missing that would help my students comprehend more deeply and allow them to answer the high stakes questions correctly?

During the Spring Semester of 2015, I began a grand adventure. I enrolled in the Masters of Literacy Education program through Hamline University. I knew I must enrich my understanding of literacy and the time was now right. My eldest child was
completely finished with her college education and working. Our middle child was a junior in college. Our youngest child was a junior in high school. It was now time for me to rekindle the fire, the passion, that I have had for reading and learning. My eyes were opened as I began to examine research and evidenced based practices that were new or being revisited since my college graduation more than twenty years ago.

The first course I took at Hamline University required that I read the book, *Focus: Elevating the Essentials to Radically Improve Student Learning* by Mike Schmoker (2011). In this book Schmoker explains the importance of avoiding fads and getting back to the basics of reading, writing, and talking. He spoke of allowing students to read for a minimum of sixty minutes a day and write for forty minutes a day. Independent reading and writing time, not teacher instruction time, was to be allowed every day. The idea behind this included the fact that students were not reading at home. If we did not provide ample time for reading, students would not do it.

I found myself questioning what I was doing. How could I fit so much independent reading and writing time into my schedule? How would I continue to meet the needs of all of my students? Would they really read for an entire hour? Could this time be broken up throughout the day? It was now spring. The school year was rapidly coming to an end. I decided I would try increasing student reading time.

My third grade students had built their stamina for reading independently so they could easily read for thirty minutes. I wanted to see what they would do with an hour. Within a few days not only were they reading for an entire hour, they were begging for more time when the hour had passed. Students who had proclaimed that they “hate reading” in
the fall were now reading and looking for opportunities to read. I was sold on the importance of allowing reading time, but now what should I do? Something would have to go and I was still struggling with peer perception. When another teacher would enter the room I feared they were thinking, “That Mrs. Koski is so lazy! Her kids are reading again.” I needed to find a balance between instruction time and independent reading time.

We continued to work in small groups, large groups, and independently. I was amazed at the growth students were demonstrating. I was certain that these rock star readers would do well on the spring tests. I looked forward to them demonstrating their tremendous skills! Test day came and to my disappointment, many who could read to me well above their grade level did not reach the desired score of three hundred fifty or higher. How could this be? What am I missing? What are they not learning or understanding? What do I do now?

**Next Steps**

I believed in assessment and individualized learning plans. I knew I must be familiar with and teach to the standards. I was convinced that there must be a balance between small group instruction and whole group instruction. Five small reading groups, four spelling groups, whole group instruction, independent reading, writing, and learning to use technology required a tremendous amount of prepping and planning. It was not necessarily a difficult task, it just required planning, organizing, and incredible amounts of documentation!
I would like my capstone thesis to include evidenced based practices in the areas of fluency. I wish to discover answers to my research question, *How can fluency instruction, using readers’ theater and paired reading, impact reading comprehension in the third grade classroom?* Not only will I need to increase my understanding about reading fluency, I will need to learn what helps students to efficiently and effectively work on becoming fluent readers. I will determine ways I can provide a more balanced reading program that serves the needs of all of my students by looking at necessary skills for fluent and comprehending readers. I will implement activities and routines to provide students with the necessary practice which is vital for proficient and fluent reading.

**Summary**

As I consider the incredible task that I have to ensure all students are reading and writing at grade level by the completion of third grade, I ask myself, *How can fluency instruction, using readers’ theater and paired reading, impact reading comprehension in the third grade classroom?* At times I am a bit overwhelmed by the complexity of my duty and may feel inadequately prepared to meet the needs of all of my students. It will be challenging to honestly look at what I am currently doing in my classroom to promote fluency. I will need to eliminate activities and procedures that have not been proven to be effective. This will create available time for those activities and procedures that I am not currently doing that have been proven to be effective. I will also need to implement procedures and methods of recording data so that I can track how my students are progressing. This is a necessary part of my growth and development as a teacher.
I cannot change what happens outside of the classroom, but I can change what is going on in my classroom. I will carefully study the recommended evidence-based practices that have been proven to be effective and implement them into my routine. This is the most effective and efficient way to teach so that I am producing proficient readers. This will take time and creativity as I juggle many different specialists’ schedules and student needs. However, it must be done.

Once I have researched the evidence-based practices for fluency instruction and put them into place, my biggest challenge will be staying consistent and organized. I must improve my abilities to keep track of the various assessments and assignments that come with differentiation. I know it will be very beneficial for me to master this aspect of my craft and I look forward to learning from those that have found a better way.

Chapter Two will begin my journey of researching the best practices or evidence-based practices in a balanced literacy program. More specifically, I will be looking for information and implementation of fluency instruction that can provide a bridge to comprehension. This will assist me in improving my teaching skills and ensuring that all students are proficient readers. I believe examining my research question, How can fluency instruction, using readers’ theater and paired reading, impact reading comprehension in the third grade classroom? will not only make me a better teacher, but it will also influence the lives of many children and the success they will experience in the future.
CHAPTER TWO

Literature Review

Introduction

Chapter One included experiences that I have had throughout my life as a learner and as an educator. The discovery that I was not providing ample instruction or practice time in the area of fluency instruction led me to question, *How can fluency instruction, using readers’ theater and paired reading, impact reading comprehension in the third grade classroom?*

A review on how children learned to read and what experts in reading instruction have determined to be evidence based practices in literacy instruction was conducted. This was to ensure that all areas of instruction necessary for producing proficient readers was happening in the classroom. The following topics were included in this research: State Standards and Common Core State Standards, Evidence Based or Best Practices in Reading Instruction, Phonemic Awareness and Phonics, Spelling and Vocabulary, Fluency, Comprehension Strategies, Writing, Differentiation, and Motivation. Close attention was given to fluency instruction as preparation was being made to introduce two methods of fluency, Readers’ Theater and Paired or Partner Reading into the classroom.

An article published in *Literacy Research and Instruction* entitled “Fluency in Learning to Read for Meaning: Going Beyond Repeated Readings,” stressed the importance of:

Identifying the essential instructional components of teaching reading as they are laid out by a developmental scheme….knowledge of these stages is helpful in
planning instruction, and teachers who are familiar with these stages are better equipped at providing meaningful instruction…(Nichols, Rupley, and Rasinski, 2008, p. 1-2)

This literature review included information about some of the essential components of reading instruction that Nichols, Rupley, and Rasinski listed in their article. Topics were not placed in any particular order. However, State Standards and Common Core State Standards were adopted to outline and organize what educators were doing in classrooms, so it was logical that this was where this review should begin.

**State Standards and Common Core State Standards**

The Common Core State Standards were created in an effort to help ensure that all students were prepared for college and career ready by the time they completed high school. These standards were organized into three main sections: Standards for English Language Arts & Literacy in History/Social Studies, Science, and Technical Subjects Grades K-5; Standards for English Language Arts Grades 6-12, and Standards for Literacy in History/Social Studies, Science, and Technical Subjects Grades 6-12. Each of these sections were divided into strands. The strands included in this section were: Reading; Writing; Speaking, Viewing, Listening, & Media Literacy; and Language. Each of these strands had benchmarks to measure if students were progressing towards mastery of the standards.

These state level standards and the Common Core State Standards were very similar in the expectations they had for students. In 2010, the Common Core State Standards were adopted by my state. This state’s standards committee met and
determined it beneficial for students to have additional standards that included critical knowledge and skills that were considered necessary for preparation for college, careers, and an active civic life. These end of year expectations were to be met and maintained. These academic standards required students to know how to:

…gather, comprehend, evaluate, synthesize, and report on information and ideas, to conduct original research in order to answer questions or solve problems, and to analyze and create a high volume and extensive range of print and non-print texts in media forms old and new. (Minnesota Department of Education, 2010, p. 6)

The expectations were listed, but educators were given the freedom to instruct students in whatever manner they determined would ensure achievement. This allowed teachers to provide whatever tools were necessary for all students to reach the desired goals of these standards.

The required third grade reading assessments were based on these academic standards. The assessments were comprised of passages that included both literary and informational texts. Approximately 40-60% of the test included literary texts and 40-60% of the test included informational texts. The informational texts included passages in history, social studies, science, and technical subjects. The amount of informational text reading that was required to pass the tests increases as the students progress through the grades. By twelfth grade the tests included 30-40% literary and 60-70% informational text (Minnesota Department of Education, 2017).
The goal of the state academic standards was to assist teachers in preparing students for life after high school. It has been proven that students that were college and career ready tended to demonstrate the following: independence; strong content knowledge; the ability to talk in front of others; comprehended during reading, listening, and talking; valued evidence; had the ability to use technology; and understood other perspectives and cultures (Minnesota Department of Education, 2010).

Even though the standards covered a broad range of skills and abilities, it was not expected that each standard be taught independently. Often there were ways to provide opportunities to develop and strengthen several areas of focus with a single task. It was necessary for teachers to become familiar with all of these expected skills so that they were able to provide students with rich opportunities to strengthen and improve literary skills. These expectations had been set by the state and federal governments. It was the responsibility of teachers to prepare students for these high stakes tests.

Exploration of standards, which led to implementation of the evidenced based practices, was critical. Teachers were then expected to identify where each student was in his understanding and ability to perform at a “meets the standard” level. Once those who were lacking skills were identified, teachers were expected to develop a plan that would assist them in meeting these standards. To determine the most effective ways to improve these weaknesses, teachers examined the research of leaders in literacy. Doing so provided an understanding of the evidenced based practices for these skills.
Evidence Based or Best Practices in Reading Instruction

The term “best practices” was used to describe instructional approaches and techniques that have been proven to be effective in increasing students’ skills and producing proficient readers. It was crucial that teachers knew what skills were necessary to produce proficient readers and what methods to use to teach these skills.

In addition to knowing about these skills and methods, teachers needed access to high quality materials and an understanding of how to differentiate for the different levels of academic performance in the classroom. Good pacing and classroom organization was also necessary to maximize teaching time. According to Roskos and Newman, educators implemented these practices well when they did so with “considerable intention, deliberate practice, and reflection...” (2014, p. 507).

What was taught and how it was taught brought consequences. It was important that teachers used reading instruction time in a way that was most advantageous to students. In 2000, the National Reading Panel Report determined certain skills were important in a complete reading program. These skills included: systematic phonics, phonemic awareness, fluency, and comprehension strategies (Taylor, Peterson, Pearson, & Rodriguez, 2002). Teachers that taught skills, engaged students in a considerable amount of actual reading and writing time, and helped students to develop the use of reading strategies saw significant increases in their students’ reading abilities.

Once educators knew what to teach, they were to look at how to teach the desired skill. Whole group, small group, word work, writing and journaling, speaking, and the use of technology were just a few of the topics and practices suggested for student
growth. Teachers were to learn how to organize instruction time so opportunities for growth were provided for all.

Another consideration to include in a review of current practices was how much time was spent “telling” or lecturing students versus guiding, questioning, and coaching? As Taylor, Peterson, Pearson, and Rodriguez studied classroom practices, they found that “telling” did not appear to be as effective as coaching for improving students’ reading achievement (2002). It was critical for teachers to develop practices that included deliberate actions that increased students’ thinking and reflecting about what they had read. Students were to know how to re-read and pull information out of a passage to increase their understanding of what was read.

A study titled, “Teacher Knowledge, Instructional Expertise, and the Development of Reading Proficiency,” by Lyon and Weiser suggested that:

- teachers need to (a) ensure that students learn and apply phonemic awareness and phonics concepts rapidly in text, (b) relate what is read to their background knowledge and their lexicon (vocabulary), and (c) deploy active strategies to derive meaning from print. (2009, p. 476)

They also suggested there seemed to be a lack of basic understanding of how to teach these skills. The authors of this article pointed out there was a tendency to blame low reading skills on non-school situations such as a student’s socioeconomic status, family background, English as a second language, or motivation. These factors may be connected to achievement in reading. However, “it is ineffective instruction that dooms
children to a lifetime of reading failure…teacher effectiveness is the most important factor in the growth of student achievement” (Lyon & Weiser, 2009, p.476).

**Phonemic/Phonological Awareness and Phonics**

Strong phonological and phonemic awareness skills were determined essential building blocks of proficient readers. Phonemic awareness skills included: phonemes—the sounds of letters; knowing that these sounds make words; understanding rhyme; the ability to blend sounds and segment words; and the ability to manipulate sounds to create new words (Gambrell & Morrow, 2015).

Some considered phonemic awareness to be a reliable predictor of future reading success. Reading instruction had been found to be more successful when students were able to rhyme and manipulate letters and sounds to create new words. It was very difficult for some students to understand that rhyming words had the same end sounds. They seemed to be unable to move beyond the initial sounds of words and unable to change these beginning sounds to make rhyming words. Additional practice of this skill was determined to be very beneficial.

Phonics was considered the connection or relationship between sounds and letter symbols or graphemes. Remembering that each word was made up of syllables and each syllable had an onset and a rime—any vowel and consonant following the onset was helpful in developing proficient readers. Students that learned to recognize these symbols and the sounds they stood for were more fluent and proficient readers. Our language was difficult for some to learn because of the many symbols that represented more than one sound. Vowel combinations and silent letters were often quite confusing
for beginning readers. Learning all of the symbols and rules of phonics was frustrating for some, but was also a necessary task for the development of proficient readers.

Phonics instruction was important because it helped students learn to quickly determine the sounds of unfamiliar words. When a reader came across a word he did not know, he used the elements of phonics to decode the word. It was with phonics instruction and considerable amounts of practice that students were able to decode.

Phonics instruction has had a tremendous impact on young readers. As readers improved their phonics skills, they moved into larger, multi-syllable words. It was at this time morphemes-prefixes, suffixes, and roots were used to determine unknown words. Students learned to look for “chunks” and smaller words within the larger word. All of these pieces were necessary parts for the development of phonics skills.

A study completed by Duke and Block suggested that phonological awareness instruction was most beneficial when it was taught with phonics and other letter-sound relationship rules. In addition to teaching the skill, it was suggested that teachers teach when and how to apply the skill. It was necessary for some students to be taught specifically how to decode. Doing this helped to teach those who struggled to read and did not know how to blend or “sound out” when they came across a word they did not know (2012).

**Spelling and Vocabulary**

Spelling and vocabulary fell into a category some called “Word Work.” Spelling and vocabulary were not included on the list of instructional areas that the National Reading Panel considered essential to reading achievement-phonics, phonemic
awareness, fluency, and comprehension. However, as Berne and Blachowicz have stated, “Decoding skills, fluency skills, and comprehension skills all draw upon a known bank of words. Teacher cues to encourage the decoding of words are useless if the word at hand is not part of the student’s listening vocabulary” (2008, p. 315). If students were required to have a rich listening vocabulary in order to read and write well, it made sense to include activities such as spelling and vocabulary instruction in order to increase the number of words a student has heard and used in class. Therefore, spelling or encoding instruction was found to be beneficial to students.

It was also determined by some that spelling achievement increased as students improved their reading and explicit spelling instruction was not necessary. However, research did suggest there was evidence that development in encoding and decoding was linked to phonological and phonemic awareness and encoding instruction “improves both the reading and spelling performances of students at risk for reading and spelling difficulties” (Weiser and Mathes, 2011, p.173). For this reason, spelling and vocabulary instruction was considered a desired learning opportunity for students.

Evidence suggested spelling instruction was most beneficial when activities included such things as letter tiles to build words or activities that helped the student learn how to manipulate phoneme-grapheme relationships. Activities were to be more than the memorization of words for a test on Friday. Providing children with these types of learning activities helped to eliminate early reading failure.

Spelling and vocabulary were both in the Word Work category, but required different methods of instruction. There were several approaches to vocabulary
instruction. The National Reading Panel has suggested that good vocabulary instruction should combine incidental and explicit teaching of vocabulary. We used different kinds of words for different purposes. Therefore, diverse methods to teach our students were recommended. Suggested activities included: working with word relationships and word parts, etymology (history of a word), synonyms, antonyms, prefixes, suffixes, and root words.

Deliberately planned high quality read aloud books, both literature and informational text, were also considered to be an effective tool in increasing students’ vocabularies. These books had words the students had not heard before. If they heard words often enough they were more likely to use them. When they had words in their listening memory, they recognized the word when they read it. Teachers assisted with increasing vocabulary skills when they later used these unfamiliar words in discussions.

Word play or word games were also listed as a productive vocabulary building activity. Often times students were more engaged in a learning activity they found enjoyable or fun. Games usually increased the fun factor for learning. This was also the case for building vocabulary.

**Fluency**

Fluent reading usually considered three abilities or skills of readers: quick and accurate word recognition, appropriate use of prosody, and comprehension. Being fluent was much more than reading words quickly. It was essential that students increased their accurate and automatic word recognition. However, it was also vital that they used good phrasing and expression when reading.
The Theory of Automaticity in Reading explained why reading fluently was so important. This theory suggested individuals had limited amounts of attentional resources available for reading. When attention was given to decoding, students had less attention to use for comprehension. It then made sense that as students improved in their word recognition and reading became more automatic, more cognitive resources were used for comprehension. Once these skills were automatic, focus then moved to the use of prosodic features-stress, pitch, and suitable phrasing (Kuhn, 2006).

Kuhn’s study suggested two primary approaches for fluency building: unassisted repeated readings and assisted reading. The unassisted repeated readings approach involved a student reading a passage repeatedly until a desired level of fluency was attained. Assisted reading involved a child reading a text with the support of a model which included a skilled reader, a tape recording, or computer narration (Kuhn, 2006).

Oral recitation lessons (ORL) and fluency development lessons (FDL) both seemed to have an effect on student learning. Oral recitation lessons included students reading passages several times to increase fluency levels. Although this was effective for building fluency, it did not improve comprehension skills. The FDL format which incorporated teacher modeling, choral reading, and paired practice with short texts had some success. Fluency-oriented reading instruction (FORI) was designed for whole class instruction. These strategies were helpful, but were not considered as effective for students.

Griffith and Rasinski suggested that Readers’ Theater and partner reading were two practices that helped students to improve fluency skills which increased
understanding or comprehension. In the article, Griffith shared her experience of adding Readers’ Theater in her classroom as an attempt to help her students improve their independent reading skills and comprehension levels. Her goal was to have students thinking critically about what they read while reading silently. She felt Readers’ Theater was a practice that bridged the gap between her students’ existing reading skills and where they needed to be so that they were successful on her state’s high stake tests.

Rasinski also assisted Griffith as her mentor while she added Partner or Paired Reading in her class. These practices were found to have a dramatic impact on Griffith’s students’ performances (2004).

Another fluency expert, Richard Allington, suggested that children needed a significant amount of successful reading practice to become fluent readers. This necessary practice happened when students were reading what Allington referred to as the “Goldilocks” principle. The books were not too easy or too difficult; they were just right. Just-right books provided a bit of a challenge, but they were not frustrating to the reader. It was also important that the book not be too easy.

Some of Allington’s suggested strategies to assist students in their fluency include: listening to reading which could be a recording or a teacher or another student modeling proficient reading; reading with a fluent and a less fluent reader as partners that took turns reading to each other; and choral reading which involved all students reading the same passage aloud with the teacher.

Allington also suggested that another strategy that fluent readers possessed was the ability to self-monitor. They recognized when they had made an error and were able
to self-correct and continue reading. Self-monitoring skills were also something that was taught to students. All of these activities and strategies came together to improve fluency which improved students’ comprehension (2004).

**Comprehension and Comprehension Strategies**

The purpose of reading is for readers to gain meaning from text or to comprehend what is written. When words are not understood reading often becomes frustrating and meaningless. The purpose of reading instruction has always been for teachers to instruct students so that skills were developed and knowledge was increased. The Texas Educational Agency suggested that to construct meaning from reading required reading to be the following:

- Interactive: it involves not just the reader but also the text and the context in which reading takes place.
- Strategic: readers have purposes for their reading and use a variety of strategies and skills as they construct meaning.
- Adaptable: readers change the strategies they use as they read different kinds of text or as they read for different purposes. (2002, p. 5)

Strategy instruction has been found to be effective in improving comprehension skills. A study done by McKeown, Beck, and Blake (2009) compared instruction techniques that encouraged comprehension. They looked at strategy instruction and instruction that focused on content. Strategy instruction involved teaching specific procedures to summarize, make inferences, and generate questions while reading text.
The other, referred to as, content approach, focused on keeping the students attention on what was being read and working through the passage to get meaning.

Part of this study included teachers that helped students build background knowledge. It was discovered that when students made connections with what they were reading, they were more likely to gain meaning from the material. Teachers, who encouraged these connections by involving students in before-reading activities and discussion, helped students build background knowledge. Sharing the purpose of our reading and introducing some vocabulary significantly increased a child’s chance for understanding.

In addition to before-reading activities, during-reading and after-reading prompts assisted students as they read and worked to comprehend what was being read. When students identified their goal by understanding what was being asked of them, monitored their progress while they were reading, and evaluated the quality of their answers, they were demonstrating significant comprehension skills.

It was recommended by McKeown, Beck, and Blake that strategies be taught that helped students to be able to summarize, infer, and predict through short texts. They also reminded us of the importance of making connections. Through content instruction, focus was placed on important ideas and making connections. It was determined that both teaching strategies and content instruction are crucial for developing readers that understood what had been read (2009).
Writing

A recent study by Steve Graham and Michael Herbert from Vanderbilt University suggested that writing about content classroom material in addition to writing during reading and writing time was a great learning opportunity. Writing during science, social studies, and math has been found to be very beneficial to our learning (2011). Not only did students increase their understanding about the topic studied, but students were more likely to remember what was read and discussed. In addition to increased understanding of content area studies, Graham and Herbert suggested that reading and writing skills were close and reciprocal. This then suggested that if reading helped with writing, writing helped with reading. If students were able to write about text, then they were able to better comprehend the text. Graham and Herbert also suggested that when students wrote about text, it provided the students with a “tool for visibly and permanently recording, connecting, analyzing, personalizing, and manipulating key ideas in text” (2011, p. 712).

It was suggested in the book, Focus: Evaluating the Essentials to Radically Improve Student Learning, that time needed to be provided for adequate amounts of “reading, writing, and talking each day” (Schmoker, 2011, p. 10). Schmocker stated that when we allowed students to read for 60 minutes a day and to write for 40 minutes a day as Richard Allington has suggested, our students’ reading skills naturally developed and we did not need to use our time teaching for the dreaded state tests (Schmoker, 2011).

Writing was considered very helpful in developing and expanding reading skills. Writing was not to be something that was haphazardly thrown into the day. Allington
also suggested that writing tasks should be in-depth assignments. When students spent ten days on a writing assignment they were much more likely to benefit from the assignment. Filling the day with shorter lessons was not as effective. Students needed time to think, process, and finally put their ideas down on paper. When done properly, writing had an incredible impact on students’ reading (2002).

**Differentiation**

No two students are exactly alike, therefore, it made sense that teachers should not try to teach the same thing to everyone. If educators taught to the “middle of the road” two groups were left behind: those who struggled and those who already knew what was being taught. Not only was valuable teaching and learning time lost, but teachers were also setting themselves up for student behavior problems as frustrated or bored students acted out.

It was suggested by Firmender, Reis, and Sweeny, that the...disparity in comprehension and fluency levels requires classroom teachers to extend additional efforts to differentiate instruction and assign reading content that is above, at, and below grade level to ensure that all students are simultaneously challenged and engaged in reading. (2013, p.3)

This was considered a challenge for teachers because of the continued increase in diversity of the students put into classrooms. Differentiation was no longer an option, it was a requirement!
Differentiation was a framework for instruction that took into consideration the abilities and weaknesses of students. When students were assessed and placed into flexible learning groups, opportunities were provided for them to learn at their instructional level with peers that had similar abilities. Of course students were not to remain in these groups all day long. There were times when they were working with others with various levels of abilities or as an entire group. However, when it came to reading instruction, there was evidence that suggested it was most productive when students worked in groups with students with similar abilities.

There were many ways in which differentiation took place. Gambrell and Morrow pointed out that in 1999 Tomlinson stated that differentiation took place with content, process, product, and the learning environment through flexible grouping and ongoing assessments (2015). This initially required quite a bit of time and effort on the part of the teacher, but once in place, the progress made was always worth the effort.

A study was conducted to see what benefits were related to the grouping of students during reading instruction. Whole class instruction coupled with mixed-ability grouping was determined to be beneficial for the average and above average learners but students who had difficulties with reading demonstrated minimal improvements (Schumm, Moody, and Vaughn, 2000). It was suggested that schools must be thoughtful with their placement of students into groups. However, it was not effective to teach those who were significantly behind their peers with the whole group or with others with various levels of skills. Students who struggled to read needed more intensive and explicit instruction geared for meeting the needs of the individual. This was
accomplished by placing students of similar abilities into small groups during reading instruction.

Small group instruction was especially useful when providing the Response to Intervention (RTI) framework for struggling readers. Stacy L. Weiss suggested that often those who were struggling to read were also struggling with behaviors that were necessary for optimal learning: attending to task, following directions, persisting with challenging tasks which was also known as having issues with Executive Function, and working independently. With a small group setting, reading skills and learning-related behaviors were addressed simultaneously (2013).

Small groups provided a student friendly atmosphere that allowed for individual needs to be met in hopes of progress being made that closed the gap that existed for our struggling readers. Small groups provided the additional attention that many students required to be successful learners. Small groups were also beneficial to the teachers because it allowed time for the teacher to assess and record data in a nonthreatening way.

Summary

There were many areas to consider when developing a high quality comprehensive reading program that met the needs of all students. Rupley, Blair, and Nichols pointed out in their study that there were five instructional tasks or content strands that were the “thrust of reading acquisition” (2009, p. 135). The five areas included: Phonemic Awareness, Phonics, Fluency, Vocabulary, and Comprehension. These five areas of instruction were heavily dependent on each other. All played a crucial role in learning how to read. It was difficult for a student to become a proficient
reader when he was lacking skills in one or more of these areas. Students became strong in each of these areas through direct or indirect instruction and an abundance of practice (2009).

Areas of focus in reading instruction, along with academic standards, and differentiation have been researched and reviewed. After considering these areas, it was discovered that direct fluency instruction and abundant practice for fluency needed to be added to the reading schedule. This missing link could be responsible for preventing students from becoming proficient readers. For this reason, I have selected for my research question, How can fluency instruction, using readers’ theater and paired reading, impact reading comprehension in the third grade classroom?

It appeared that changes were necessary so that best learning opportunities were being provided for all students. Chapter Three explains the intended process of adding direct fluency instruction and abundant practice to current reading instruction practices. The question How can fluency instruction, using readers’ theater and paired reading, impact reading comprehension in the third grade classroom? was the basis for the upcoming changes and data collection.
CHAPTER THREE
Methodology

Introduction

In Chapter Two I shared my findings as I delved into what experts in education have found to be essential for balanced and high quality reading instruction. This information has helped as I have sought to determine if my lack of direct fluency instruction has had a negative impact on students’ levels of comprehension and low state test scores. Chapter Three includes an explanation of how I planned to conduct my research and accomplish my goal of improving my classroom instruction while discovering How can fluency instruction, using readers’ theater and paired reading, impact reading comprehension in the third grade classroom?

Research Paradigm and Rationale

My district had invested a considerable amount of time and money into new curriculum and training for reading instruction. Many colleagues considered it wonderful to have access to excessive amounts of curriculum and instructional tools, but at times it had become overwhelming and confusing to have such an abundance. It was my desire to ensure that all students were being provided with appropriate reading instruction and ample practice that suited their individual needs. Sorting through the existing curriculum to determine what could be used during evidence based practices was an important part of my research.

While reviewing professional articles and other literature for Chapter Two of this capstone thesis, it became apparent that my teaching methods were weak in the area of
fluency instruction. My research uncovered techniques or activities that had been proven to help in the development of reading fluency. Two of these techniques and activities that drew my attention were Paired Reading, or sometimes called Partner Reading, and Readers’ Theater.

Paired Reading had been included in some instructional materials that had been received, but not much consideration had been given to implementing Paired Reading because it seemed to be just another name for reading aloud with a classmate which was already taking place in the classroom. My discovery that Paired Reading involved the teacher strategically placing students with higher reading abilities with students with lower reading abilities was riveting. The student with higher abilities worked as a tutor to the student with lower reading abilities. Paired Reading was a method of reading practice that allowed all students to be engaged and improving reading skills. When students were working together in this manner, the student with lower reading skills had someone to guide and help him read. Being the tutor caused the higher level reader to improve his fluency and comprehension skills. This explanation that Paired Reading was strategic partner placement caused me to reconsider the value of this activity, and I now considered it to be an efficient and productive way to increase our practice time.

The value of Readers’ Theater had also been overlooked. Experts in fluency instruction repeatedly spoke of the marvelous tool Readers’ Theater scripts had been for increased practice. Not only were the parts read repeatedly, students were expected to make listening to the performance more interesting by using their voices to create the characters. This new realization encouraged me to make necessary changes to the
schedule to allow for this new and exciting form of practice. This new interest in Paired Reading and Readers’ Theater has caused me to ask, *How can fluency instruction, using readers’ theater and paired reading, impact reading comprehension in the third grade classroom?*

My qualitative research included: reading the research of others on best practices or evidence based fluency instruction; reviewing existing curriculum and my classroom procedures; surveying and assessing students to determine their current levels of reading and individual reading strengths and weaknesses; implementing best practices in fluency instruction with Paired Reading and Readers’ Theater; and determining the results of implementing such evidence based practices.

A study in 2003 by Greenwood, Tapia, Abbott, and Walton revealed that “Accelerated growth in literacy skills is seen to be a product of instruction defined by use of evidence-based practices that leads to short-term outcomes in reading aloud and silent reading behaviors…” (p. 96). My desire was to provide the tools necessary for students to experience these short-term outcomes which, with practice, led to long-term outcomes.

Kathleen Roskos and Susan B. Neuman suggested several evidence based practices including: explicit instruction, rereading, close reading, grammar, and technology in their article published in *The Reading Teacher*, “Best Practices in Reading: A 21st Century Skill Update” (2014). The use of Readers’ Theater and Paired Reading appeared to be practices that were included in these recommendations because they allowed students to reread and use close reading. These practices had been determined
by several leading literacy experts to be worthy of classroom time, so implementation of
Readers’ Theater and Paired Reading moved forward.

Setting and Participants

The setting in which my research was conducted was in my regular education
classroom. I was teaching one of two third grade classes in a rural, midwestern school.
These children were eight and nine years old. Educational and special needs services
such as occupational therapy, speech, adaptive physical education, Title One services,
and other special education services for students that were in preschool through twelfth
grade were provided. Approximately four hundred seventy-five students and thirty adults
were in the building. I expected twenty-one students with a wide variety of abilities. Of
these twenty-one students, two students had been diagnosed with Autism Spectrum
Disorders. There were additional students with individual education plans (SLD and
EBD). One paraprofessional was assigned to one or more students with special needs.
One of these students was considered to have limited understanding and limited verbal
skills.

This midwestern region depended on the local mining industry and many
members of the community were employed by these mines. During my research, many
of the mine workers had been laid off for a significant period of time. This economic
change had been difficult for many. We were considered a low income school.
Twenty-two of the forty-three (51%) third grade students qualified for free or reduced
lunch. The school qualified for Title One funds because of the high rate of those who
received free or reduced lunch. The mines had started to resume operation and many of our parents were returning to work.

In addition to students living in poverty, we were also dealing with an increase in drug abuse in our community. There had been a significant increase in the use of methamphetamine and heroin. Drug and alcohol abuse continued to interfere with the stability of the homes in which several of our students lived. We also had many students living in stable and secure homes.

The discrepancy in living situations and circumstances revealed itself in our classrooms regularly with varying degrees of attitude, attendance, ability, and achievement. These differences often interfered with student learning. However, I did not believe our school was any different than most schools in our area, state, or even in our nation. We had challenges and needed rise to the occasion by instructing our students in a way that allowed them to advance in their level of learning and understanding. It was my goal to determine how I could make necessary changes in my teaching by asking, *How can fluency instruction, using reader’s theater and paired reading, impact reading comprehension in the third grade classroom?*

**Methods**

To accomplish the goal of completing my capstone thesis, I did the following:

1. Letters of Consent were given to parents of students who were invited to participate in this study.

2. The research of others was studied to determine evidence based practices or best practices in fluency instruction.
3. A review of the State Academic Standards and Common Core Standards was conducted to ensure all areas of reading instruction were familiar to me and all topics were being covered throughout the school year while paying close attention to fluency and comprehension.

4. A review of my district’s existing curriculum and teaching tools was conducted to determine what was available to assist me in assessing and instructing my students.

5. Additional articles on fluency instruction were read to determine best methods of implementation for Paired Reading and Readers’ Theater.

6. Current teaching practices were considered. It was necessary to decide what methods or practices I would continue to use and what practices should be eliminated. This allowed time for new practices.

7. A schedule was created to show the amount of time that was used for fluency instruction.

8. A review of students’ previous year’s achievement data was conducted. This review allowed me to be aware of any special circumstances, which included special education needs.

9. Assessment of students took place. Students were asked to respond to a reading survey to determine interests and hesitations about reading.

10. Students’ current skills in reading were studied to find weaknesses that
could prevent a student from becoming a fluent reader. These assessment scores were also used to determine groups and partnerships for the evidence based practices that were implemented.

11. I put the determined evidence based practices of Readers’ Theater and Paired Reading into place.

12. Regular reassessments took place to determine that adequate progress was made by students. The STAR 360 Reading Assessments, the Bookshop Reading Assessments, and the Words Their Way Spelling Assessments were used for these measurements. Changes were made as needed to groups based on the results of these assessments.

13. Upon the completion of the Minnesota Comprehension Assessments and the conclusion of the school year, the student data was analyzed and preparation for reporting the results of this research was made.

**Tools**

Several assessment tools were used to make necessary determinations for the research of my thesis question, *How can fluency instruction, using readers’ theater and paired reading, impact reading comprehension in the third grade classroom?* End of the year student data from the second grade teachers along with IEP information from the special education teacher was requested. These records provided data that assisted in preparing for all students.
Reading surveys were used to reveal each child’s personal feelings toward reading important information regarding reading in the home. It was believed that including this data was beneficial for the educator as reading levels were identified and groups were formed for instructional purposes.

Assessments to determine current independent and instructional reading levels, fluency, comprehension, vocabulary, and spelling were administered to the class. Those struggling were also assessed for oral language, phonemic awareness, and phonics.

**Data Analysis**

There were two major areas for which data was collected and reviewed. These two areas included: First, current reading instruction practices along with the evidence based practices that were recommended by leaders in fluency instruction. The second area was student data that provided information about the growth of the students in the classroom throughout the school year. Student assessments were given at the beginning of the year and during each quarter to determine if students were making adequate progress toward the goal of fluently reading and comprehending at appropriate grade levels.

**Summary**

As preparation began for the research and implementation of my capstone topic, *How can fluency instruction, using readers’ theater and paired reading, impact reading comprehension in the third grade classroom?*, it was important to remember that learning to read fluently was a complex skill that required a tremendous amount of effort and practice by the individual learning to read. It was the responsibility of the educator to
determine where each child was academically, whether he was at grade level, and to
create a plan that moved him along to the desired level. When evidence based practices
were put into place, it was much more likely that students were making adequate progress
toward reaching the goal of being fluent and comprehending readers. The removal of any
non-evidence based practices would allow for the additional time that was necessary to
implement the desired practices.

Reviewing existing data from the previous school year and current IEPs helped to
prepare me for the implementation of a high quality, evidence based reading fluency
program. Assessing students during the beginning of the school year assisted in
determining individual goals for students and small group placement. This also helped
students to focus on areas of weakness that could be made strong while striving to reach
the expected grade level achievement. It was believed that improvement in these weak
areas would help to produce proficient and fluent readers. As students worked toward
their goals, growth was measured to determine adequate progress. Programming and
planning changed as needed to ensure all were moving forward and showing growth.

At the conclusion of the school year, final assessment data was gathered to
determine the effect that implementing the practices listed in my research question, *How
can fluency instruction, using readers’ theater and paired reading, impact reading
comprehension in the third grade classroom?* had in my classroom. Chapter Four
includes the details of implementation of Paired Reading and Readers’ Theater in my
third grade classroom.
CHAPTER FOUR

Results

Introduction

In Chapter One my journey of lifelong learning and my desire to assist all students in becoming proficient and fluent readers was explained. Reviewing my current reading instruction practices and learning more about current best practices in reading instruction has caused me to ask, *How can fluency instruction, using readers’ theater and paired reading, impact reading comprehension in the third grade classroom?*

Chapter Two included my literature review of best practices in reading instruction. Topics reviewed included: State Academic Standards and Common Core State Standards, evidenced based or best practices in reading instruction, phonemic/phonological awareness and phonics, spelling and vocabulary, fluency, comprehension and comprehension strategies, writing, and differentiation. When I considered my current reading instruction practices, it was the area of fluency instruction that was determined to be weak.

Chapter Three described my current school setting and the dynamics of my current classroom population. The rationale behind my desired research and the methods and tools I used during my research were also explained in Chapter Three.

This chapter describes the timeline of events and activities that took place throughout my study of *How can fluency instruction, using readers’ theater and paired reading, impact reading comprehension in the third grade classroom?* Two forms of fluency instruction were implemented over two-ten week periods, Readers’ Theater and
Paired Reading. I will now explain how these activities were conducted throughout my research period.

**Letters of Consent**

Prior to student involvement in my research, letters of consent were sent to my superintendent, principal, and the parents or guardians of my twenty-two students. Copies of these letters are located in Appendix A. These letters explained what was about to take place in the classroom, how contact was made if there were any questions or concerns, and sought parental permission for student participation. Twenty of the twenty-two students returned signed consent slips. Additional copies were delivered to the two students’ parents or guardians that had not returned the consent forms. The students’ parents or guardians never returned the signed consent forms. For this reason two of my students were allowed to participate, but all of the data for these two students was excluded from this study. Another student’s data was excluded because he attended reading classes with another teacher due to his individualized education plan. Data was collected on nineteen of my twenty-two students. With consent forms returned, research began. The project start date was determined to be November 7, 2016.

**Initial Assessments**

My school administration required students’ reading skills assessments to be completed by the end of September. These initial scores were reviewed and were determined that the scores were recent and thorough, therefore, they were appropriate for baseline scores. Assessments used for these initial scores included *Bookshop Reading* curriculum assessments and the online *STAR 360 Reading Assessments*. These
assessments provided the participants’ current instructional and independent reading levels, comprehension levels, fluency levels, and overall “scaled scores.” See Appendix F for Table 1-Bookshop Reading and STAR 360 Assessments-Initial Scores. This table and all other tables used in this report are located in Appendix F.

*Bookshop Reading* used the Fountas and Pinnell Text-Level Gradient to determine a Targeted Text-Level Standard. The desired text-level for third grade students at the conclusion of the school year was level P. Level O was considered the minimum text-level for third grade students to be considered “at grade level.” This assessment was an individual one-on-one assessment with the teacher. A student read leveled passages to the teacher until he reached a determined number of miscues. Once the “instructional reading level” was determined, fluency and comprehension components of the assessment were administered. Based on this assessment, twelve of the nineteen students participating in this research were reading at the desired minimum level of level O or higher.

The *Bookshop Reading Assessment* also measures fluency. Once a student had reached his instructional level, the student read the passage aloud for one minute. Miscues were recorded and subtracted from the total number of words read in that minute. This final count was considered the measurement for “Words Per Minute” read or the students’ Oral Reading Fluency Score. The *Bookshop Reading Assessment* considered an end of the year oral reading fluency rate of 110 words per minute while reading a level O passage to be “grade level.”
Reading Comprehension was determined by the *Bookshop Reading Assessment* by finding the instructional reading level and then having the student retell the details of the passage in sequential order. Students were also asked three scripted questions to determine if they were able to remember key information. A total score of up to six points was received for this comprehension score. Up to three points was given for the recall or retelling of the passage and up to three points was given for the correctly answered questions. Students had to score a minimum of four points, two points in each area, to be considered comprehending that passage. See Appendix C for copies of the *Bookshop Assessment* tools used for this research. Eighteen of nineteen students scored four points or more at their current instructional reading level. Eleven of the twelve students who were reading at level O or higher were also comprehending well.

The *STAR 360 Reading Assessment* was also administered. A third grade student was considered to be at the 50 percentile level on the STAR 360 Reading Assessment when a fall or beginning of the school year score of 357 was obtained. Initial STAR 360 scores revealed that eight of nineteen students had scores of 357 or greater.

Estimated Oral Reading Fluency levels are measured by the *STAR 360 Reading Assessment* in words per minute or WPM. To be at the 50 percentile level a student needed a fall score of 84 WPM. These scores revealed that eight of nineteen students were reading at the desired fall fluency level.

I also reviewed the assessments used for our spelling skills. Using the *Words Their Way Spelling Assessment* helped to identify anyone who was lacking grade appropriate phonics skills. See Appendix D for copies of the assessment. All but one
student participating in this research were reading at an instructional reading level of J or higher. One student was found to be reading at level F. Level F was considered to be a first grade reading level. Spelling scores confirmed that basic phonemic awareness, including knowledge of vowel sounds, was in place for all students except for the one student.

Second grade teachers were contacted about the student who was reading at Level F. I referred to this child as Student #17 throughout this report. It was explained to me that this child has had significant lagging skills for several years. Past teachers had recommended that this child be tested for learning disabilities, but the parents refused the testing. The Special Education teacher was contacted about Student #4. This child had been diagnosed as being on the Autism Spectrum. She read words above grade level, however, she was unable to retell what had happened in the passages that she read. The special education teacher confirmed that she had amazing decoding skills and did well with spelling. However, she was often unable to understand and draw meaning from the words that she read.

These assessments and conversations with past educators had provided the data I had determined necessary for my research, with the exception of a measurement of how students felt about reading at home and at school. To determine how students felt about reading, two surveys were given to the students to complete. Each survey included several questions about reading. Two particular questions on each survey would be used in this study. These surveys are included in Appendix B of this thesis.
The first survey I used was called “Elementary Reading Attitude Survey” or what I referred to as the Garfield Survey. This survey was designed by Kear (1990) and had twenty questions. Students were asked to circle one of the four pictures that best represented how they felt about the statement or question. The pictures included were labeled by the creator: Happiest Garfield, Slightly Smiling Garfield, Mildly Upset Garfield, and Very Upset Garfield. This survey was selected because of the fun and inviting way the survey was written and because many students were very fond of Garfield. Of the twenty questions, I looked at two particular questions: Question #3 - How do you feel about reading for fun at home? and Question #13 - How do you feel about reading in school? The pictures of Garfield were assigned a value from 1-4: Happiest Garfield = 4, Slightly Smiling Garfield = 3, Mildly Upset Garfield = 2, and Very Upset Garfield = 1. These numbers were included on Tables 2 and 13 of this thesis. See Appendix F - Table 2- Elementary Reading Attitude Survey or Garfield Survey for the 19 students’ original responses to these questions.

The student responses for question #3 - How do you feel about reading for fun at home? were as follows: five students selected Happiest Garfield, four students selected Slightly Smiling Garfield, six students selected Mildly Upset Garfield, and four students selected Very Upset Garfield.

The student responses for question #13 - How do you feel about reading in school? were as follows: five students selected Happiest Garfield, seven students selected Slightly Smiling Garfield, five students selected Mildly Upset Garfield, and two students selected Very Upset Garfield.
It appeared that ten of nineteen students disliked reading at home. This result included all students that selected a picture valued at one or two points. Seven of nine students were not happy about reading in school. This result also included all students that selected a picture valued at one or two points. One child strongly disliked reading at home and school. Three students strongly disliked reading at home and disliked reading at school. One child strongly disliked reading at school and disliked reading at home. One child disliked reading at home and school. Four students had a more favorable opinion about reading at home than school. One student disliked reading at home, but selected the Happiest Garfield when he gave his opinion about reading at school. There were also eight students that selected pictures that gave both reading at home and at school a Happiest or Smiling Garfield response, which indicated a favorable attitude.

The second survey, “Reading Interests Survey,” was created by Kelli Sbalbi and was purchased from Teachers Pay Teachers. This was a brief survey with nine questions about an individual’s reading interests. Two particular questions or statements were to be included in this research. “Do you enjoy reading?” was answered with a reply of “Yes,” “No,” or “Sometimes.” The other statement, “I think I am a/an ______ reader.” was answered with “Excellent,” “Good,” “OK,” or “Poor.” These surveys were given at the start of the research project and would be given again at the end of the school year. See Appendix F - Table 3 - Reading Interest Survey Fall 2016 for the nineteen student responses for these questions.

Students answered the question, “Do you enjoy reading?” as follows: Seven students replied with yes, three students replied with no, and nine students replied with
sometimes. Students completed the statement, “I think I am a/an _____ reader.” with the following: four students selected excellent, thirteen students selected good, and one student selected ok. One student did not complete this statement. All initial assessments had been gathered. It was now time to move forward with preparing students and myself for the implementation of fluency instruction.

Preparing for Research

Explicit fluency instruction was lacking in my reading instruction routine. Articles and journals about reading fluency instruction were studied. Readers’ Theater was suggested to be a helpful activity by experts, Richard Allington and Timothy Rasinski. Preparations were made to add specific fluency instruction to the classroom routine.

Part of my preparation included finding Readers’ Theater scripts. Online websites and blogs were searched and materials were downloaded and ordered. Regular discussions during our morning meetings about the importance of being proficient and fluent readers took place. These chats provided natural opportunities for the introduction of Readers’ Theater. The reaction of the students about Readers’ Theater was positive. Students seemed very interested and excited about including the scripts as part of their reading instruction.

Implementing Readers’ Theater

Scripts were distributed and introduced on Mondays. Copies of all scripts that were used during this ten week trial of Readers’ Theater are included in Appendix E. Students were expected to practice at home and during read-to-self or read-to-friend time.
Fridays were performance days. Entire cast practice sessions were held for fifteen minutes on Friday mornings and the final reading was held on Friday afternoons. Adding Readers’ Theater to our routine required only slight changes to the schedule because students were expected to do the majority of their preparation at home.

All groups used the same script for our first experience with Readers’ Theater. Throughout the study we tried various scripts and different groups of students. When groups were created, consideration was given to individual reading skills, students’ interests, and the number of characters or cast members that were required for the scripts. All twenty-two students were involved in Readers’ Theater even though I tracked only nineteen. Once groups and scripts were determined, we were ready to begin. Please note, copies of all scripts are found in Appendix E.

Week One: Our first play was *The Brementown Rappers (based on The Brementown Musicians)* (Martin, 2002). I chose a story that was a personal favorite and an easier script that was used by all groups as our introduction to Readers’ Theater. Students were placed into five groups. Each group had students with various levels of reading skills. I assigned the parts to the students. The classroom aide and I were also included in these groups. We discussed the importance of following along and always knowing where we were in the script. We also covered how to speak to make the final reading more interesting for our audiences. Students were reminded that it was very tedious and boring if cast members did not know their parts and the group had to wait for people to find and then read their parts.
Scripts were handed out. Each student received two copies of the script. One copy remained in school and the other copy was to be kept at home. The copies had parts highlighted. Students seemed excited and all reported that they had practiced the script at home. Friday’s performance went well. Some students were not as prepared as I had expected, but all participated and commented positively about Readers’ Theater.

Week Two: Students were put into four groups. These groups had readers with various levels of reading skills. Two groups performed *The Emperor’s New Hair* (*based on The Emperor’s New Clothes*) (Martin, 2002) and two groups performed *The Three Little Elephants* (*based on The Three Little Pigs*) (Martin, 2002). These scripts were chosen because all students were familiar with the original stories and the students’ interest levels were high. Students were given two copies of the scripts with parts highlighted. One copy was to stay in school and the second copy was to go home with the student. We continued with the expectations of practicing at home and fifteen minutes on Friday morning for group practice. The final production was performed Friday afternoon. Once again students reported that they were enjoying the plays and they also liked that we had more than one play performed that week. Some of the students reported that they were not getting help at home and it was difficult to remember to practice when at home.

Week Three: This was a short, holiday week. No Readers’ Theater scripts were assigned.

Week Four: Four groups were created for this week’s assigned reading. This week included two groups of students with lower reading abilities and two groups of
students with higher reading abilities. Four different plays were assigned. The two
groups with lower reading skills performed the phonics based scripts: *Sam & Cam’s Snack* (Chanko, 2009) and *The Best Pet* (Chanko, 2009). The reading groups with higher
reading skills performed *Harriet* (Shepard, 1993/2014) and *The Baker’s Dozen* (Shepard,
2004/2014). Students were given two copies of their scripts with parts highlighted. One
copy was to stay in school and the second copy was to go home with the student. All
groups seemed very satisfied with the length and difficulty of their assigned scripts.

Interest remained high, but once again several did not practice at home. Changes
were made to the weekly schedule to provide two in-class practice sessions. This
additional class time was appreciated by the students. Read-to-self or read-to-friend time
remained an optional practice time. Whole group practice continued to be on Friday
morning with the final performance Friday afternoon. Students did well. However, one
particular student who was an excellent reader, continued to struggle to keep focused and
ready to read her part. Again, the students stated that they liked the variety and preferred
when different plays were performed.

Week Five: This week three groups were formed. I selected *The Three Billy Goats Gruff* (Adsit, 2010/2013) for a group of lower level readers. Two mixed ability
groups worked with *A Riddle Maker Saves the Day* (Linde, 2003) and *Davy Crockett: Fact or Legend* (Linde, 2003). Once again students were given two opportunities to work
independently on their parts and one opportunity to work with their groups in addition to
any independent or partner reading time of their choosing. The final performances held
the audience’s attention. Students were using their voices to make the characters more
interesting. More expression and an occasional accent were used during these performances. Students enjoyed watching their peers perform.

Week Six: Three groups of mixed ability levels were formed. This week a few students with lower reading skills were purposely assigned parts that required more reading than they had been assigned in the past. The purpose of this was to see if those with lower skills would work to become proficient and fluent with their parts. This week’s scripts included: *The Ugly Woodpecker (based on The Ugly Duckling)* (Martin, 2002), *Little Late Riding Hood (based on Little Red Riding Hood)* (Martin, 2002), and *Millions of Cats* (Shepard, 1993/2014). Students practiced twice independently or with a partner during class time and once as a group before the performance. They were also allowed to read during read-to-self or read-to-friend time. Several students practiced at home and during independent reading time in addition to the time allotted during our class time. It was encouraging to see those who read well helping those that struggled. Performances went well.

The *STAR 360 Assessment* was also given this week to measure student growth in the areas of Scaled Score and Estimated Oral Reading Fluency. The Scaled Score aided in determining overall comprehension skills. See Appendix F, Table 4-Reading Assessment Scores - September 2016 - December 2016.

To reach the 50 percentile mark, Winter Scaled Scores were to be 392 or greater. The desired Winter Estimated Oral Fluency Rate score was now 95. Sixteen students increased their scores. Ten students were now at the 50 percentile score or higher in both areas. Three students’ scores dropped. Two of these students with lower scores three
continued to be above the 50 percentile score while one of these three students fell below the 50 percentile score. Seven of the nine students that remained below the desired score saw significant increases ranging from 39 to 87 points. Two of the nine students saw small gains with increases of 2 and 7 points.

Week Seven: This was a short, holiday week. No Readers’ Theater scripts were assigned.

Week Eight: Two mixed groups were formed this week. *The Princess Mouse: A Tale of Finland* (Shepard, 2004/2014) and *The Gifts of Wali Dad: A Tale of India and Pakistan* (Shepard, 2004/2014) were the scripts for the week. Students were given two copies of the scripts with parts highlighted. One copy was to stay in school and the second copy was to go home with the student. Students continued to practice during class time. Several students stated that they were “too busy” to practice at home. Some students’ interest seemed to be lagging. Performances were adequate. One student who struggled to read put extra effort in this week’s readings. He successfully performed his part and he seemed very pleased with his performance.

Week Nine: All students were assigned to one script that had twenty-two readers, *The Legend of Lightning Larry* (Shepard, 1993/2014). There was some hesitation to assign this script because of the cowboy theme that included the use of gun noises. A discussion was held to talk about the importance of acting responsibly while reading this play. The students agreed to act appropriately during this reading. The script was assigned. Students practiced frequently and enjoyed the story. This script was by far the
best play we had performed during this project. All students said this was their favorite play and they wanted to read it again and again.

The *STAR 360 Assessment* was given to measure student growth in fluency and comprehension. This was a second “winter” assessment to determine if progress had been maintained during our winter break. See Appendix F-Table 5 - STAR 360 Reading Assessment Scores September 2016-January 2017.

The January assessment scores were mixed. My initial reaction to the test scores was shock. The scores ranged in students’ scores decreasing as much as 115 points to increasing by 169 points. Nine students’ scores went down, one student’s scores remained the same, and nine students increased their scores. Nine students were once again below the desired Winter Scaled Score of 392. However, one student had scored 428 on the Scaled Score in December and now had a January score of 339. This was a loss of 89 points. Another student who had been below the desired scores for both previous tests now had an impressive score of 451. This was an increase of 108 points since the December test and 191 points since September.

It was important to note that the Estimated Oral Reading Fluency Scores were directly related to the Scaled Scores. In other words, the same ten students who have scaled scores of 392 or greater were also at or above the desired Estimated Oral Reading Fluency rate of 95 WPM. This correlation was part of the assessment design.

Week Ten: Four groups of students with various skill levels were selected. I presented the scripts and allowed the students to self-select from four scripts. I pulled names out of a can to determine who chose first, second, and so on. The scripts included
two phonics based plays, *Mike Rides a Bike* (Chanko, 2009) and *Hugo’s Unicorn* (Chanko, 2009), a tall tale, *The Legend of Slappy Hooper: An American Tall Tale* (Shepard, 2004/2014), and one fantasy, *The Walking Sticks Buy Shoes* (Linde, 2003). Students were given two copies of the scripts with parts highlighted. One copy was to stay in school and the second copy was to go home with the student. Time was given on two days to work independently or with a friend in the same group, and whole group practice was held the morning of the performance. Performances went well. A discussion was held after this final performance. Some students were no longer interested in doing Readers’ Theater while others wanted to continue. It was explained to the students that we had reached the end of our second quarter and research with Readers’ Theater was complete. Readers’ Theater was now an optional reading activity. Week Ten also included the *Bookshop Reading Assessment*. See Appendix F for Table 6 - Bookshop Reading Assessments Fall 2016 - Winter 2017.

The growth varied from increasing one to six reading levels. Fourteen of nineteen students were now reading at level P or higher. Two of the five students that were still below the desired Level P were reading at Level N. The other three were making improvements, however, they were still significantly below the desired Level P with one at Level J and two at Level K. These individuals were participating in interventions that were put into place at the beginning of the school year - Title One, small group instruction, and an after school Targeted Services group. These students exhibited progress, but it was extremely slow.
Week Eleven and beyond: A small group of students continued to practice reading by using scripts that had been kept from our project and from materials they had found online. Eventually only two students continued to show interest in reading the scripts, and they decided two readers were not enough to produce fun and interesting plays.

**Implementing Paired Reading**

While reading about fluency instruction a few different articles had suggested the use of a strategic form of partner reading called Paired Reading. Read-to-friend partner reading had been used in the classroom for several years. Paired Reading was different because it required the teacher to create partnerships based on reading skills. A more proficient reader was paired with a less proficient reader. The more proficient reader in each partnership served as a tutor. Care was given by the teacher when creating these partnerships to avoid boredom and frustration for the more proficient reader. The less proficient reader selected appropriate materials for his reading level and read aloud to his partner. The more proficient partner carefully followed along watching for proper pronunciation, prosody, and comprehension. The student acting as the tutor made necessary promptings and corrections. The reader with higher skills also read aloud to demonstrate desired reading skills.

At the conclusion of our second quarter, reading assessments were completed. These scores included measurements in reading level, fluency, and comprehension and would be used for the creation of assigned reading partners for Paired Reading. These
scores were shared previously in this report. See Appendix F for Table 6 - Bookshop Reading Assessments Fall 2016 - Winter 2017 for these scores.

The entire class participated, but only those who had permission slips on file would be tracked. Students’ partnerships were determined by ranking students by skill levels. Each student was assigned a number using the numbers one through twenty-two. The top reader was given the number one and my least proficient reader was given the number twenty-two. Reader number one was placed with reader number twelve, reader two with reader thirteen, reader three with reader fourteen, and so on.

The top readers were placed with a peer who was in the middle level and the middle leveled readers worked with the lower leveled readers. Care was used to determine compatible personalities when creating these partnerships. The more proficient reader in each team acted as the “tutor.” The less proficient reader selected appropriate leveled reading materials and read aloud to the tutor. The tutor followed along carefully watching for proper pronunciation, prosody, and comprehension. Tutors made corrections and demonstrated proper reading skills. The reader with higher skills also read aloud to demonstrate desired reading skills. Paired Reading was held for approximately fifteen-twenty minutes one-three times a week for ten weeks. We began the week of January 23, 2017.

Week One: A class meeting was held to announce that another form of fluency instruction was about to begin. Clarification about how partners were chosen and role expectations were explained. Students were reminded that all have different areas of strengths and weaknesses. It was also explained that this form of reading practice, if
done properly, was expected to help everyone improve their reading skills. All agreed that they would participate and be helpful team members. Discussions also included the importance of using our time efficiently. Students knew they were expected to get started quickly and stay on task for the entire allotted time. This required the person choosing the reading material to plan ahead and to be prepared when it was time to begin.

Assigned partners were announced and the list was displayed on the bulletin board. Students were told that partnerships would be reviewed at the midpoint of our research or in about five weeks. Students found their partner, selected reading materials, and began to read. Those acting as tutors seemed very serious about the role they were fulfilling. It was enjoyable to see the less proficient reader engaged and striving to read well with his peer. It was a successful initial Paired Reading session. During our first week we practiced Paired Reading three times.

Week Two: Students worked with their assigned reading partner twice. Students continued to work well together. All were prepared and able to start right away. Again students seemed serious about this form of practice and were able to remain on task for the entire fifteen-twenty minutes. Students also commented that the time went quickly when it was announced that our Partner Reading time was over.

Week Three: Students continued to be excited about working with their peers. Students practiced three times during this week. Things continued to go smoothly. Two students had difficulty selecting material, but they eventually found something that interested them and they were able to start with little time lost. We also took the STAR
360 Assessment. See Appendix F - Table 7 - STAR 360 Assessment Scores September 2016 - February 2017.

The results of this assessment were once again mixed. Eleven of the nineteen students had now reached the desired winter scores of 392 for a scaled score and 95 for Estimated Oral Reading. Only four students showed steady growth. Two of these four students with steady growth were above the desired score of 392 and two were significantly below the desired score. Three students actually had scores that were lower than their September scores. It appeared to be common for this group of students to have a decrease in scores and then rebound during the next assessment.

Week four: This week students met together twice. Students quickly began reading and remained focused on helping one another. I was able to circulate around the room and listen to the students read. Several students were taking their role as tutor very seriously. Again all remained on task the entire time.

Week five: This was a short week, so students met just once. Several students had inquired if Paired Reading time was scheduled, but additional time was unable to be scheduled. Excitement for Paired Reading remained high! When asked how the teams were working, all students agreed that the teams were working efficiently and they did not want to change. Students had reached the midpoint of the Paired Reading research. The latest assessment scores showed growth, but did not require adjustments to partnerships.

Week Six: Students participated in Paired Reading twice. All students were fulfilling their roles well. Students were using their reading time efficiently and little
preparation was required of me for this method of fluency practice. Students continued to enjoy reading with their peers and no complaints were made. The \textit{STAR 360 Assessment} took place again. See Appendix F for Table 8- STAR 360 Scaled Scores -September 2016 - March 2017. and Appendix F for Table 9 - STAR 360 Estimated Oral Fluency Scores September 2016 - March 2017

Student scores varied. Fourteen of nineteen students increased their scores from the February scores. The scores now ranged from the lowest scaled score being 142 to the highest scaled score of 720. Fluency correlated with the scaled scores. Fluency rates ranged from 42 WPM to 170. Ten of the nineteen students were now above the desired spring scaled score of 436 and fluency rate of 105 WPM. Another student had been beyond this score in February, but had now dropped just below the score with 431. When compared to their September scores, two students actually scored lower in March than they had in September. Student #3 had the following scaled scores: 400, 374, 259, 405, 395. Student #3 was struggling with ADHD and the knowledge that he would be moving soon. Student #4 had the following scaled scores: 200, 239, 130, 93, 186. Student #4 was diagnosed with ASD and struggled to get meaning from her above grade level reading level. Seventeen of the nineteen students had increased their scores anywhere from thirty-two to two hundred forty-nine points since September.

Week Seven: This was a short week, but we were able to hold two Paired Reading sessions. Two students had difficulty selecting reading materials on our first session of the week. Encouragement was given to select quickly and get started. They
did so. Students worked well and efficiently during this reading time. Students continued to say positive things about Paired Reading.

Week Eight: Paired Reading was held on Tuesday and Thursday of this week. Two students were unable to participate. Partners were temporarily reassigned so that all remaining students were able to participate. After the shuffle of students, all went to work quickly. Again students helped one another and were productive!

Week Nine: Students met together twice this week. Several students struggled to stay on task during Paired Reading. Students began chatting and little reading was taking place. Reminders were given to the groups about the importance of using our time wisely. Most of the students settled in and started reading. It was also the end of the third marking period. *Bookshop Reading Assessments* were started in preparation for report cards.

Week Ten: This was the final week of Paired Reading. Students participated in two sessions of Paired Reading. Students quickly selected materials and got busy right away. Final *Bookshop Reading Assessments* were completed this week. See this data in Appendix F - Table 10 Bookshop Instructional Reading Levels: Fall, Winter, Spring.

**End of the Year Assessments**

Both forms of fluency instruction were implemented and put into practice for ten weeks. The school year was quickly coming to an end. Assessments were given to measure students’ academic growth. This information was used for required district reports and for this capstone thesis.
The final one-on-one Bookshop Reading Assessments revealed that all but three students reached the desired reading level of P. Twelve of the nineteen were reading at level W. Although three did not reach the level of P, one made significant progress. Student #17 went from reading at a level F in the fall to reading at level K in the spring. This was an increase of five levels. The other two students, student #5 and Student #10 started at level J and completed the school year at level L. Based on these scores, recommendation was given to next year’s fourth grade teachers to watch and consider testing this student for learning disabilities. These students were recommended for Special Education testing in the past. Parents were not willing to consent to these assessments at that time.

The Bookshop Comprehension Assessment was included in this end of the year assessment. See Appendix F Table 11 - Bookshop Reading Comprehension Scores- Fall, Winter, Spring. These scores revealed that students reading at their appropriate reading level were understanding the words that they were reading. Although reading and fluency levels increased, students #3, #4, and 17 did not reach the minimum score of 4 out of 6 possible points at least once during the three assessments.

Two of these students had special circumstances and these scores were expected. Student #3 was diagnosed with Autism Spectrum Disorders. Although she read well and memorized spelling lists, she was unable to retell a story or give details when asked about a passage that she had read. She often answered with information that was not in the story. This inability to recall key ideas was once again exhibited during the final assessment. After reading a passage about a girl that had warned many people who were
on a beach that a tsunami was coming, the scripted question that was asked was, “Based on what you read about this girl, what is your opinion of Tilly.” Student #3’s reply was, “She has a pretty dress on?” There had been no mention of the girl’s clothing in the passage. The student was expected to give a character description of Tilly being brave or courageous.

Student #4 struggled with ADHD and was moving to another town and school when the school year is over. His ability to concentrate and remain on task dropped in all subjects.

Student #17 was significantly below grade level. It had been suggested by teachers for several years that this child be tested for a learning disability, but the parents refuse the testing.

Reading fluency skills were also assessed using the Bookshop Reading Assessments. See Appendix F Table 12 Bookshop Fluency Scores - Fall, Winter, Spring for these scores. The desired spring score for this assessment is 110 WPM while reading Level O passages or higher. Eleven of nineteen students were reading at this desired level or higher.

The state comprehensive assessments were also administered. See Appendix F, Table 13 End of the Year Final Assessment Compilation, for the end of the year data including the MCA scores. Ten of the nineteen or 52.6% of students met or exceeded the standards with scores of 350 or greater. Three students partially met the standards with scores of 347, 348, and 349. The following figure shows the results of the State Assessment that the 19 students in my class received during spring of 2017.
While looking closely at the students’ individual scores in all areas, eight of the ten students who met or exceeded the standards, were reading at level O or beyond and had a fluency rate of 110 WPM or more. The two students who also met or exceeded were reading at level W and had fluency rates of 97 and 74.

Figure 2. Evaluation of Individuals Who Met or Exceeded the State Assessment Standards.
When looking at the nine students who did not meet or exceed the standards, there were three students who could be placed into each of the following categories: Reading at Level O+ & 110+ WPM, Reading at Level O+ & <110 WPM, and Reading Below Level O & < 110 WPM. I believe these numbers help support the idea that comprehension does indeed require adequate skills in reading level, fluency, and what I will call “other areas,” which would include the ability to problem solve and stay on task.

Two of the three who were found to be “Reading at Level O+ & 110+ WPM” were reading at level W and had fluency rates of 125 WPM and 149 WPM. The MCA scores were 347 and 348. They fell just below the cut score of 350. It would seem that these students have the ability to meet the standards, but inexperience in taking the test, or any other number of reasons may have prevented them from scoring the additional 1-2 necessary points. The third student in this category was reading at level P with 112 WPM. This student’s MCA score was 337. I would suggest that this student does indeed have the academic skills to successfully read and comprehend, however, executive function skills were lacking. This would explain his “Does Not Meet” status on the state test.

When considering those who were “Reading at Level O+ & <110 WPM” one student missed the cut score of 350 by one point. This student was reading at level R with a fluency rate of 71 WPM. This student’s reading level, fluency rate and MCA score would definitely lead me to suggest more fluency building activities for this individual. Increased automaticity might free up attentional resources that would allow this student to better comprehension skills.
The final category for those who did not score 350 or higher on the MCA, Reading Below Level O & < 110 WPM, included the three students who were reading at levels L and K and had fluency rates of <87 WPM. The MCA scores were 303, 319, and 333. These students continued to struggle considerable differentiation had taken place. These students were flagged for possible testing for Special Education services.

**Table 3.** Evaluation of Individuals Who Did Not Meet the State Assessment Standards

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>2017 MCA Results</th>
<th>Students Who Did Not Meet the Standards</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Reading Below Level O &amp; &lt; 110 WPM</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Reading at Level O+ &amp; &lt;110 WPM</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Reading at Level O+ &amp; 110+ WPM</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The attitude and interest surveys were also given at the end of the school year. See Appendix F: Table 14- Elementary Reading Attitude Survey or Garfield Survey Fall 2016 - Spring 2017 and Table 15 - Reading Interests Survey Fall 2016 - 2017.

The student responses for question #3 - How do you feel about reading for fun at home? were as follows: four students selected Happiest Garfield, three students selected Slightly Smiling Garfield, six students selected Mildly Upset Garfield, and five students selected Very Upset Garfield. One student was absent.
The student responses for question #13 - How do you feel about reading in school? were as follows: nine students selected Happiest Garfield, three students selected Slightly Smiling Garfield, three students selected Mildly Upset Garfield, and three students selected Very Upset Garfield. One student was absent.

When compared to the fall scores, opinions about reading at home: twelve opinions remained the same, three opinions went up, and three opinions went down. Reading at school opinions changed in this way: ten opinions remained the same, six opinions went up, and two opinions went down.

The second survey, “Reading Interests Survey,” had the following responses to the two particular questions or statements that were included in this research. Students answered the question, “Do you enjoy reading?” as follows: Eleven students replied with yes, one students replied with no, five students replied with sometimes, and two did not answer. Students completed the statement, “I think I am a/an _____ reader.” with the following: seven students selected excellent, six students selected good, two students selected ok, one student selected poor, and three student did not complete this statement. When comparing the data from fall and spring for this survey, students answers to the question, Do you enjoy reading? were as follows: two students went from No to Sometimes, five students went from Sometimes to Yes, 8 stayed the same, one went from Yes to Sometimes, and one went from Sometimes to No. When comparing the data from fall and spring for the completion of the statement, I think I am a/an _____ reader., the follow happened: Eight students gave the same response, four students considered
themselves to be better than they were in the fall, three students rated themselves with a lesser response, and four left it blank.

**Summary:**

The research of my question, *How can fluency instruction, using readers’ theater and paired reading, impact reading comprehension in the third grade classroom?* had come to an end. It was now time to gather, organize, and draw conclusions from the stacks of data I had collected over the past six months. Many students had made tremendous gains from the beginning of the year. All but three students had reached or surpassed the goal of reading at Level P or higher. Still, the MCA results were not what was desired.

Chapter Five will include my key learning and limitations that were discovered while working on this research project. Recommendations for future use along with my concluding remarks will also be shared as I consider my experiences while researching, *How can fluency instruction, using readers’ theater and paired reading, impact reading comprehension in the third grade classroom?*
CHAPTER FIVE

Conclusions

Introduction:

Chapters One through Three explained my experiences as a lifelong learner and educator. It was my desire to improve my reading instruction and my students’ reading skills that led me to carefully examine current best practices in reading instruction. I shared my struggle to determine if I had noticeable gaps in my teaching that could be causing students to not be adequately prepared to “meet the standards” on the annual state assessment. While considering the necessary components of high quality reading instruction, I concluded that I was not providing my students with adequate fluency instruction. This caused me to inquire, How can fluency instruction, using readers’ theater and paired reading, impact reading comprehension in the third grade classroom?

Chapter Four included my experience of implementing two different kinds of fluency instruction activities: Readers’ Theater and Paired Reading. Assessment results were recorded and shared to report if growth in fluency and overall reading skills were noticeable.

In this chapter, I will share the implications of my research for teachers and school policies. I will also review the limitations of this study so that improvements can be made for future research on my chosen topic, How can fluency instruction, using readers’ theater and paired reading, impact reading comprehension in the third grade classroom? Finally, I will share my recommendations for future studies and how I plan to communicate my findings with my students, families, colleagues, and administrators.
Implications:

The research necessary for this capstone thesis provided an opportunity for personal evaluation and reflection of my instructional practices. I discovered that explicit fluency instruction was lacking from my routine. While preparing for the implementation of Readers’ Theater and Paired Reading, there were experiences that supported what I had studied during my literature review. I was pleased to see what others had explained in books and articles happening in my classroom. I was also surprised by the unexpected learning that I experienced as I worked with my students to determine *How can fluency instruction, using readers’ theater and paired reading, impact reading comprehension in the third grade classroom?*

The first expected learning experience included the development of a deeper understanding of the importance fluency. Fluency is much more than reading words quickly. Prosody, which is an element of fluency, includes good phrasing and expression. This is vital for comprehension.

While reading “Teaching Children to Become Fluent and Automatic Readers” (Kuhn, 2006), I gained a new appreciation for how the brain works. The author explained the importance of the Theory of Automaticity being applied to reading. It made tremendous sense to me that if recalling multiplication facts helped free up attentional resources for problem solving, then reading fluently could free up attentional resources for comprehension. This also clarified why students who had tremendous
vocabulary skills and could read far above grade level, but read slowly, could struggle to comprehend.

Understanding this information has caused me to look at my teaching practices and to make modifications. One important modification involves placing more emphasis on increasing fluency and comprehension skills at students’ current reading levels instead of increase reading levels. Once the student is reading fluently and comprehending at his determined reading level, I then adjust the level of text to provide a “good fit” that encourages growth, but does not frustrate the child. By taking these smaller steps, students have a greater chance of developing proficient reading skills. Taking time to practice fluency with Readers’ Theater or Paired Reading is a simple change in my schedule that can have wonderful ramifications.

This thesis focused on the specific use of Readers’ Theater and Paired Reading as effective fluency building activities that could impact reading comprehension. Just as Griffith and Rasinski had suggested, I found Readers’ Theater and Paired Reading to be effective ways to increase reading, which should increase comprehension. What I found was Readers’ Theater may not be for everyone. When the participants learned about Readers’ Theater they were excited. However, after ten weeks of Readers’ Theater, some students became bored. Personal preference to read silently or with a partner was made known by a few of my best readers. Allowing for self-selection of scripts helped to get these students through it, but they were relieved when it was over. There was one particular student who found Readers’ Theater to be very enjoyable. She joined a local children’s theater group!
Although Readers’ Theater was a valuable method of practice, it was also a
tremendous amount of work for the teacher. Selecting the scripts and highlighting parts
was time consuming and required space for storage. Copies of the scripts were rarely
saved for reuse because students would lose them or leave them looking very tattered.
Readers’ Theater was not for everyone, but it was very effective for those who enjoyed it.

Paired Reading worked for everyone! Paired reading was incredibly easy to
implement. Partners were easily selected with existing data and very little time was spent
finding materials. When students understood the purpose of the activity and the impact it
could have on their skills, all were willing to do their part. Allowing the more advanced
reader to act as the tutor or teacher motivated him to follow along and help as needed.
When the student with the lower reading skill was allowed to select the reading material,
he was motivated to read. When all students were reading, the teacher had an
opportunity to circulate and listen to many students and document her findings. The
students and the teacher were improving their skills when Paired Reading was taking
place. I found Paired Reading to be a wonderful use of time!

My first unexpected learning experience was realized while performing the
literature review. Several years of teaching children to read had allowed me to become
confident that I was producing readers. However, my time was rarely spent on reading
articles and journals written by those who had studied and performed more recent
research. I have come to realize that making time to review current evidence-based
practices is vital for being an effective teacher. Even if the evidence based practices
haven’t changed, it is beneficial to review and adjust my teaching methods as needed.
Realizing the necessity of taking time to read for professional development was a key learning experience.

Another key learning experience that I did not expect included the reaction of my participants. My study seems to support what other researchers have suggested about quality and quantity of time spent on reading having a tremendous impact on readers. Schmoker (2011) suggested providing students with more time to read at school. Getting rid of practices that were not proven to be effective increased the amount of time I was able to provide my students for reading fluency practice. It was confirmed once a child had the skills and the interest in what he was reading, there was no need for “fluff.” Students wanted to read and were disappointed when they had to put their books down. They often begged for more reading time.

My surveys wasted precious time. This was a discouraging learning experience. My intentions were good, but as students’ responses were read and scored, the number of questions that were left unanswered was frustrating. Questions on both surveys were patiently read aloud to the students. Students seemed to be on task and answering honestly, but when results were studied, it had little benefit to me or my research. It was much more informative to sit with a child and ask him about what he was reading and how much time was spent reading at home. I now believe that paper surveys with third grade students are not worth the time it takes to administer and score. I believe a simple “thumbs up” or “thumbs down” with eyes closed would have been a more effective use of time.
Finally, too much testing stressed out the teacher just as much as it did the kids. When research on this project began, testing the students each month seemed like a worthwhile way to track growth. Testing frequently caused me to become concerned when a student’s scores dropped. After looking over the entire list of *STAR 360 Assessment* scores, I realize that almost all students had dips and rebounds. However, in the end, all students had made wonderful improvements and increases to their reading skills. Even those who would be flagged for possible reading disabilities improved. There were an endless number of reasons why a child might not do well on a particular test. It was foolish to spend time on excessive testing and analyzing of scores. It seemed that if best practices were being used for reading instruction, there was a much better chance of producing proficient readers and excessive standardized tests were not necessary. Tracking students with a clipboard while reading with small groups, whole groups, and individuals now seemed like a much better use of time. Administering the *STAR 360 Assessment* three times a year for additional information to support report cards and meet the requirements for Title One services was sufficient. Classroom time was far too precious for it to be spent on unnecessary testing. Eliminating unnecessary testing would provide students with additional time for reading.

This research has provided many learning experiences that have caused me to evaluate my teaching methods and reflect on changes that allow for more evidence-based reading instruction. My study of *How can fluency instruction, using readers’ theater and paired reading, impact reading comprehension in the third grade classroom?* suggests
that explicit fluency instruction does have an impact on reading skills and overall comprehension, but there are some limitations that should be considered.

**Research Limitations**

There were limitations to consider when reviewing this study. A limitation that has consumed my thoughts throughout this research is proof. How can proof be provided that shows that the implementation of explicit fluency instruction was what produced more proficient readers? At the conclusion of my study, more students were reading at the desired level of P with 110 words per minute, or more, than ever. However, how could I provide proof that it was specifically Readers’ Theater and Paired Reading and not natural maturation, increased reading practice at home, or any other number of circumstances that could increase students’ fluency and comprehension skills?

To truly measure if Readers’ Theater and Paired Reading were responsible for my students’ growth, I would need to duplicate this study with additional groups over extended periods of time. It would be impossible to find students with the exact ability levels and life experiences to repeat this same study. Therefore, it seems that I will never be able to provide the conclusive data that proves it was the implementation of Readers’ Theater and Paired Reading that caused students’ increased reading abilities.

Another limitation to consider is the accuracy of the assessments administered to the participants. The accuracy of any assessment is dependent on the ability and the willingness of the individual being assessed. An inexperienced or unwilling individual may be responsible for skewing the results of even the best assessment. Although our *STAR 360 Reading Assessment* has been determined to be a credible assessment, a child’s
lack of experience or his impulsivity may have an impact on the measurement of the assessment. The Oral Fluency Reading measurement within the *STAR 360 Assessment* is considered to be “estimated.” It is directly tied to the scaled score. This means that when a child receives a certain scaled score it is expected that he can orally read at the rate given. There is no actual reading aloud during this test. This is why it is necessary for there to be an additional oral reading assessment such as the assessment that is provided with the *Bookshop Reading Assessments*. Also, this assessment is timed. Students have a limited amount of time to complete the question that is shown on the screen. Once that time has expired, the next question appears. If a student becomes distracted or is overly conscientious and reading slowly, points may be lost.

Although there are limitations to consider, the research of others involving numerous participants over extended periods of time allows me to value my study. Evidence based practices suggests that explicit fluency instruction does improve reading and comprehension skills. Therefore, I will continue to include Readers’ Theater and Paired reading with the following recommendations.

**Recommendations for Future Use**

My research on *How can fluency instruction, using readers’ theater and paired reading, impact reading comprehension in the third grade classroom?* has allowed me to experiment with two particular methods of fluency instruction. Both methods were beneficial and will be used in the future with other groups of students. However, there are a few things that I would change when using these practices.
Readers’ Theater required a tremendous amount of teacher time and effort. Acquiring the number of scripts necessary to keep an entire class interested and actively participating for ten weeks was time consuming. Readers’ Theater materials were easily accessible online and through teacher resource distributors, but the real work began once the materials arrived. Determining what scripts would be used and who would read each character’s part, in addition to the copying and highlighting of two scripts for each student, became drudery within a few weeks.

Recommendations include starting slow and teaching students how to prepare their own scripts. Teacher selection and preparation of scripts may be necessary when first implementing Readers’ Theater, but most children have the skills necessary to allow them to highlight their own materials. Allowing students to self-select from teacher recommended materials would allow for teacher guidance, but would also eliminate the use of time needed for teacher assigned parts. Allowing students to select their own materials might also increase interest and their willingness to participate.

I would also recommend that Readers’ Theater be used for shorter periods of time throughout the school year. Instead of spending ten consecutive weeks, I would recommend one-two weeks each quarter during the school year. Those who enjoy using Readers’ Theater could use it more frequently, but it would be an optional form of reading practice once the required participation was completed.

A final recommendation for Readers’ Theater would include the encouragement of parent involvement. Parent involvement would definitely help increase students’ skill levels, but there are no guarantees of practice at home. I would suggest that efforts be
taken to inform parents of the importance of practicing at home while also providing time
during the school day for additional practice with peers. It is more likely that allowing
for additional classroom practice would promote student learning and the production of
higher quality performances for all students.

Paired Reading was a wonderful experience and I plan to use it throughout the
entire school year. Creating partnerships based on reading levels does not require a great
deal of additional work. Students’ reading levels are already assessed at the beginning of
the year and again mid year for tracking growth and small group assignments. Students
were able to select materials they were interested in and get started quickly. This practice
easily fits into any schedule. Paired Reading is beneficial when done for as little as ten
minutes or could be constructively used for a longer period of time. Paired Reading also
provides the teacher with time to listen to students reading out loud which is a useful
form of assessing abilities in a non threatening way.

Recommendations for Paired Reading would include the importance of
self-selecting materials that are at appropriate levels for the lower reader. At times
students were reading materials that were far too easy for this interactive activity.
During Paired Reading, the higher level reader acts as a teacher which creates an
opportunity for the reader with lower reading abilities to select material that is a bit
challenging. Students must be reminded regularly of the expectations and also of their
reading level. Providing students with some type of card or sticker to be kept in a reading
folder or binder would help to keep teams informed and allow for greater efficiency.
Teachers should also keep this information nearby in the event of a missing card or folder.

I also think increasing the frequency of partner changes throughout the year would be valuable. I did not change partners during this ten week trial because the skill levels did not change enough to require modifications. A mid quarter or once a month partner change might be an easy modification that could be responsible for improving reading skills along with strengthening peer relationships as different students worked together.

Assessments are valuable tools when they are appropriately and accurately administered. Excessive assessing is unnecessary, wastes time, and can produce student fatigue which can result in inaccurate scores. During my research I felt it important to have monthly measurements of potential growth. This was found to be ineffective. In the future I will not use our valuable class time for additional standardized assessments.

My school district requires that I administer our assessments three times a year. This is adequate for most students. Instead of the additional assessing of all students, I will select those who do not appear to be making adequate progress. Additional assessing should include other materials that help to identify gaps in learning and understanding in hopes of determining what must be done to increase student learning. To measure individual skills and understanding of recent topics, other curriculum based or teacher generated assessments would be a better use of time.

Surveying students can be a helpful form of assessment when done properly. It is wise to investigate students’ habits and attitudes about reading. This valuable piece of
information can influence instruction and lead to more effective learning opportunities for students. Students replying to a lengthy paper and pencil survey may not be as beneficial as a simple group response using “thumbs up,” “thumbs down,” “thumbs somewhere in between.” When teachers provide students with a supportive atmosphere in which learning is encouraged and all feel valued, it is possible to use simple teacher-student responses and interviews to collect valuable information.

It is my belief that these recommendations will allow for an even greater impact in the classroom. Lyon and Weiser stated that “teacher effectiveness is the most important factor in the growth of student achievement” (2009, p. 476) so it can be expected that my students’ achievement will increase as I become more confident and effective with the use of Readers’ Theater, Paired Reading, and other forms of explicit fluency instruction.

Conclusion

As I reflect upon the tremendous undertaking this capstone thesis has been, I realize that I am a different person than I was two years ago. The knowledge that I have gained through the study of other people’s research and applications has guided me through this arduous task. The increased understanding that I now have about the process of reading has had an impact on how I work with students. The realization that things rarely go as planned when working with people has helped me to understand that we must always strive to do what is best for every learner. Then, when things do not go as planned, we reevaluate and try again, and again, and again.
If I am honest myself and the reader of this paper, I must admit that my goal while considering *How can fluency instruction, using readers’ theater and paired reading, impact reading comprehension in the third grade classroom?* was to discover the missing link that would provide all of my students the necessary skills to pass the state level end of the year assessments. I was most disappointed when several of my students did not “meet the standard.” However, after taking some time to carefully examine the growth and gains that my students did accomplish, I was pleased. All had made significant improvements. For whatever reason, many did not pass the state test, but they were proud of their improvements and so was I!

Learning to read proficiently and fluently impacts understanding. This is not accomplished quickly or with one particular “fix all.” It takes time and practice. Once basic phonemic and phonic skills are in place then it is ample amounts of high quality practice that transforms beginning readers into proficient and comprehending readers.

Ample practice must include materials that are considered a “good fit” and must also hold a student’s interest. Readers’ Theatre worked well when the students were interested in a particular script and the readability was appropriate. The best results were seen with those who had grade level or higher skills and interest. Readers’ Theatre was not a “fix all,” but it was definitely a valuable reading activity that increased interest and the desire to read for some of my students. It was interesting to watch as proficient readers could be very skillful and expressive when they read their parts if they were interested in the script. There were other times when the more skillful readers would lose track of where we were and we would have to wait. Struggling readers seemed to enjoy
participating, but some would lose their place and need prompting, while others worked extra hard to know their part and read it well.

Although I could see the benefits of using Readers’ Theater, I found that it required a significant amount of time and preparation each week. Therefore, Readers’ Theater would most likely be included in my instruction, but I would limit its use. It would be a requirement for all to participate periodically throughout the year, and I would also make it available for additional use for those who enjoyed practicing in this manner.

Paired Reading proved to be a successful fluency building activity. Students are excited to work with peers. It is easily implemented and requires no additional materials. It is imperative that students are informed about the process of partner assignments and the roles each person has in the partnership to allow for trust and comfort to develop. The benefit of having additional helpers for those who are reading below grade level was astonishing. Paired Reading has become and will continue to be an important tool used for the building of fluency skills in my classroom.

Time was always a factor. I originally wanted to perform additional assessments, especially with those who were significantly behind their peers. However, I was not able to find additional time to do this. The STAR 360 Reading Assessment provides an “estimated” oral fluency rate. However, it is directly related to the scaled score. Therefore, it was a quick way to assess the students overall skills, but did not provided an accurate measurement of a student’s actual fluency rate. I have come to realize that the
individualized assessment for fluency was much more accurate at providing this useful measurement.

Students’ attitudes were also something to consider when looking at growth and accurate assessments that were included for this research. Reflection upon the timing of the surveys that were administered has brought the realization that spring and the last week of school may have influenced student responses. The suggestion of “reading for fun at home” in June when the students were looking forward to baseball, camping, and swimming was not something most children would consider to be a desirable activity.

I have determined that excessive assessment of the entire group of students is not necessary. I will continue to do what is required by my district three times a year for the majority of the class and look for additional assessments for those who are not making adequate progress.

The importance of studying research and applying what has been determined effective is one of the most important things an educator can do. Learning about evidence based practices encourages the implementation of these methods and activities which produces more proficient readers. Understanding the process of becoming a reader and assisting students in acquiring the necessary skills to become a skillful reader is my responsibility. Now, I have the added duty of sharing what I know because of this study with others so that they can also increase their knowledge and understanding of the importance of effective reading instruction.

I plan to share my research information with students, parents, colleagues, and administrators. Taking time to inform others through parent-teacher communications
will have an impact on the lives of my students and their families. When I offer to lead my school and regional staff development classes I can increase local educators knowledge and understanding. All of this can have an impact on the building of literacy in my community, state, nation, and world. The influence of one enlightened individual can have an impact on educating others which can make our communities and even the world a better place.

It is because of my inquiry of *How can fluency instruction, using readers’ theater and paired reading, impact reading comprehension in the third grade classroom?* that I now know that fluency instruction does impact reading comprehension. Fluency is one piece of a complicated puzzle. When all of the essential pieces of learning to read are put into place the outcome is the creation of a skillful reader. These essential pieces include, but are not limited to: hearing others speak and read to build a speaking vocabulary; building phonemic awareness and phonics skills; knowing and applying spelling rules; recognizing sight words; understanding the meaning of base words, prefixes, and suffixes; using punctuation properly; writing; ample amounts of quality practice which includes explicit fluency instruction; and knowing and applying reading strategies. Becoming a proficient reader is accomplished differently by everyone. It takes time and perseverance, but once a student becomes a skillful reader, his life is forever changed.
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Seuss, Dr. (1978). *I can read with my eyes shut!* New York: Random House


APPENDIX A

Letters of Consent
Dear (Superintendent),
I am currently working on an advanced degree, Master in Literacy Education Degree, through Hamline University in St. Paul, Minnesota. One of the requirements for this degree is that I complete a Capstone Project. The topic I have selected for my Capstone Project is, *How Can Fluency Instruction Impact Reading Comprehension?*

My plan includes studying existing research for “Best Practices” and “Evidence Based Practices” in fluency instruction. I will also review the existing curriculum that our district has invested in during the last six years to see how this fits into the “Best Practices” theories. I will implement Reader’s Theater and Partner Reading as part of my classroom routine. Data will be collected in a natural classroom setting. My goal is to continue using my current practices that research suggests are most effective; identify practices that I may be using that should be eliminated; and implement new practices that will be most effective and efficient for student learning.

I am seeking permission to move forward with this project. If all goes as planned and my application is accepted by the board at Hamline University, I will be prepared to start this fall and complete my research in the spring at the conclusion of the third or into the fourth quarter of our 2016-2017 school year. I will notify parents of this project and request their written consent before I begin. I will keep you, Mr. Hall, and my students’ families informed throughout the entire process.

Thank you for considering this project. I would appreciate the opportunity to increase my knowledge and experience with best practices in fluency instruction. I am confident that this will help my students to become proficient readers. Please sign and return the attached consent form if you are supportive of this project.

Sincerely,

Angela Koski, Third Grade Teacher
Consent to Conduct Research

Angela Koski has my permission to conduct research in her classroom at Cherry Elementary School in Iron, Minnesota on the topic of *How Can Fluency Instruction Impact Reading Comprehension?* I understand that this research will be conducted during the 2016-2017 school year.

____________________________________  
Signature, Title  Date
Dear (Principal),

I am currently working on an advanced degree, Master in Literacy Education Degree, through Hamline University in St. Paul, Minnesota. One of the requirements for this degree is that I complete a Capstone Project. The topic I have selected for my Capstone Project is, *How Can Fluency Instruction Impact Reading Comprehension?*

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Consent to Conduct Research

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____________________________________  Signature, Title  Date
Dear Parents/Guardians,

Welcome to a new school year! I am thrilled to be your child’s teacher! I am looking forward to a fantastic year!

I am currently a graduate student at Hamline University in St. Paul, Minnesota and have been working on my Master’s in Literacy Education Degree for about 20 months. The time has come for me to begin my research project, or Capstone. The topic I have chosen for my Capstone is, HOW CAN FLUENCY INSTRUCTION IMPACT READING COMPREHENSION? I plan to study the research of those who are considered experts or masters in reading instruction, review our existing curriculum and resources, assess students to determine their strengths and any gaps in their reading skills, implement evidence based or best practices in the classroom and eliminate any practices that are not considered effective, and study the impact these practices have on student learning, growth, and development. My goal is to have everyone reading at grade level and able to pass the state tests in the spring.

Permission to conduct this research has been given by XXXXXXX, Cherry School Principal and XXXXXXX, Superintendent of St. Louis County Schools.

We will start as soon as permission is granted from the review board at Hamline University. All data collection will be done in my classroom. Assessments will be administered to determine students’ current reading levels. Best practices in reading/fluency instruction will be put into place. I will reassess at the end of the first, second, and third quarters. Research will be completed by the end of March 2017. I will use surveys, personal interviews or conferences, and samples of students’ work to show student progress. This research is public scholarship. The results and final product of my project will be cataloged in Hamline’s Bush Library Digital Commons which is a searchable electronic repository and it may be published or used in other ways.

I assure you that confidentiality and anonymity of the students and their abilities will be maintained. Student identification will be removed from all work samples. I will not use students’ actual names. Numbers will be assigned to each student to track information. This is strictly voluntary. Students may refuse to have his/her information included in my research. Students may withdraw from the study at any time with no negative consequences.
I will work to ensure that the potential for risks or discomfort for your child is minimal or non-existent. Steps to eliminate feelings of inadequacy will be provided in a supportive classroom environment with encouragement and acceptance. Students will see their strengths along with any gaps in their understanding. Individual goals will be set that are attainable and encourage students to become better readers. Communication will be maintained so that you are aware of what is going on during the research process.

The potential benefits from this study include increased knowledge and skills in reading/language arts for the students. Students more likely to be reading at grade level and performing at expected levels of understanding when I am aware of and practicing evidence based methods of teaching. Potential benefits for me include becoming more adept as a reading/language arts teacher who is able to more effectively teach students. Students and teachers throughout the building and district could benefit from this study as I share my findings with my colleagues and administrators.

This letter is to ask for your permission to conduct this research with your child. If you agree that your child may participate, please fill out the attached Informed Consent to Participate form and return it to me as soon as possible. If you have questions or concerns, please contact me at 123-123-123.

Sincerely,

Angela Koski
Third Grade Teacher
Dear Angela Koski,

I have received your letter about the upcoming research project that will be conducted in your classroom. I understand that students will be assessed for current reading levels and will be reassessed at the end of each quarter. Students will be observed and interviewed. Samples of work will be kept. The data collected will be used in your final report which will be on file at Hamline University’s Bush Library Digital Commons. I understand that there is little to no risk involved for my child and that confidentiality will be protected. I may or my child may withdraw from this project at any time without consequences.

________________________________________________________________________

Parent/Guardian Signature                                                                       Date
APPENDIX B

Student Surveys on Reading
Elementary Reading Attitude Survey

School __________________ Grade ______ Name __________________

Please circle the picture that describes how you feel when you read a book.

1. How do you feel when you read a book on a rainy Saturday?
   - Picture 1
   - Picture 2
   - Picture 3
   - Picture 4

2. How do you feel when you read a book in school during free time?
   - Picture 1
   - Picture 2
   - Picture 3
   - Picture 4

3. How do you feel about reading for fun at home?
   - Picture 1
   - Picture 2
   - Picture 3
   - Picture 4

4. How do you feel about getting a book for a present?
   - Picture 1
   - Picture 2
   - Picture 3
   - Picture 4
Please circle the picture that describes how you feel when you read a book.

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<td>How do you feel about spending free time reading a book?</td>
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<td>6.</td>
<td>How do you feel about starting a new book?</td>
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<td>7.</td>
<td>How do you feel about reading during summer vacation?</td>
<td>![Garfield pictures]</td>
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<tr>
<td>8.</td>
<td>How do you feel about reading instead of playing?</td>
<td>![Garfield pictures]</td>
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Please circle the picture that describes how you feel when you read a book.

9. How do you feel about going to a bookstore?

10. How do you feel about reading different kinds of books?

11. How do you feel when a teacher asks you questions about what you read?

12. How do you feel about reading workbook pages and worksheets?
Please circle the picture that describes how you feel when you read a book.

13. How do you feel about reading in school?

14. How do you feel about reading your school books?

15. How do you feel about learning from a book?

16. How do you feel when it's time for reading in class?
Please circle the picture that describes how you feel when you read a book.

<p>| | | |</p>
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<td>17.</td>
<td>How do you feel about stories you read in reading class?</td>
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<tr>
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<td>How do you feel when you read out loud in class?</td>
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<td>19.</td>
<td>How do you feel about using a dictionary?</td>
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<td>20.</td>
<td>How do you feel about taking a reading test?</td>
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Page 5

© PAWS – www.professorgarfield.org
Survey designed by Dennis J. Kear, Wichita State University
Reading Interest Survey

Name: _______________ Date: ______

1. Do you enjoy reading? (Circle) Yes No Sometimes

2. What is your favorite book? Why?

3. How do you pick books you want to read?

4. Please check your favorite genres.

  _ Adventure/Action  _ Drama
  _ Fantasy          _ Poetry
  _ Fairy Tales      _ Non-fiction
  _ Mystery         _ Realistic Fiction
  _ Science Fiction _ Historical Fiction
  _ Biography       _ Other
5. My favorite place to read at home is ________________________________

6. Which of these subjects do you like the most?
   □ Reading  □ Writing  □ Math  □ Science  □ Social Studies

7. What are your hobbies? How much time do you spend on your hobbies?


8. Circle the best choice that fits you.
   Would you rather...
   read picture books  or  chapter books
   read to someone  or  have someone read to you
   talk about a book  or  write about a book
   read with someone  or  read by yourself

   q. I think I am a...
      □ Excellent reader
      □ Good reader
      □ OK reader
      □ Poor reader
APPENDIX C

Bookshop Assessment Tools
When I Grow Up

Fiction

A young person isn't sure what he wants to be when he grows up, but he has some interesting ideas!

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TOTAL

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READING RECORD 3-5

114
The author likes bats, and he knows a lot of interesting things about them.

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Some people think bats are creepy. I like bats.</td>
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<td>20</td>
<td>Did you know bats are mammals? Bats drink milk as babies.</td>
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<td>33</td>
<td>Their wings are like our hands. They are the only mammals that fly.</td>
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<tr>
<td>37</td>
<td>They sleep upside down.</td>
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<tr>
<td>49</td>
<td>Bats don't see color like we do. They have great hearing. Most bats use their senses to catch insects. A little brown bat can catch 600 insects in just one hour!</td>
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<tr>
<td>79</td>
<td>Farmers like bats. Bats don't just eat insects. They also help spread seeds, so certain types of fruits can grow.</td>
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<tr>
<td>94</td>
<td>I think bats are great animals.</td>
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</table>

TOTAL
Anna has been practicing diving for a long time, but it is still scary when she goes up onto the diving board.

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<th>SC</th>
<th>MSV</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Eddie Chang just dove off the diving board. He was</td>
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<tr>
<td>21</td>
<td>cool as a cucumber. Anna is next. She can't hear the</td>
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<tr>
<td>29</td>
<td>other kids splashing around or the lifeguard's whistle.</td>
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<td>38</td>
<td>All she hears is the pounding inside her chest.</td>
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<tr>
<td>47</td>
<td>She grabs the metal railings and begins to climb.</td>
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<tr>
<td>57</td>
<td>She practiced all week. Over and over, she dove off</td>
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<td>69</td>
<td>the side of the pool. She hasn't done a belly flop since</td>
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<td>74</td>
<td>the beginning of the summer.</td>
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<tr>
<td>84</td>
<td>She has reached the top. She feels the diving board</td>
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<tr>
<td>94</td>
<td>under her feet. A few steps, and she's there. She</td>
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<tr>
<td>103</td>
<td>opens her arms, takes a deep breath, and dives.</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
It takes a lot of people and a lot of hard work to keep the Golden Gate Bridge in good condition.

10 Have you seen the Golden Gate Bridge? It’s in San Francisco, California. It’s 4,200 feet long. This bridge is a bright reddish-orange color.

34 Painting such a long bridge is a big job. A group of 38 painters work all year to keep the bridge in good condition. They use harnesses for safety, like mountain climbers.

64 Sometimes it gets wet and foggy over the water.

75 It can also be cold up in the clouds. The temperature can drop 30 degrees in just hours.

91 San Francisco’s ocean air is salty. It makes the bridge’s metal rust. So the painters’ work is never done.

112 Take a close look at the next bridge you see. Maybe you’ll spot a painter!
Coyote challenged Cloud to a race, but was Cloud too clever for Coyote?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Page</th>
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<th>Fluency</th>
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<td>11</td>
<td>One day, Coyote was bored. All his friends were on vacation.</td>
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<td>16</td>
<td>“I’m so bored!” he howled.</td>
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<td>28</td>
<td>Then he caught sight of Cloud, drifting quietly in the sky. “What</td>
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<td>39</td>
<td>a puff of nothing,” thought Coyote. “Hey there, Cloud,” he called.</td>
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<td>49</td>
<td>“Want to race? I bet you sunny weather I win!”</td>
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<td>62</td>
<td>“Fine by me,” said Cloud. “If I win, expect a chance of showers.”</td>
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<td>73</td>
<td>Coyote snickered as he ran. Every time he looked up, Cloud</td>
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<td>80</td>
<td>was floating along, slow as can be.</td>
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<td>93</td>
<td>But Cloud was smart and caused a fruit orchard to spring up in</td>
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<td>96</td>
<td>front of Coyote.</td>
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<td>108</td>
<td>Coyote thought, “Cloud is so slow. I’ll stop a minute and eat</td>
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<tr>
<td>120</td>
<td>some of these delicious peaches.” Then he took a nap. Cloud won</td>
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<tr>
<td>127</td>
<td>the race, and that’s why it rains.</td>
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</table>
This article explains where maple syrup comes from.

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Do you like maple syrup on your pancakes?</td>
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<td>16</td>
<td>Most maple syrup comes from the province of</td>
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<td>25</td>
<td>Quebec, in Canada. Each year, kids in Quebec go</td>
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<td>31</td>
<td>to see how syrup is made.</td>
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<td>40</td>
<td>Maple syrup is the sap from maple trees. In</td>
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<tr>
<td>49</td>
<td>the spring, the nights are cold and days are</td>
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<td>59</td>
<td>warmer. The sap starts to flow. It flows out of</td>
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<tr>
<td>69</td>
<td>taps in the trees and into buckets. Then it's boiled</td>
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<td>79</td>
<td>down in a sugar shack. Finally, it's ready to eat.</td>
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<td>88</td>
<td>Time for a taste! In long trays outside, warm</td>
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<td>97</td>
<td>syrup is poured onto fresh snow. Kids twirl the</td>
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<tr>
<td>105</td>
<td>syrup and snow on wooden sticks. Then the</td>
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<tr>
<td>110</td>
<td>visitors enjoy the sweet treat.</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Dear Diary

Fiction

Student
Teacher

Date

Abigail writes in a diary. Today she wrote about making money by selling things in a yard sale.

<table>
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<th>Page</th>
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<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Dear Diary,</td>
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<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Today the Murphys had a huge yard sale. They</td>
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<tr>
<td>22</td>
<td>let Tara and me set up our own table. We sold</td>
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<tr>
<td>31</td>
<td>lemonade and stuff from when we were little kids.</td>
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<tr>
<td>39</td>
<td>Last night we gathered our old things together.</td>
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<td>48</td>
<td>Then we put stickers with prices on everything. Tara</td>
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<td>57</td>
<td>had some jigsaw puzzles. She marked those for 50</td>
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<tr>
<td>68</td>
<td>cents each. I thought kids might pay 25 cents for my</td>
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<tr>
<td>70</td>
<td>old books.</td>
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<tr>
<td>76</td>
<td>Olivia Simpson bought my fairy costume.</td>
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<td>87</td>
<td>At first I felt sad to give it up, even though</td>
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<tr>
<td>97</td>
<td>it's way too small for me. But then Olivia put</td>
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<tr>
<td>106</td>
<td>it on and pretended she was a wicked fairy.</td>
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<tr>
<td>115</td>
<td>I could tell she was having a great time.</td>
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<td>119</td>
<td>Altogether, I made $14.75!</td>
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<tr>
<td>121</td>
<td>Yours truly,</td>
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<tr>
<td>122</td>
<td>Abigail</td>
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</table>

TOTAL

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READING RECORD 3-5 45
Americans use a quarter of the world’s natural resources. This article gives some ideas about how we can cut down on our use of energy.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Fluency</th>
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<td>19</td>
<td>Americans use a lot of energy. People living in the United States make up 5% of the world’s population.</td>
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<td>30</td>
<td>However, we use up more than 25% of the world’s natural resources! Using so much energy hurts the environment.</td>
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<td>48</td>
<td>Here are some ways you can help keep our planet:</td>
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<tr>
<td>57</td>
<td>• Turn off the lights, TV, and computer when you’re not using them.</td>
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<tr>
<td>63</td>
<td>• Recycle writing paper.</td>
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<tr>
<td>72</td>
<td>• Shut off the water when you brush your teeth.</td>
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<tr>
<td>84</td>
<td>• Bring a tote bag to the store so you don’t use a plastic bag.</td>
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<tr>
<td>92</td>
<td>• Pack your lunch in a container.</td>
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<tr>
<td>99</td>
<td>Do not plastic wrap. Americans use enough plastic wrap every year to cover the state of Texas!</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
When it is time for the young birds to learn how to fly, not everyone thinks it's a good idea!

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Fluency</th>
<th>Running Words: 132</th>
<th>Errors</th>
<th>Comprehension</th>
<th>Fluency</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>My family lives in a nest at the top of the Brooklyn Bridge in New York City. I used to live there, too, until last week when my sisters and I flew the coop.</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>25</td>
<td>My parents looked nervous, but encouraged us to spread our wings and fly. Jackie did a graceful tour over the water. Roxanne looked like a professional acrobat, twirling and diving until we all cheered. Then it was my turn. I squeezed my eyes shut, flapped my wings like crazy, and somehow landed on the ground. And this is where I plan to stay.</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>34</td>
<td>&quot;Sammy,&quot; my mother tells me, &quot;your cousin Zack migrates 15,000 miles every year. Birds fly. It's what we do.&quot; Not this bird. Flying gives me a stomach ache, so I'm thinking of getting a motortbike instead.</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

TOTAL
Why We Yawn

In this interview with a brain expert, we find out what scientists know, and don’t know, about why we yawn.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Line</th>
<th>Text</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>Why do we yawn? Let’s talk with a brain expert to find out.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>Dr. Madden, who yawns?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25</td>
<td>Just about everyone. People start yawning before they’re even born. Almost all mammals yawn, and some reptiles and birds yawn, too.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>43</td>
<td>Why do we do it?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>53</td>
<td>Some scientists think we yawn when we’re bored or tired because our breathing slows down. When this happens, we get less air. Yawning gives us a big gulp of oxygen.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>61</td>
<td>But studies now show that people getting more oxygen yawn just as much. Yawning may simply be a good stretch for your lungs.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>105</td>
<td>Why do I feel like yawning when I see someone else yawn?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| 108  | In earlier times, yawning might have been a signal that got passed among animals. Perhaps people yawn today out of habit. We still have a lot to learn!
Lee really wanted a kitten, but Jamil was afraid to try anything new.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Fluency</th>
<th>Running Words: 156</th>
<th>Errors</th>
<th>Comprehension</th>
<th>Fluency</th>
<th>E</th>
<th>SC</th>
<th>E</th>
<th>SC</th>
<th>MSV</th>
<th>MSV</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| 11      | Jamil refused to try new things. When his neighbor's cat had kittens, his dad said he and his sister, Lee, could take one home; however, Dad explained that Lee and Jamil had to agree to share responsibility. Lee begged Jamil to agree, but he had never owned a pet, and he didn't want to try anything new now. The following week, Lee came down with chicken pox. She looked sad, and it seemed as if no one could cheer her up. Jamil plodded to his neighbor's apartment and asked about the kittens. One kitten remained. Jamil tucked it gently under his arm. As the kitten licked his hand, Jamil even grinned. Back home, Jamil dashed into Lee's room. "I have a surprise!"
| 137     | He put the kitten at the foot of the bed. It scampered up to Lee. A huge grin crossed her face. Jamil had just tried something new, and he found he really liked it! |

TOTAL
Lisa was not allowed to have inline skates. She wrote a letter to try to convince her mom to let her have some.

Dear Mom,
I know we’ve talked about inline skates, and I know we’ve never been able to agree. I thought if I wrote you a letter, I could state my thoughts more clearly.
I have ideas about skating that will make it much safer for me. I hope you’ll agree after you read this.
I’ve found information online and in magazines about skating safely. Before even putting my skates on,
I’ll buy all the safety gear. I’ve been saving my money.
I will buy a good helmet. I’ll also buy elbow pads, wrist guards, and knee pads. I’ll wear all my safety gear every time I skate.
I plan to take safety classes, so I’ll know how to be safe. I’m excited about inline skates, and I hope you’ll let me have a pair. Thank you for thinking about this.

Love,
Lisa
Gabriella was disappointed that she wasn't in the softball team, but she found out that she could enjoy other things as well as softball.

8 Gabriella raced to check for her name. Softball
19 was her life. She lived to play and hear the crowd
27 cheer—but Gabriella wouldn't be hearing cheers this
35 season. Her name wasn't on the team list.
41 Later that afternoon, Gabriella's teacher asked
49 her to substitute for someone who dropped out
57 of the school play. Gabriella thought, "No way!
67 I'm a softball player, not an actress," but she couldn't
78 get the words from her brain to her mouth. So she
80 muttered, "Okay."
89 At rehearsal, Gabriella barely made an effort to read
98 her lines because she really wasn't all that committed
108 to acting. Finally, a friend took her aside and said,
116 "We have to pull together. You'll sink everyone
122 if you keep acting like this."
133 Gabriella took his words to heart. She was in full swing
142 by the first performance, and she loved the applause
154 at the end. She knew she'd be trying out for more than
160 the softball team in the future.
Toni Morrison is an African American whose family ensured she received a good education. She became a famous author.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Books have always been important to author and</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Morrison was born in 1931 in Ohio, where her family moved to find a strong education for the children. Good schools for African Americans were difficult to find during the time.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Morrison realized education was important to her family. She learned about many topics from them. She learned a great deal about African-American culture. Her family often sang songs and told stories and folktales.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Morrison took her love of words to school, finishing in the number one spot in high school. Morrison went to college and earned degrees. Then she taught in college and became an editor and author. The books Morrison wrote did not become popular immediately, but she continued to write. People soon realized how talented and intelligent she was. Today, many say her books are some of the best ever written.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
An exciting discovery makes Wah’s move to an old country house seem not so bad after all.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Fluency</th>
<th>Running Words: 150</th>
<th>Errors</th>
<th>Comprehension</th>
<th>E</th>
<th>SC</th>
<th>E</th>
<th>SC</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Wah sighed and ripped open another box. Moving hadn’t been his idea. Now that his family had moved into an old country house, he thought nothing could be worse. To add to the anxiety, workers sawed and hammered as they remodeled.</td>
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<tr>
<td>21</td>
<td>After the workers left, Wah noticed an old fireplace peeking out from behind cracked plaster. He pulled at the plaster, and a metal box clang to the floor.</td>
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<tr>
<td>30</td>
<td>Wah grabbed the tarnished box and blew away the dust. Inside, he found yellowed sheets of paper tied with twine. In faded directions, Wah saw names of places such as “brine tree” and “soggy pond.” He had no idea what these places were. The following day, he asked someone at his new school—someone who had lived in the town for years. That day began a new adventure. Wah and his friend began a search for treasure in his new town.</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

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Juan's Individual Vegetable Pizzas

This is the recipe Juan uses to make pizzas for his aunt's party. Note: Slash marks (/) represent line breaks where indicated.

### Fluency

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Running Words: 138</th>
<th>Errors</th>
<th>Comprehension</th>
<th>Fluency</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

**Because Juan's aunt likes pizza, he plans to make individual pizzas for guests at her birthday party. Here is the recipe he plans to use.**

**Supplies:**
- Cookie sheet / bowl / spoon / knife

**Ingredients:**
- Whole wheat bagels / tomato sauce / tomato slices / shredded low-fat mozzarella cheese
- Green olives / black olives / basil

**Directions:**
- Ask an adult to preheat the oven to 350°. Then have an adult cut each bagel in half.
- Spoon tomato sauce on each bagel half. Place a tomato slice on top of the sauce.
- Sprinkle shredded cheese onto the tomato slice. Place vegetable toppings on the cheese. Lightly sprinkle with basil. Place bagels onto cookie sheet. Have an adult put the cookie sheet into the oven. Bake at 350° for 15 minutes. Have an adult take the cookie sheet out of the oven. Allow to cool slightly before serving.
Jeb and Grandpa have to help each other when they find themselves in a building when an earthquake hits.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Line</th>
<th>Words</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>The roar of a thousand freight trains cut through</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18</td>
<td>the eerie silence, and the ground trembled as though</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>28</td>
<td>Atlas were holding Earth and shaking it like a gumball machine. Boards, bricks, and windows smashed to</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>35</td>
<td>the ground all around Jeb and his grandpa; pianos and</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>53</td>
<td>tables flipped end over end, splintering into fragments.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>62</td>
<td>When the din and shaking stopped, Jeb sighed in</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>73</td>
<td>relief, but he immediately gasped the air back in as the</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>82</td>
<td>jolts began again. Grandpa pulled him into a doorway.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>91</td>
<td>Once the ground was still again, Jeb saw Grandpa’s</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>102</td>
<td>arm pinned to the ground under a board. “I’ll go get</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>112</td>
<td>help!” Jeb shouted. “I can’t get you loose myself.” Jeb’s</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>121</td>
<td>heart beat with the force of the earthquake jolts.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>130</td>
<td>“No time,” Grandpa said. “The shaking will start again.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>138</td>
<td>We have to get away from the buildings.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>146</td>
<td>Hesitantly, Jeb reached for the board, and slowly</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>156</td>
<td>eased it off of Grandpa’s arm. Just then a carriage</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>165</td>
<td>stopped across the street, and Jeb and Grandpa raced</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>173</td>
<td>aboard to head to a more desolate area.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
This journal entry tells about a favorite book and how reading this book affected the author of the journal.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Fluency</th>
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<th>Errors</th>
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<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Journal Entry</td>
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<td>4</td>
<td>January 21</td>
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<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>In class today, the teacher asked us to write about</td>
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<td>24</td>
<td>a favorite book. I thought for a while before deciding</td>
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<tr>
<td>35</td>
<td>to write about a book. I chose this book because it tells an interesting story. The description</td>
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<tr>
<td>55</td>
<td>makes me feel as if I'm in the middle of the events.</td>
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<tr>
<td>65</td>
<td>Also, I think the title is very clever. In this book,</td>
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<tr>
<td>74</td>
<td>Madeline L'Engle tells about the adventures of a brother and sister as they race through time and</td>
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<tr>
<td>90</td>
<td>space while trying to save their father.</td>
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<tr>
<td>99</td>
<td>Because the brother and sister in the book solved the problems themselves, I really identified with the characters. The author made me feel as if I were right in the middle of the action.</td>
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<tr>
<td>124</td>
<td>While I wasn't interested in science fiction before</td>
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<tr>
<td>132</td>
<td>I read this book, the story made me interested in reading more science fiction. I particularly like books about time travel and space travel. The book also inspired me to write science fiction. Who knows? Maybe one day,</td>
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<tr>
<td>170</td>
<td>people will be reading my science fiction books!</td>
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<td>178</td>
<td>TOTAL</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

14 READING RECORD 3-5

Copyright ©2006 Mondo Publishing
Life in space sounds exciting as Dad and Jana head off on an intergalactic holiday... as long as everything goes to plan!

10 “Yikes!” cried Dad, as the family car glided through the air. “I forgot to turn off the lights at home. I meant to set them in vacation mode.”

37 “Don’t worry,” said Jana, as she leaned forward and scrolled through prompts on the car’s computer. “I’ll turn them off remotely and set them to come on tonight.”

65 Because he needed a snooze, Dad set the car’s navigation system to steer into the space terminal. Outer-galaxy trips were long, and he wanted to feel rested before boarding the shuttle.

96 Jana checked the vacation schedule on her watch’s computer. She made a point of scheduling every event in her life, always wanting things to be in order.

125 At the station, Jana and Dad discovered their flight had been cancelled; however, one flight was available—a flight to an unexplored planet. Jana wanted to go home, but she looked into Dad’s exhausted eyes and realized how much he needed the trip. “All right,” she said, “I’ll go, but I plan to make a new vacation schedule during the flight.”
When a tornado damages a town, students at a nearby community center decide to hold a bake sale to raise money to help the victims.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Page 133</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3–5 READING RECORD: LEVEL S</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Doing Our Part</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Date</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

When a tornado damages a town, students at a nearby community center decide to hold a bake sale to raise money to help the victims.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Page 133</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3–5 READING RECORD: LEVEL S</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Doing Our Part</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Date</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

When a tornado damages a town, students at a nearby community center decide to hold a bake sale to raise money to help the victims.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Fluency</th>
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<th>Fluency</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>A strong tornado blew through</td>
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<td>9</td>
<td>Oklahoma. Students in Kyoko's</td>
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<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>Community Club wanted to help families</td>
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<td>23</td>
<td>in a nearby town where the worst damage</td>
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<td>29</td>
<td>had occurred. Club members planned to</td>
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<tr>
<td>37</td>
<td>have a fundraiser to collect money to buy</td>
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<td>44</td>
<td>food, bottled water, and other items for</td>
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<td>51</td>
<td>victims of the storm. During a meeting,</td>
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<td>53</td>
<td>Members discussed the best way to</td>
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<tr>
<td>66</td>
<td>raise funds, and they decided to hold a</td>
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<tr>
<td>73</td>
<td>bake sale. They created posters like this</td>
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<td>79</td>
<td>one to place in school hallways.</td>
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<tr>
<td>85</td>
<td>Bake Sale to Help Tornado Victims</td>
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<tr>
<td>93</td>
<td>Why: To help victims of last week's tornado</td>
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<tr>
<td>101</td>
<td>Who Can Participate: All students in our school</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>104</td>
<td>Where: Community Center</td>
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<tr>
<td>116</td>
<td>How: We'll meet at school and take buses to the Community Center.</td>
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<tr>
<td>120</td>
<td>When: Saturday, May 5</td>
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<tr>
<td>125</td>
<td>What to bring: Baked goods</td>
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<tr>
<td>136</td>
<td>Mark the date, and be sure to bring a signed permission</td>
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<td>148</td>
<td>slip to school no later than May 1. Students who do not</td>
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<td>159</td>
<td>bring a signed permission slip will not be permitted to go.</td>
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<td>170</td>
<td>Please do your part to help us help the tornado victims.</td>
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<td>175</td>
<td>You can make a difference.</td>
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TOTAL
### 3-5 Reading Record: Level T

**Torrence and Harold**  
**Fiction**

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Student</th>
<th>Teacher</th>
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**Date**

Torrence and Harold are having a bike race. Harold is determined to win, but he discovers that sometimes it may be wiser to listen to advice.

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</thead>
</table>
| 9       | Torrence and Harold took their bikes to the starting line of the race in the park. These boys were the only two who would battle for a win this day. Torrence seemed distracted. Harold, however, sat tall, gripping his handlebars, shouting: “I’ll win; Torrence races like a sloth. He will never beat me!”  
21       | The race began, and Harold zoomed ahead, not even noticing the tortoise he almost hit with his bike. Soon,  
31       | Torrence came upon the tortoise and stopped to admire its strong shell and the way it slipped into the water and paddled away.  
38       | Ahead, Torrence saw Harold approaching the vine patch. Though it provided a shortcut, it was filled with leaves and thick stalks, too thick for a bicycle to navigate. Torrence shouted to warn Harold.  
47       | Harold shouted something over his shoulder and started into the vines, and then his bike ground to a halt as its spokes were grabbed by thick greenery. As  
53       | Torrence pedaled ahead and crossed the finish line—while Harold was still stuck in the vines—he said, “Slow  
62       | and steady wins the race.” |
| 102     |                     |        |               |         |    |    |      |      |
| 111     |                     |        |               |         |    |    |      |      |
| 116     |                     |        |               |         |    |    |      |      |
| 122     |                     |        |               |         |    |    |      |      |
| 128     |                     |        |               |         |    |    |      |      |
| 135     |                     |        |               |         |    |    |      |      |
| 146     |                     |        |               |         |    |    |      |      |
| 156     |                     |        |               |         |    |    |      |      |
| 164     |                     |        |               |         |    |    |      |      |
| 175     |                     |        |               |         |    |    |      |      |
| 180     |                     |        |               |         |    |    |      |      |
Charles Lindbergh accepted a challenge to be the first person to fly solo from New York to Paris without stopping.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Page</th>
<th>Running Words</th>
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</table>

TOTAL
Although Susan was not interested in her father's ham radio, she changed her mind when there was an emergency.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Fluency</th>
<th>Running Words: 205</th>
<th>Errors</th>
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<th>Fluency</th>
<th>£</th>
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</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>“C.O., C.Q., C.Q.” Susan heard Dad on his ham radio as he looked for another ham radio operator to talk to. The radio's squawks and squawks had become part of her life, as her Dad had tried to teach her Morse code many times. He'd explained how pressing the code key hooked up to his radio made long and short sounds. Though she understood that each series of sounds stood for a letter, she'd paid little attention. After all, it was 1958, and people could just dial some numbers and use the phone to talk with someone. One afternoon, as Susan waited for her father to come home, a huge storm hit the area. Susan's neighbor was hurt and needed help, but phones weren't working. Susan panicked. &quot;I don't know how to help. I... I... the radio!&quot; Susan flipped it on, the microphone crackled, and all she could hear was &quot;Hola,&quot; as a word from Mexico came through. Slowly, Susan pressed the code key: S.O.S. She pressed again and again until, finally, she heard a response come through. She grabbed the microphone and managed to get her address understood through the crackles. Her proud father got home just as the ambulance arrived for the neighbor.</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
### 3-5 Reading Record: Level U

**The Great Flood of 1993**

**Nonfiction**

**Student**

**Teacher**

**Date**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<th>Running Words: 202</th>
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<th>E</th>
<th>SC</th>
<th>MFY</th>
<th>MFY</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>The Great Flood of 1993 sent water roaring out of the Mississippi River; it left behind 75 towns covered by flood waters.</td>
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<td>35</td>
<td>The Great Flood took the lives of at least 50 people. 54,000 people had to leave their homes, and about 50,000 homes were damaged or destroyed. Such a catastrophic flood generally occurs only once every 500 years!</td>
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<td>71</td>
<td>How did such a flood happen? Large amounts of rain fell in Missouri during the fall of 1992, and this worried climate experts, as they realized that a winter freeze would come—followed by a spring thaw. Where would all the melted ice and snow go? Heavy, ongoing rains had already filled lakes and streams.</td>
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<td>94</td>
<td>In the spring, heavy rains fell again, and by July, the Missouri River could not stay in its banks any longer. For many weeks, flood water continued to race out of the river and into cities. The flood water came up as high as the second floor of many homes.</td>
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<td>138</td>
<td>The dangerous mud was filled with snakes, bugs, and trash. Many years passed before people's lives began to return to normal. It is hoped that such a flood will not happen again for at least another 500 years.</td>
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</table>

**TOTAL**

**62** READING RECORD 3-5

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Rip Van Winkle Summary  Fiction

A legend is a story that is passed down through generations. This summary tells how the legend of Rip Van Winkle was born.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Summary</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Running Words: 201</td>
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<tr>
<td>Errors</td>
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<tr>
<td>8 Rip Van Winkle lived in the Catskill Mountains.</td>
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<tr>
<td>20 Though he was loved by all in the village near his home,</td>
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<tr>
<td>34 he was a lazy man. Work was not to his taste, and he would</td>
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<tr>
<td>43 avoid it at all costs. Rip frequently had disagreements</td>
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<tr>
<td>55 at home, and he would often leave to walk to the village.</td>
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<td>67 One day, with his dog, Rip hiked away, and he saw many</td>
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<td>78 strange sights. Rip soon tired of his journey and fell asleep.</td>
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<td>88 When he awoke, his dog was nowhere to be found,</td>
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<td>98 and when Rip returned to the village, he didn't recognize</td>
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<td>108 a soul—and no one recognized him. To his astonishment,</td>
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<td>118 Rip realized his beard had grown to a foot long.</td>
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<td>127 Rip discovered that almost all his friends had died</td>
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<td>138 or left the village long before, and he began to think</td>
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<td>148 he was going mad. Finally, an old man came upon</td>
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<td>158 the scene. He recognized Rip and helped Rip realize that</td>
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<tr>
<td>168 he had been sleeping for twenty years—as the events</td>
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<tr>
<td>179 of the world had gone on all around him. Some doubted</td>
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<tr>
<td>191 the truth of the story that Rip had slept for twenty years,</td>
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<tr>
<td>201 but the legend of Rip Van Winkle was born, nonetheless.</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
People can have ideas that they would like to become laws, but it is a long journey for an idea to travel from a bill to a law. Note: Slash marks (/) represent line breaks where indicated.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Flueny</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>An idea has a long journey as it travels from bill to law.</td>
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<td>16</td>
<td>Introduction of Bill</td>
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<td>29</td>
<td>Though anyone can send ideas for / laws to Congress, only a member of</td>
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<td>43</td>
<td>Congress can introduce a bill. The bill / is the idea officially written up and</td>
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<td>52</td>
<td>placed into the hopper, a box for this / purpose.</td>
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<td>Action by Committee</td>
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<td>65</td>
<td>Each of Congress' committees has / responsibility for a special area.</td>
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<td>76</td>
<td>Committee members discuss the bill, / and sometimes send it to subcommittee</td>
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<td>for more research.</td>
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<td>Reporting of Bill</td>
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<td>95</td>
<td>When the bill is ready, it is released / from committee with a report.</td>
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<td>Floor Action</td>
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<td>112</td>
<td>When a bill is examined on the House / Floor, it can be debated by Congress.</td>
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<td>Voting on the Bill</td>
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<td>Members of Congress vote on the bill.</td>
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<td>128</td>
<td>• “Yea” is a yes vote.</td>
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<td>• “Nay” is a no vote.</td>
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<td>• A “Present” vote means the / member of Congress is present, yet</td>
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<td>decides not to vote.</td>
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<td>153</td>
<td>The bill is sent to the President after it / passes in Congress.</td>
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<td>• The President may sign the bill, / and then it becomes law.</td>
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<td>182</td>
<td>• The President may veto, or reject, / the bill.</td>
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<td>• The President may ignore the / bill, and depending on special</td>
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<td>circumstances, the bill / then may or may not become law.</td>
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TOTAL
Jacqueline and the Beanstalk

Fiction

Student

Teacher

Date

We know about Jack and the Beanstalk, but what if it happened today, and if there was something more important at stake than gold?

Jacqueline had tried, unsuccessfully, to get her community to begin a program to reduce, recycle, and reuse. She thought back to the successful recycling program she'd started in her old town; she wondered why she couldn't get such a program rolling here.

One day, Jacqueline ate watermelon at the community picnic. People shouted, "Throw the seeds and rind in the trash can. Let's keep our park clean!" Instead, Jacqueline threw her seeds into a grove of trees, and she took the rind to a farmer who could feed it to his pigs.

People were angry with Jacqueline for tossing seeds onto the ground; however, within days, the seeds grew into a vine that reached up as high as the eye could see. Jacqueline scaled the vine and found an ogre at the top. He tried to keep her away from recycling bins she wanted to take with her. As the ogre growled and grimaced, Jacqueline ran circles around him until he grew dizzy and fell over in a heap, and then she grabbed the recycling bins and raced back down the vine. Then she placed the recycling bins in locations throughout the town and began the most successful recycling program in the state.
Tilly Smith was on vacation in Thailand when she recognized the signs that a tsunami was coming.

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Page</th>
<th>Running Words: 204</th>
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</table>
| 8    | The ocean in Phuket, Thailand bubbled and sizzled,  
| 20   | and the tide raced backward toward the sea, as though a huge  
| 30   | invisible hand had grabbed it and pulled it back. Ten-year-old  
| 40   | Tilly Smith, on vacation with her parents and sister, recognized  
| 51   | the signs. She said, “There’s definitely going to be a tsunami.”  
| 63   | At first, her mother and father didn’t believe her, but as Tilly  
| 73   | grew more and more hysterical, her terrified sister raced back  
| 83   | toward the hotel’s pool. Then her father followed, and Tilly  
| 87   | finally convinced her mother.  
| 97   | Officials believed Tilly, as well, so they sounded the alarm.  
| 107  | People raced away from the beach in time to escape  
| 116  | the monster waves fast approaching. Tilly saved 100 lives  
| 128  | that day; no one on the beach where she had generated the  
| 130  | warning perished.  
| 141  | Why was Tilly aware of what was happening when so many  
| 150  | others were oblivious? Only weeks earlier, in her geography  
| 160  | class at school in Oxshott, Surrey (in England), the teacher  
| 170  | had offered up a lesson on tsunami and had explained  
| 181  | the warning signs. Tilly could not have known that day that  
| 192  | the attention she paid in class would save 100 lives—including  
| 204  | her own life and the lives of her mother, father, and sister.  

TOTAL
<table>
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<th>Fiction: Retell</th>
<th>Nonfiction: Fact Recall</th>
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<td><strong>Prompt</strong></td>
<td><strong>Prompt</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>&quot;Tell me what this text was all about.&quot;</td>
<td>&quot;Tell me some things that you learned about in this passage.&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>or</td>
<td>then</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;What was that story mainly about?&quot;</td>
<td>&quot;What else do you remember?&quot;</td>
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<td>then</td>
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<tr>
<td>&quot;What else happened?&quot;</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Score</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3 points for a full retelling of 4 or more details, sequentially told</td>
<td>3 points for 3 facts (any order)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 points for 2–3 details, sequentially told</td>
<td>2 points for 2 facts (any order)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 point for 2 or more details, not sequentially told</td>
<td>1 point for 1 fact</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0 points for 0–1 detail</td>
<td>0 points for 0 facts</td>
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Teacher Comments/Notes: Record what the student actually says

Comprehension

1. If the student has already included the answer in the retell or recall, there is no need to ask that particular question. Student automatically receives credit for that question.

2. Score 1 point for each question (see question master sheet). Maximum score is 3 points.

**Comprehension Questions Score**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1.</th>
<th>Correct</th>
<th>Incorrect</th>
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| 3. |         |           |                     |
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Total Score

Add the scores of retell/recall and comprehension. Maximum score is 6 (3 points retell/recall, 3 points comprehension)
### COMPREHENSION QUESTIONS
#### QUESTIONS AND DETAILS
**LEVELS J–M**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Author</th>
<th>Level</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>When I Grow Up</strong></td>
<td>Fiction</td>
<td>J</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>I Like Bats</strong></td>
<td>Nonfiction</td>
<td>J</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Diving</strong></td>
<td>Fiction</td>
<td>K</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Painting the Golden Gate</strong></td>
<td>Nonfiction</td>
<td>K</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>The Reason for Rain</strong></td>
<td>Fiction</td>
<td>L</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Maple Syrup It Comes From Trees</strong></td>
<td>Nonfiction</td>
<td>L</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Dear Diary</strong></td>
<td>Fiction</td>
<td>M</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Our Planet</strong></td>
<td>Nonfiction</td>
<td>M</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

**When I Grow Up**

A young person isn’t sure what he wants to be when he grows up, but he has some interesting ideas!

1. What different things does the author want to be when he grows up?
   - A lion tamer, an astronaut, a truck driver
2. What do you think makes the author get mad at his brother? Answers will vary, but need to show cause and effect relationship. (e.g., His brother broke one of his toys.)
3. Suppose you could be anything that you wanted to be, what would you be and why?
   - The answer needs to be an occupation and the reason has to have a relationship to the occupation. (e.g., I want to be a teacher because I like being with kids.)

**I Like Bats**

The author likes bats and he knows a lot of interesting things about them.

1. How do bats sleep?
   - Bats sleep upside down.
2. How are bats helpful?
   - They help farmers by eating insects and spreading seeds.
3. What else do bats eat besides insects? How do you know?
   - They also eat fruit. The passage states that bats help spread seeds which can come from fruits.

**Diving**

Anna has been practicing diving for a long time, but it’s still scary when she goes up onto the diving board.

1. What can Anna hear when she is climbing onto the diving board?
   - She hears her heart pounding.
2. The author says that Eddie Chang was “as cool as a cucumber.” What does that mean?
   - It means that Eddie is relaxed and calm, not nervous at all about diving.
3. How do you think Anna’s dive turned out? Why?
   - It turned out well; she had put in a lot of practice time.

**Painting the Golden Gate**

It takes a lot of people and a lot of hard work to keep the Golden Gate Bridge in good condition.

1. What color is the Golden Gate Bridge?
   - The bridge is a reddish-orange color.
2. Why does the author state “a painter’s job is never done?”
   - The Golden Gate Bridge is near the sea so it is always rusting and needs constant painting.
3. What do you think might happen if the painters did not keep painting the bridge?
   - Parts of the bridge might break because of the rust; it would look terrible with all of the rust showing.

**The Reason for Rain**

Coyote challenged Cloud to a race, but was Cloud too clever for Coyote?

1. Why was Coyote so bored?
   - All of his friends were on vacation.
2. Why was it clever of Cloud to cause a fruit orchard to grow?
   - Cloud knew that Coyote would stop to eat the peaches, and that gave Cloud the chance to win.
3. What was the author’s purpose for writing this story?
   - The author wanted to give a possible explanation for why it rains.

**Maple Syrup It Comes From Trees**

This article explains where maple syrup comes from.

1. What is maple syrup?
   - It is the sap from maple trees.
2. Why do you think maple sap is boiled?
   - To get rid of water; to get to the sweet part; to get rid of dirt and germs.
3. Why is the maple treat so unusual?
   - The syrup is poured on the snow.

**Our Planet**

This article gives some ideas about how Americans can cut down on our use of energy.

1. Name at least three ways we can help our planet. Students should mention three of the ways that are stated in the passage.
2. Why do you think Americans use up so much energy compared to other countries?
   - Answers will vary: we have bigger cars, more technology, etc.
3. Why do you think using too much plastic wrap is harmful to the environment?
   - It takes a lot of energy to produce plastic wrap.
### COMPREHENSION QUESTIONS 3-5

#### Questions and Details - Levels N-Q

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Genre</th>
<th>Questions</th>
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</table>
| **Not This Bird**      | Fiction | 1. Where does Sammy's family live? At the top of the Brooklyn Bridge.  
                         |       | 2. Why is Sammy's behavior so unusual? All birds learn to fly; it's part of their nature.  
                         |       | 3. What might happen to Sammy if he doesn't learn to fly? Answers will vary: he might get caught by an animal on the ground; he won't be able to have a nest in a tree.  |
| **Why Do We Yawn**     | Nonfiction | In this interview with a brain expert we find out what scientists know and don't know about why we yawn.  
                         |       | 1. Who is Dr. Madden? Dr. Madden is a brain expert.  
                         |       | 2. Why would we interview an expert about yawning? An expert has a lot of information about something.  
                         |       | 3. Who might you interview to find out why people get hiccups? A doctor who knows a lot about the human body; another kind of scientist.  |
| **Something New**      | Fiction | Lee really wanted a kitten, but Jamil was afraid to try anything new.  
                         |       | 1. Why couldn't Jamil and his sister Lee get a kitten? They both had to agree to take care of it, and Jamil didn't want to try anything new.  
                         |       | 2. How did Lee probably feel towards Jamil? Why? She was probably upset with him because she really wanted to get a kitten.  
                         |       | 3. What do you think made Jamil change his mind? He felt sorry for his sister when she was sick; when he went to get the kitten, he saw how cute it really was.  |
| **Dear Mom**           | Nonfiction | Lisa wrote a letter to try to convince her mom to let her have inline skates.  
                         |       | 1. What does Lisa plan to buy in order to stay safe while skating? A helmet, elbow pads, wrist guards, knee pads  
                         |       | 2. What do you think Lisa will learn in safety classes? Answers will vary, but students should mention things to do to stay safe.  
                         |       | 3. How do you think Lisa's mom will reply to this letter? Answers should reflect an understanding that the letter is persuasive and will probably lead Lisa's mom to think further about the issue.  |
| **Trying Out**         | Fiction | Gabrielle was disappointed that she wasn't on the softball team, but she found out that she could enjoy other things as well as softball.  
                         |       | 1. What disappointing thing happened to Gabrielle? She didn't make the softball team.  
                         |       | 2. How do you think the other students in the play felt towards Gabriella? Why do you think that? Answers will vary: they were angry at her because she wasn't trying.  
                         |       | 3. How did Gabriella's feelings change in the story? At first she was upset because she didn't make the team; she wasn't interested in the play, but she liked it in the end.  |
| **Moving On**          | Fiction | An exciting discovery makes Wahl's move to an old country house seem not so bad after all.  
                         |       | 1. Why was Wahl feeling anxious and unhappy? His family had just moved; workmen were all over the house.  
                         |       | 2. How do you think the metal box got in the fireplace? Answers will vary, but should be plausible: someone hid it; it got left behind by accident, etc.  
                         |       | 3. What do you think Wahl and his new friend will do next? Answers will vary, but they should reflect a sequence of events having to do with looking for the treasure.  |
| **Toni Morrison**      | Nonfiction | Toni Morrison is an African-American author whose family ensured she received a good education.  
                         |       | 1. Why did the Morrison family move to Ohio? So that the children could get a good education.  
                         |       | 2. What do you think that Toni Morrison's books might be about? Student's answers should reflect the fact that Toni Morrison was very interested in African-American culture.  
                         |       | 3. What kind of person is Toni Morrison? What supports your opinion? Answers will vary: She is intelligent—finished first in her class; hard working—earned college degrees.  |
| **Juan's Individual Vegetable Pizzas** | Nonfiction | This is the recipe Juan uses to make pizzas for his aunt's party.  
                         |       | 1. Why did Juan make pizzas? He made them for his aunt's party because she liked pizza.  
                         |       | 2. Why does Juan need an adult to help make the pizza? Some of the steps could be dangerous — using a knife, turning on the oven.  
<pre><code>                     |       | 3. What do you think would happen if Juan didn't follow the directions carefully? The pizzas wouldn't turn out right; they might not taste good.  |
</code></pre>
<table>
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<th>Title</th>
<th>Level</th>
<th>Type</th>
<th>Text</th>
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</table>
| **Surviving the 1906 San Francisco Earthquake** Fiction | R | | Job and Grandpa have to help each other when they find themselves in a building when an earthquake hits.  
1. What were some of the signs that an earthquake was taking place?  
There was roaring, shaking, bricks and windows falling, furniture tipping over.  
2. What was Job feeling when Grandpa’s arm was pinned to the ground? How do you know?  
He felt helpless; couldn’t see Grandpa by himself. He was afraid; his heart was beating like earthquake jolts.  
3. Why do you think it’s important for Job and Grandpa to get away from the buildings? The earthquake isn’t over. More buildings will fall when it starts up again. |
| **Journal Entry** Nonfiction | R | | This journal entry tells about a favorite book and how reading this book affected the author of the journal.  
1. What is the book A Wrinkle in Time about? A brother and sister race through time and space to save their father.  
2. What kind of person is the author of the journal entry? Why do you think that? Answers will vary: independent—solves problems herself, like the characters; open-minded—willing to read different books.  
3. How can reading a book influence a reader? Answers will vary: can get you interested in another genre; help you find a favorite author. |
| **Automatic Pilot** Fiction | S | | Life in space sounds exciting as Dad and Jana head off on an outer-galaxy holiday—as long as everything goes according to plan.  
1. How does Jana help Dad at the beginning of the story? She turns off the lights at home by using the car’s computer.  
2. What kind of person is Jana? What are your reasons for your opinion? She is helpful; helps Dad turn off lights. She is organized; everything needs to be in order. She is kind; goes on trip even though she wants to go home.  
3. Are the events in this story likely to occur in real life? Why or why not? Students should point out the elements of science fiction that make this story an example of a fantasy. |
| **Doing Our Part** Nonfiction | S | | When a tornado damages a town, students at a nearby community center decide to hold a bake sale to help the victims.  
1. Why is Kyoko’s Community Club trying to raise money? To help the victims of a tornado.  
2. What sort of damage do you think the tornado caused? People were without food and water; houses were damaged, etc.  
3. Do you think this poster is effective and will get people to come to the bake sale? Why or why not? Student’s answer should refer to specific elements of the poster that support their point of view. |
| **Torrence and Harold** Fiction | T | | Torrence and Harold are having a bike race. Harold is determined to win but he discovers that sometimes it may be wiser to listen to advice.  
1. Why does Harold think he will win the bike race? Torrence races slowly like a sloth.  
2. How are Harold and Torrence different? Students should refer to specific actions in the story and what they show about the characters (e.g., Harold races past the tortoise—impatient; Torrence stops to admire it—patient).  
3. What could Harold have done differently that would have helped him to win the race? Answers will vary: he could have stopped to think whether it was safe to ride into the vines. |
| **Lindbergh is the First!** Nonfiction | T | | Charles Lindbergh accepted a challenge to be the first person to fly solo from New York to Paris without stopping, and he did!  
1. What was Charles Lindbergh’s important accomplishment? He was the first person to make a solo flight from New York to Paris.  
2. What do you think Charles Lindbergh’s reasons were for trying to do this? Answers will vary: the prize was a lot of money; no one had ever done it before; he would become famous.  
3. Why does Charles Lindbergh give credit to his plane at the end of the flight? He thinks of it as a living thing that has feelings similar to his. |
### CLASS DATA SUMMARY 3-5

**Teacher:**

**Grade Level:**

**Class:**

**Date:**

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<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Benchmark Text Level (0-124)</th>
<th>Fluency (0-124)</th>
<th>Vocabulary (0-110)</th>
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<td>Oral Language (0-55)</td>
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<td>Letter-Sound Correspondence (0-45)</td>
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APPENDIX D

Words Their Way Assessment Tools
Elementary Spelling Inventory (ESI)

The Elementary Spelling Inventory (ESI) covers more stages than the PSI. It can be offered as early as first grade, particularly if a school system wants to use the same inventory across the elementary grades. The 25 words are ordered by difficulty to sample features of the letter name-alphabetic to derivational relations stages. Call out enough words so that you have at least five or six misspelled words to analyze. If any students spell more than 20 words correctly, use the Upper-Level Spelling Inventory.

1. bed  I hopped out of bed this morning.  bed
2. ship  The ship sailed around the island.  ship
3. when  When will you come back?  when
4. bump  He had a bump on his head after he fell.  bump
5. boat  I can float on the water with my new raft.  boat
6. train  I rode the train to the next town.  train
7. place  I found a new place to put my books.  place
8. drive  I learned to drive a car.  drive
9. bright  The light is very bright.  bright
10. shopping  She went shopping for new shoes.  shopping
11. spoil  The food will spoil if it is not kept cool.  spoil
12. serving  The restaurant is serving dinner tonight.  serving
13. chewed  The dog chewed up my favorite sweater yesterday.  chewed
14. carries  She carries apples in her basket.  carries
15. marched  We marched in the parade.  marched
16. shower  The shower in the bathroom was very hot.  shower
17. bottle  The bottle broke into pieces on the tile floor.  bottle
18. favor  He did his brother a favor by taking out the trash.  favor
19. ripen  The fruit will ripen over the next few days.  ripen
20. cellar  I went down to the cellar for the pot of paint.  cellar
21. pleasure  It was a pleasure to listen to the choir sing.  pleasure
22. fortunate  It was fortunate that the driver had snow tires.  fortunate
23. confidence  I am confident that we can win the game.  confidence
24. civilize  They wanted to civilize the forest people.  civilize
25. opposition  The coach said the opposition would be tough.  opposition
Words Their Way: Elementary Spelling Inventory Feature Guide

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Features</th>
<th>Component Initial</th>
<th>Short Vowels</th>
<th>Digraphs</th>
<th>Blends</th>
<th>Common Long Vowels</th>
<th>Other Vowels</th>
<th>Inflected Endings</th>
<th>Syllable Structure</th>
<th>Unaccented Final Syllables</th>
<th>Harder Roots</th>
<th>Basics of Roots</th>
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Totals: 7 / 15 / 16 / 7 / 5 / 15 / 17 / 5 / 15 / 15 / 15 / 62 / 25
## Words Their Way Elementary Spelling Inventory Classroom Composite

**Teacher: ___________________________  School: ___________________________  Grade: __________  Date: __________**

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<tr>
<th>STAGES</th>
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*Highlight for Instruction*

*Highlight students who miss more than 1 on a particular feature; they will benefit from more instruction in that area.*
APPENDIX E

Readers’ Theater Scripts
The Brementown Rappers
(based on "The Brementown Musicians")

Characters

Narrator
Donkey/Donkey MC
Rooster/Da Roosta
Dog/Fun-Luvin' Dawg
Cat/Kitty-O

Narrator: Once upon a time, there was a donkey who lived on a farm. He was getting old, so the farmer told him it was time to retire. The donkey had always dreamed of being a rapper. So he decided to run away to Brementown to try to make it in the music business.

He walked along the road for a while and came upon an old hound dog.

Donkey: How are you doing?

Dog: Not so well, not so well. I'm tired of living out here in the middle of nowhere.

Donkey: You should come with me. I'm on the way to Brementown. I'm going to become a rapper.

Dog: I'd love to come along.
Donkey: Hey, I have an idea. If we’re going to be rappers, we should start talking real cool. And we need new rapper names. I’ll be Donkey MC.

Dog: I hear you, my donkey. From now on, you can call me Fun-Luvin’ Dawg.

Narrator: The donkey and the dog continued to walk down the road. Only now they were Donkey MC and Fun-Luvin’ Dawg.

And they had cool new walks now, too. The donkey used to walk in a slow, tired way. Now Donkey MC galloped like a prize stallion. The old hound dog used to drag his belly on the ground. But Fun-Luvin’ Dawg walked in a sly way, like a fox.

Soon the two friends met up with a mangy old cat with messy fur and drooping whiskers.

Donkey MC: How’s it going, my fine feline friend?

Fun-Luvin’ Dawg: Yo, cat. Can I get a me-o-o-oow!

Cat: What is with you two? You’re acting weird.

Donkey MC: We’re going to Brementown. We’re going to become rappers.

Fun-Luvin’ Dawg: This is your chance to be a cool cat.

Cat: That sounds fun. I’m certainly not enjoying being a farm cat. The farmer says I’m getting too old. I’d love to visit Brementown.

Donkey MC: Come along with us, then. But first you have to think of a cool rapper name.

Cat: From now on, you can call me Kitty-O.

Narrator: The three animals walked down the road. The cat had a new walk now, too. Instead of being a scurrying furball, Kitty-O started to slink like a tiger.

Pretty soon, the animals ran into a rooster.

Donkey MC: How’s it crowing, my fine feathered friend?

Fun-Luvin’ Dawg: Yo, rooster. Can I get a cock-a-doodle-dooooo?!

Kitty-O: What’s up?
Rooster: What is wrong with you? You three are acting really, really weird.

Donkey MC: We're going to Brementown. We're going to become rappers.

Fun-Luvin' Davy: This is your chance to strut your stuff.

Kitty-O: Hey-o.

Rooster: That sounds fun. The farmer says I'm getting too old to wake him up with my crowing. He just bought a new alarm clock. I'll show him!

Donkey MC: Come along with us, then, but first you have to give yourself a cool rapper name.

Rooster: From now on, you can call me Da Roosta.

Narrator: The four animals continued down the road. Now the rooster also had a new walk. Instead of lurching awkwardly around the farmyard, Da Roosta walked with a proud strut, like a peacock.

But it was a long way to Brementown. Soon night was falling. The animals were growing tired and hungry.

There was a house in the distance with lights on. The animals walked up to the house. There were robbers sorting through their loot. Spread out on the table was all kinds of delicious food.

Donkey MC: Yo, check out those hoodlums.

Fun-Luvin' Davy: Let me at 'em.

Da Roosta: They're going to regret the day they met Da Roosta.

Kitty-O: I'm hungry!

Donkey MC: Hush. I got a plan.

Narrator: Donkey MC's plan was to make up a rap song. The animals practiced in a whisper so that the robbers couldn't hear them.
Donkey MC: Okay, home animals, let's rap on three, and real loud. One... two... three.

Donkey MC, Fun-Luv'n Dawg, Kitty-C. Da, Roosta. (loudly).

Yo, yo, we come from da farm
And it's cause for alarm
We're the animal crew
And we're here to tell you

If you're a robber or crook
You're just no good in our book
You best run home to your mamas
And put on your pajamas

Narrator: The robbers were startled by four farm animals rappin' very loudly. They ran out of the house in a fright. After they were gone, the animals went inside and feasted on the food and slept in the beds.

The next day, they walked into Brementown. When they arrived, they were surprised to learn that they were heroes. People had heard about how they scared away the robbers.

The four animals were immediately given a record contract. They made a video that played on MTV and also on various nature channels. They even went on tour with a group of robots who had formed a heavy metal band.

The Brementown Rappers went on to have five number-one songs. Here's one of their biggest hits:

Donkey MC, Fun-Luv'n Dawg, Kitty-C. Da, Roosta:

Who let the Donkey out?
Bray, bray, bray!
Who let the Hound out?
Bark, bark, bark!
Who let the Cat out?
Purr, purr, purr!
Who let the Rooster out?
Crow, crow, crow!

*the end*
The Emperor's New Hair
(based on "The Emperor's New Clothes")

Characters

Narrator  Mr. Twee
Emperor  Imperial Hair-dresser
Traveling Salesperson  Townspeople
Mr. Twiddle  Little Boy

Narrator: Once there was a very powerful emperor. He ruled over a huge land. But there was something that he was secretly embarrassed about. He didn't have one single hair on his head.

The Emperor felt that he needed to wear wigs. He had more than a hundred of them in a special closet. They were the finest wigs and could easily be mistaken for real hair.

One day a traveling salesperson showed up at the Emperor's castle with a very unusual product.

Emperor: What are you selling today? Make it quick, because I have a huge empire to run.

Salesperson: Oh, great Emperor, I have traveled here today with an amazing new product.
I want to offer you the very first batch. It’s called Hair Today Magic Potion. It’s just $19.99. And wait! That’s not all! If you buy Hair Today Magic Potion, I will also throw in a free comb.

Emperor (touching his wig). Why would I need it? As you can see, I have a full head of hair.

Salesperson. Yes, your hair is very nice indeed. But perhaps you have a friend who could use this potion. I used to be bald myself. And as you can see, I grew plenty of new hair thanks to Hair Today Magic Potion.

Emperor. I’ll take a hundred bottles. It’s for my bald friend, of course.

Narrator. The Emperor began using Hair Today Magic Potion. Each night before he went to bed, he’d take off his wig and put three drops on his very shiny head.

Each morning, he’d talk to his two advisors, Mr. Twiddle and Mr. Twee. They were the only people the Emperor trusted. He’d ask them if the Hair Today Magic Potion was working.

Mr. Twiddle and Mr. Twee wanted to make the Emperor happy. They wanted to keep their jobs. So they told the Emperor what they believed he wanted to hear.

Emperor. What do you think, my trusted advisors, Twiddle and Twee? Do you think the potion is working?

Twiddle. Oh, I do. I definitely notice a difference.

Twee. Yes, you are starting to grow just a few hairs.

Emperor. Only a few?

Twee. Well, when I say a few, I mean, like, maybe twenty.

Twiddle. Or maybe fifty. They’re very nice-looking hairs, I might add.

Emperor. Yes. I see them, too.

Narrator. The Emperor continued to use the potion. And his two trusted advisors continued to tell him that the potion was working. As the days went by, they began to tell more and more extravagant lies to the Emperor. Soon they even began to believe the lies themselves.
Emperor: Tell me, trusted advisors, how do I look today? Is the potion working yet?

Twiddle: Is it working? Are you kidding? You have grown a thick head of beautiful hair.

Twee: Yes, your hair is thick and straight and brown...

Twiddle: Well, I would say it's more wavy than straight. And it's more golden than brown.

Twee: But you have a lot of it. It's thick, no question.

Twiddle: Yes, you can throw away your wigs. You don't need them anymore.

Twee: In fact, if I do say so myself, Emperor, you need a haircut.

Emperor: A haircut! How wonderful. My hair is long and thick and black and curly.

Twee: Actually, it's golden and wavy.

Emperor: So it is. It's long and thick and golden and wavy.

Twiddle: And shiny.

Emperor: And shiny. It's long and thick and golden and wavy and shiny, and I need a haircut. Fetch me the imperial hairdresser at once.

Narrator: Twiddle and Twee ran off to find the imperial hairdresser. When they found the hairdresser, they described the Emperor's new hair in great detail. By now, they were so caught up in their lie that they completely believed it themselves. And soon, they had the imperial hairdresser convinced that the Emperor had long thick golden wavy hair that needed to be cut.

Imperial Hairdresser: Oh, Emperor, what a fine head of hair you have.

Emperor (blushing): Thank you, thank you. Right now, there's a bit too much of it. It's just a little too long and thick and golden and wavy and shiny.

Imperial Hairdresser: It will be a pleasure to trim it. I will make you look fabulous!
Narrator: The imperial hairdresser set to work with scissors and a comb. The haircut required many hours of snipping and clipping and fussing and worrying and blow-drying. But at last, the imperial hairdresser was finished.

Imperial Hairdresser: Well, what do you think?

Emperor: Maybe just a little more off the back.

Narrator: The imperial hairdresser carefully clipped the scissors near the back of the Emperor's head.

Imperial Hairdresser: Now what do you think?

Emperor: Perfect!

Twiddle: What a great style!

Twee: Everyone in the kingdom will want to get the same haircut.

Imperial Hairdresser: You look fabulous, Emperor, absolutely fabulous!

Twiddle: We should have a parade to show off your new hairstyle.

Twee: Yes, it will be inspiring for the people to see an emperor with hair that's so long and thick and golden and wavy and shiny.

Narrator: And so Twiddle and Twee arranged an elaborate parade. There were jugglers and soldiers and horses. At the tail end of the parade, the Emperor marched proudly. He wasn't wearing his crown. He wanted everyone to gaze at his wonderful new hairstyle.

As he passed through his empire, Twiddle, Twee, and the imperial hairdresser called out to the townspeople.

Twiddle: Everyone, behold the Emperor's new hair.

Twee: Look at how golden it is! Look at how thick it is!

Imperial Hairdresser: The Emperor looks fabulous! Have you ever seen such fabulousness?
Townpeople: The Emperor’s hair is long and thick and golden and wavy.

Little Boy: He doesn’t have any hair.

Townpeople: And shiny! The Emperor’s hair is very shiny.

Little Boy (slightly louder): He doesn’t have any hair!

Townpeople (begin to chant): The Emperor’s hair is fabulous! The Emperor’s hair is fabulous! The Emperor’s hair is fabulous!

Little Boy (loudly): Can’t you people see? The Emperor doesn’t have a hair on his head!

Townpeople (gasping): The Emperor doesn’t have any hair!

Twiddle, Twee, imperial hairdresser: The Emperor doesn’t have any hair!

Emperor: I don’t have any hair!

Narrator: At first, the Emperor was embarrassed. But he was also glad that someone was honest enough to tell him. He called for the little boy to come out of the crowd.

Emperor: Little boy, you were the only one who was brave enough to tell me the truth.

Little Boy: Well, you are still very handsome, Emperor. You look cool without any hair.

Emperor: Thank you. That’s very kind.

Narrator: The Emperor asked the little boy to walk beside him in the parade. The little boy became a trusted advisor and true friend to the Emperor. The Emperor stopped using magic hair-growth potions. He gave away his wigs to a family of traveling circus clowns.

From that point forward, the Emperor worked to run his empire kindly and wisely. No one cared that he didn’t have any hair. In fact, most people thought he looked quite handsome. Twiddle and Twee even shaved their heads to look just like the Emperor.

*the end*
The Three Little Elephants
(based on "The Three Little Pigs")

Characters

Narrator
Big Bad Mouse
First Little Elephant
Second Little Elephant
Third Little Elephant
James the Butler

Narrator: Once upon a time, there were three little elephants who lived with their parents. When the elephants grew old enough, they went out into the world to live on their own. The first little elephant built a small wooden shack. One day, there was a knock at the door.

Big Bad Mouse: Knock, knock, knock.

First Elephant: Who's there?

Big Bad Mouse (in a tiny voice): It's the Big Bad Mouse. Open up at once!

First Elephant (can't hear the mouse): Hello? Is anybody out there?
Big Bad Mouse (in a tiny voice): Let me in, let me in, let me in.

First Elephant (muttering to self): That’s strange. Someone knocked on my door. But whoever it was, they seem to have gone away.

Narrator: The Big Bad Mouse was frustrated. So he wrote a note and slipped it under the elephant’s door. It read:

  Squeak, squeak, squeak. I’m the Big Bad Mouse.
  I’ll rip up your garden. I’ll tear down your house.
  I’ll tug on your tail. I’ll pull on your ears.
  I’m mighty and mean. I’m the worst of your fears.

Later that day the elephant found the note.

First Elephant (reading the note): A Big Bad Mouse! Oh, no. I’ve never seen a mouse. But it sounds very scary. I imagine that it must be giant, much larger than an elephant. I’ll bet it has big yellow eyes and long sharp teeth.

  Oh, no! Help! There’s a Big Bad Mouse on the loose! I must run away before it comes back to my house! I must run for my life!

Narrator: The elephant ran through the wooden shack, tripping over tables and bumping into chairs. The terrified elephant left through the back door and ran all the way to the second elephant’s house.

  The second elephant lived in a brick house. It was larger than the first elephant’s wooden shack. It also had a doorbell, which the first elephant rang. Ring, ring!

Second Elephant: Hello? Who’s there?

First Elephant: It’s me. I am so scared. There’s a mouse on the loose. Can I stay at your house? Please, please!

Second Elephant: A mouse! I’ve never seen a mouse. But it sounds very scary. I imagine that a mouse must be gigantic with a long tail and sharp claws. Come inside quickly and lock the door behind you.
Narrator: A few minutes passed. The two elephants sat in frightened silence. Suddenly, the doorbell rang.

The two elephants looked at each other and their terror grew. Who could it be?

First Elephant: I'm not answering it.

Second Elephant: Don't look at me. I'm not answering it either.

Narrator: The Big Bad Mouse kept ringing the bell, but no one answered. Finally, he grew frustrated and slipped a note under the door. It read:

Squeak, squeak, squeak. I'm the Big Bad Mouse.
I'll rip up your garden. I'll tear down your house.
I'll tug on your tail. I'll pull on your ears.
I'm mighty and mean. I'm the worst of your fears.

Second Elephant (reading note): Oh, no! This is terrifying! Now the Big Bad Mouse has come to my house.

First Elephant: Oh, no! What will we do? Where will we go?

Second Elephant: There's a gigantic, frightening, fierce mouse on the loose. Run! We must run for our lives!

Narrator: The two terrified elephants stumbled out of the house, tangling up their legs, and tripping over one another. They left through the back door of the house. They didn't stop running until they arrived at the third elephant's house.

The third elephant lived in an enormous mansion. It had a long driveway and a swimming pool.

The two elephants rang the doorbell and James the Butler answered. As soon as he opened the door, they ran past him, shouting and waving their arms wildly.

First Elephant (out of breath): Oh, my! Oh, no! It's horrible! It's terrifying!

Second Elephant (out of breath): Help us! Do something! Call for help! Call the police! Call the army!
Third Elephant: Get ahold of yourselves, both of you. Now slow down and tell me what
you’re so frightened of.

First Elephant and Second Elephant: A mouse!

Third Elephant: A mouse?! Why didn’t you say so? I’ve never seen a mouse. But I imagine
a mouse would be humongous, larger than this mansion. I think it might have scales and it
might breathe fire.

Narrator: The three elephants huddled in fear. They remained very still, listening with
extreme care.

After a few minutes, the doorbell rang.

Third Elephant: Don’t answer it, James.

James: Why not, Master Elephant?

Third Elephant: It’s a mouse, James! A humongous, terrifying, scaly, fire-breathing mouse!

James: Don’t be ridiculous. Mice are tiny furry creatures that scurry about and eat seeds
and berries.

Narrator: James went and opened the door. The three elephants were so frightened now
that their eyes were popping out and their ears stood straight out from their heads.

James: Well, what have we here? A little tiny mouse.

Big Bad Mouse (in a tiny voice): Would you please deliver a message to the elephants? Please
tell them:

Squeak, squeak, squeak. I’m the Big Bad Mouse.
I’ll rip up your garden, I’ll tear down your house.
I’ll tug on your tails. I’ll pull on your ears.
I’m mighty and mean. I’m the worst of your fears.

James: Elephants. Come here. You must face your foe. I must say, he is not especially scary.
Narrator: The three elephants walked very nervously toward the door. The first and second elephants were looking over the shoulder of the third elephant.

The three frightened elephants stared at the doorway, but no one appeared to be there besides James the Butler. They looked to the left. They looked to the right. They looked up. Then they looked down.

There, on the doorstep, stood a little tiny mouse.

First Elephant: But you’re so small!

Second Elephant: We’ve never seen a mouse before.

Third Elephant: You’re really not very frightening at all.

Mouse (in a tiny voice): You’re so huge. I did not know that this is the way you looked. You’re very, very frightening. Kekek, elephants!

Narrator: And with that, the mouse scampered into the woods. At last, the elephants had seen that a mouse was very small. They were never frightened of mice again. At last the mouse had learned that elephants are very large. The mouse never again threatened to rip up an elephant’s garden or tear down an elephant’s house. Everyone lived happily ever after.

*the end*
Sam and Cam's Snack

Characters

Sam  Alex
Cam

Sam:  I am hungry, Cam.
Cam:  Me, too, Sam.
      What shall we have?
Sam:  We have a bag of snacks.
      It should be on the rack.
      I will grab it.
Cam:  I will give you a hand.
Sam:  Oh, no! The bag is gone!
Cam:  That makes me mad!
Sam:  Me, too! Where can it be?
Cam:  Is it in back of the jam?
Sam:  No! Is it in that basket of yams?
Cam:  No! Is it behind the crackers?
Sam:  No! Could it be in the trash?
Cam: I am so hungry, I can’t stand it. I need to eat fast!

Sam: Let’s get the facts. Who had a snack last?

Cam: I did. But I put the bag back.

Sam: It just doesn’t add up. We will catch the rat who took it!

Cam: Yes! Let’s plan a trap!

Alex: Hi, Sam and Cam. Did you know that your cat is out? She’s over there in the grass. And she’s dragging a bag!

Sam: It’s the snack sack! Catch that cat!

Cam: Don’t let her get past you! Thanks, Alex! You’re a pal!

Alex: It was a snap! I’m glad to help.

Sam: At last, we can eat! Here, have a snack.

Alex: Even the cat?

Cam: Sure! Cats need snacks, too!

The End
The Best Pet

Characters

Benji  Jed  Mom
Etta  Penny  Dad

Benji: My parents are getting me a pet!
Etta: What kind of pet will you get?
Benji: I don’t know yet. What’s the best pet to get?
Jed: Get a hen. You could help her build a nest.
Penny: She will give you fresh eggs.
Etta: You can eat them for breakfast!
Benji: No, feathers make a mess. And hens peck too much.
Penny: Then how about an elephant?
Etta: You could build a tent for him.
Jed: And sell rides for ten cents!
Benji: No, an elephant is too heavy. How would I get him to the vet?
Etta: Well, how about a penguin?

Jed: You could sled together in the snow!

Benji: No, my parents would never let me. Let’s just forget it.

Jed, Etta, and Penny: We are trying to help, Benji. What pet do you want?

Benji: I want a pet that will be my friend.

Mom: Hi, Benji! We got you a pet.

Penny: It’s a yellow kitten!

Dad: It’s a kitten that needs a friend.

Jed, Etta, and Penny: Benji can be her friend!

Benji: Yes! We will be the best friends ever!

The End
Harriet

By Florence Parry Heide

Adapted for reader's theater by Aaron Shepard, from Florence Parry Heide's story in her book *Tales for the Perfect Child*, Lothrop, Lee & Shepard, New York, 1985

For more reader's theater, visit Aaron Shepard's RT Page at www.aaronshep.com/rt

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PREVIEW: Harriet was a very good whiner.

GENRE: Humor

CULTURE: American

THEME: Whining

READERS: 6

READER AGES: 7–11

LENGTH: 5 minutes

ROLES: Narrators 1–4, Harriet, Mother

NOTES: For best effect, place NARRATORS 1 and 2 at far left, and 3 and 4 at far right, as seen from the audience.

NARRATOR 1: Harriet was a very good whiner. She practiced and practiced, and so of course she got better and better at it.

NARRATOR 4: Practice makes perfect.

NARRATOR 2: Some children hardly ever whine. Can you believe that?

NARRATOR 3: So of course, they never get to be very good at it.

HARRIET: Can I have a piece of that blueberry pie?

NARRATOR 1: ... Harriet asked her mother while her mother was fixing dinner.
NARRATOR 4: Guests were coming, and her mother wanted everything to be very nice.

MOTHER: No, Harriet. The pie is for after dinner. We’re having roast beef.

NARRATOR 2: Children like Harriet are not interested in roast beef when they are interested in pie.

NARRATOR 3: Harriet used her best whiny voice.

HARRIET: I want a piece of pie.

MOTHER: I said no, and I mean no.

NARRATOR 1: Harriet’s mother always liked to say what she meant.

NARRATOR 4: She started to make some nice tomato aspic.

HARRIET: Can I have some pie, can I have some pie?

MOTHER: Harriet, I told you, when I say no, I mean no!

HARRIET: But I want some pie.

MOTHER: Harriet—

HARRIET: Can I have some pie?

NARRATOR 2: Harriet’s mother tried to concentrate on the aspic—

HARRIET: Please can I have some pie?

NARRATOR 2: but that was very hard to do, because Harriet was whining.

NARRATOR 3: Good whiners make it very hard for anyone to think of anything else.

MOTHER: Why don’t you color in your nice new coloring book?

HARRIET: I want some pie now.

MOTHER: Dinner will be ready pretty soon.

HARRIET: But I want some pie NOW.

NARRATOR 1: A good whiner sticks to one subject.

HARRIET: I want some pie.

NARRATOR 4: A good whiner never gives up.

HARRIET: PLEASE can I have some pie?

NARRATOR 2: Harriet kept whining—

HARRIET: I want some pie, I want some pie. I want some pie.

NARRATOR 2: and her mother kept trying to get dinner ready.

HARRIET: I . . . want . . . some . . . PIE.

NARRATOR 3: Her mother burned the gravy.

MOTHER: (shouting) All right, all right! Have some PIE!

NARRATOR 1: She was very tired of hearing Harriet whine.
NARRATOR 4: Harriet stopped whining while she had her piece of pie.

NARRATOR 2: She always rested up between whines.

NARRATOR 3: That’s what good whiners always do.
The Baker's Dozen
A Saint Nicholas Tale

Told by Aaron Shepard

Adapted for reader's theater by the author, from his picture book published by
Atheneum, New York, 1995

For more reader's theater, visit Aaron Shepard's RT Page at
www.aaronshep.com/rt

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not be posted online without permission.

PREVIEW: Van Amsterdam, the baker, is as honest as he can be—but he may have something left
to learn.

GENRE: Legends, St. Nicholas tales
CULTURE: American (Dutch colonial)
THEME: Generosity
READERS: 6 or more
READER AGES: 8–13
LENGTH: 6 minutes

ROLES: Narrators 1–4, Baker, Woman, (Customers), (Children), (Saint Nicholas)

NOTES: For best effect, place NARRATORS 1 and 2 at far left, and 3 and 4 at far right, as seen
from the audience. For special features, visit www.aaronshep.com/extras.

NARRATOR 1: In the Dutch colonial town later known as Albany, New
York, there lived a baker, Van Amsterdam, who was as honest as he
could be.

NARRATOR 4: Each morning, he checked and balanced his scales, and
he took great care to give his customers exactly what they paid for—not
more, and not less.

NARRATOR 2: Van Amsterdam's shop was always busy, because
people trusted him, and because he was a good baker as well. And
never was the shop busier than in the days before December 6, when
the Dutch celebrate Saint Nicholas Day.
NARRATOR 3: At that time of year, people flocked to the baker's shop to buy his fine Saint Nicholas cookies.

NARRATOR 1: Made of gingerbread, iced in red and white, they looked just like Saint Nicholas as the Dutch know him—

NARRATOR 4: tall and thin, with a high, red bishop's cap, and a long, red bishop's cloak.

NARRATOR 2: One Saint Nicholas Day morning, the baker was just ready for business, when the door of his shop flew open.

NARRATOR 3: In walked an old woman, wrapped in a long black shawl.

WOMAN: I have come for a dozen of your Saint Nicholas cookies.

NARRATOR 1: Taking a tray, Van Amsterdam counted out twelve cookies. He started to wrap them, but the woman reached out and stopped him.

WOMAN: I asked for a dozen. You have given me only twelve.

BAKER: Madam, everyone knows that a dozen is twelve.

WOMAN: But I say a dozen is thirteen. Give me one more.

NARRATOR 4: Van Amsterdam was not a man to bear foolishness.

BAKER: Madam, my customers get exactly what they pay for—not more, and not less.

WOMAN: Then you may keep the cookies.

NARRATOR 2: She turned to go, but stopped at the door.
WOMAN: Van Amsterdam! However honest you may be, your heart is small and your fist is tight. Fall again, mount again, learn how to count again!

NARRATOR 3: Then she was gone.

NARRATOR 1: From that day, everything went wrong in Van Amsterdam’s bakery.

NARRATOR 4: His bread rose too high or not at all.

NARRATOR 2: His pies were sour or too sweet.

NARRATOR 3: His cakes crumbled or were chewy.

NARRATOR 1: His cookies were burnt or doughy.

NARRATOR 4: His customers soon noticed the difference. Before long, most of them were going to other bakers.

BAKER: (to himself) That old woman has bewitched me. Is this how my honesty is rewarded?

NARRATOR 2: A year passed.

NARRATOR 3: The baker grew poorer and poorer.

NARRATOR 1: Since he sold little, he baked little, and his shelves were nearly bare. His last few customers slipped away.

NARRATOR 4: Finally, on the day before Saint Nicholas Day, not one customer came to Van Amsterdam’s shop.

NARRATOR 2: At day’s end, the baker sat alone, staring at his unsold Saint Nicholas cookies.

BAKER: I wish Saint Nicholas could help me now.
NARRATOR 3: Then he closed his shop and went sadly to bed.

NARRATOR 1: That night, the baker had a dream. He was a boy again, one in a crowd of happy children. And there in the midst of them was Saint Nicholas himself.

NARRATOR 4: The bishop’s white horse stood beside him, its baskets filled with gifts. Nicholas pulled out one gift after another, and handed them to the children.

NARRATOR 2: But Van Amsterdam noticed something strange. No matter how many presents Nicholas passed out, there were always more to give.

NARRATOR 3: In fact, the more he took from the baskets, the more they seemed to hold.

NARRATOR 1: Then Nicholas handed a gift to Van Amsterdam. It was one of the baker’s own Saint Nicholas cookies!

NARRATOR 4: Van Amsterdam looked up to thank him, but it was no longer Saint Nicholas standing there.

NARRATOR 2: Smiling down at him was the old woman with the long black shawl.

NARRATOR 3: Van Amsterdam awoke with a start. Moonlight shone through the half-closed shutters as he lay there, thinking.

BAKER: I always give my customers exactly what they pay for—not more, and not less. But why not give more?

NARRATOR 1: The next morning, Saint Nicholas Day, the baker rose early.

NARRATOR 4: He mixed his gingerbread dough and rolled it out.
NARRATOR 2: He cut the shapes and baked them.

NARRATOR 3: He iced them in red and white to look just like Saint Nicholas.

NARRATOR 1: And the cookies were as fine as any he had made.

NARRATOR 4: Van Amsterdam had just finished, when the door flew open. In walked the old woman with the long black shawl.

WOMAN: I have come for a dozen of your Saint Nicholas cookies.

NARRATOR 2: In great excitement, Van Amsterdam counted out twelve cookies—

NARRATOR 3: and one more.

BAKER: In this shop, from now on, a dozen is thirteen.

WOMAN: You have learned to count well. You will surely be rewarded.

NARRATOR 1: She paid for the cookies and started out. But as the door swung shut, the baker’s eyes seemed to play a trick on him.

NARRATOR 4: He thought he glimpsed the tail end of a long red cloak.

* * *

NARRATOR 2: As the old woman foretold, Van Amsterdam was rewarded. When people heard he counted thirteen as a dozen, he had more customers than ever.

NARRATOR 3: In fact, Van Amsterdam grew so wealthy that the other bakers in town began doing the same.

NARRATOR 1: From there, the practice spread to other towns, and at last through all the American colonies.
NARRATOR 4: And this, they say, is how thirteen became the “baker’s dozen”—

NARRATOR 2: a custom common for over a century,

NARRATOR 3: and alive in some places to this day.
Setting:
On the Bridge and
In the Meadow

Three Billy Goats Gruff

Characters:
Narrator 1
Narrator 2
Little Billy Goat
Medium Billy Goat
Large Billy Goat
Troll

Written by: Who knows?
Illustrated by: Melonheadz
Reader's Theater by
Kim Adsit
Narrator 1: The three billy goats gruff were hungry.

Large Billy Goat: “We can go across the bridge to get food.”

Narrator 2: So the three billy goats gruff went to the bridge.

Narrator 1: The littlest billy goat went first!

Narrator 2: Trip! Trap! Trip! Trap! The littlest billy goat went over.

Troll: “Who is on my bridge? I will eat you!”

Little Billy Goat: “I am too small! My brother is bigger than me.”

Troll: “I will wait. You can go.”
Narrator 1: The medium sized billy goat went next!

Narrator 2: Trip! Trap! Trip! Trap!
The medium sized billy goat went over.

Troll: “Who is on my bridge? I will eat you!”

Medium Billy Goat: “I am too small! My brother is bigger than me.”

Troll: “I will wait. You can go.”

Narrator 1: The large billy goat went last!

Narrator 2: Trip! Trap! Trip! Trap!
The large billy goat went over.
Troll: “Who is on my bridge? I will eat you!”

Large Billy Goat: “I am big. I have big horns.”

Troll: “I am scared of you.”

Narrator 1: So all the big goats went to the meadow and ate flowers.

Narrator 2: And the troll went back under the bridge.
A Riddle-Maker Saves the Day
Based on a Folktale from Vietnam

................................. Characters .................................

Narrator  Peasant Boy
Wealthy Man  Housefly
Peasant Man  Magistrate
Peasant Woman

Narrator: Years ago there was a wealthy man who lived in an enormous house near a village of poor peasant farmers. The peasants often did not have enough money to buy seeds to plant their crops. Their families sometimes went hungry. The wealthy man loaned money to them, but charged a large fee to do so. One day, he went to collect money from one of the peasants.

Wealthy Man: If this peasant cannot give me my money today, I will select some of his most precious items as payment.

Narrator: The wealthy man sees a small boy of about eight playing in front of a tiny hut.

Wealthy Man: Boy, I want to see your parents. I have come to collect their debt.

Peasant Boy: I am sorry, sir, but they are not here.

Wealthy Man: (in an angry voice) Not here when I want my money? Tell me where they are and what they are doing!
**Peasant Boy:** My father is in the forest cutting live trees. After that he will plant dead ones. My mother is selling the wind to shoppers at the market. With the money she receives, she will purchase the moon for the family.

**Wealthy Man:** How dare you answer me in a riddle! Tell me what the meaning is immediately!

**Peasant Boy:** I will repeat my statement for you, sir. My father is in the forest cutting live, woody plants. After that he will plant dead ones. My mother is selling the wind to shoppers at the market. Then she will purchase the moon for the family.

**Wealthy Man:** *(scratching his head)* Hmm, you are clever. I can’t figure out the answer to this riddle alone. I’ll make a bargain with you. If you tell me the answer, then your parents will not have to repay their debt.

**Peasant Boy:** *(smiling)* What a great bargain for my family. Yes, I will tell you, sir. But first I need a witness.

**Wealthy Man:** *(pointing up, then down)* Let us use the sky and the ground as our witnesses.

**Peasant Boy:** No, sir. Only a living thing can be a witness.

**Wealthy Man:** *(looking around the yard)* There—see that housefly on the rock? He is alive, so he can be a witness.

**Housefly:** Buzz, buzz, buzz. I’ll be a witnezzz. Witnezzz.
**Peasant Boy:** That is fine with me. My father is chopping live trees. He will use them as lumber to make a fence. My mother made beautiful paper fans which she is now selling. With the money she earns, she will buy oil for our lamps.

**Wealthy Man:** Well, I see you are an intelligent and quick-witted young fellow. Your parents’ debt is paid. I will depart now.

**Housefly:** Paid, all paid. I was a witnezzz. Buzz, buzz, buzz.

**Narrator:** The wealthy man returned to his home. Three days later he came back to talk to the peasants again.

**Wealthy Man:** I have come to collect my debt. You have owed me money for many months.

**Peasant Man:** But sir, I cannot pay.

**Peasant Woman:** The crops are poor, and we have no money.

**Peasant Boy:** Father, Mother, this man made a bargain with me. He said you would not have to pay your debt if I told him the answer to my riddle.

**Peasant Woman:** How wonderful! What a smart son!

**Wealthy Man:** That’s ridiculous! I never said such a thing.

**Peasant Man:** My son does not lie. We will go to the Magistrate.

**Peasant Woman:** Yes, the Magistrate will know what to do.

**Narrator:** The next day they all met at the Magistrate’s office.
**Magistrate:** Boy, tell me what happened.

**Narrator:** The boy told the Magistrate all about the bargain.

**Magistrate:** Such a fantastic tale. What do you say, sir?

**Wealthy Man:** It is a pack of lies. I never talked to this fellow.

**Magistrate:** (*to the peasant boy*) Did you have a witness?

**Peasant Boy:** Yes, your honor. There was a housefly on the man’s head. We agreed that it would be our witness.

**Housefly:** Buzz, buzz, buzz. I was a witnezzz. Witnezzz.

**Wealthy Man:** (*yelling*) He is lying, your honor! The housefly was on the rock, not on my head! (*The wealthy man covers his mouth with his hand. The boy smiles.*)

**Housefly:** Witnezzz. On the rock. Witnezzz. Buzz.

**Magistrate:** Ha, ha! You let a little peasant boy trick you. You did talk to the boy. Now you must keep your promise.

**Wealthy Man:** (*to the peasants*) Very well, your debt is paid.

**Peasant Family:** Hooray, hooray! No debt!

**Peasant Boy:** (*smiling*) Please visit us again, sir. I’ll tell you more riddles.

**Housefly:** Riddlezz. I like riddlezz. Buzz.

**Wealthy Man:** Grr. This is not a good day for me! (*He walks away.*)
Davy Crockett: Fact or Legend?

Characters

D. V. Crockett
Wanda Know
Player #1
Player #2
Factito Chorus
Legendaire Chorus
Announcer

Announcer: Welcome to Famous Person: Fact or Legend? Our famous person for today's show is Davy Crockett. Born in Tennessee in 1786, Davy Crockett is the subject of many tall tales and legends. Many of his real-life adventures were just as amazing as the legends told about him. Today our two contestants will try to figure out which events from his life are facts, and which are legends. And now here's our hostess, Ms. Wanda Know.

Wanda Know: Hello, everyone. It's great to be here! And now let's meet our experts. They will make the final judgment about our contestants' answers. First, meet the Factitos.

Factito Chorus: (chanting) It's a fact; it's a fact. We know it to be true—it's something we can prove.

Wanda Know: The Factitos look for facts in encyclopedias and other books, and also on Internet sources. And now please welcome our other panel of experts—the Legendaire Chorus.

Legendaire Chorus: (chanting) It's a legend; it's a story. It may be partly true, but we don't know for sure.
**Wanda Know:** The Legendaires like stories. They don’t worry about the truth. They don’t check sources either.

**Announcer:** We also have a special guest with us today. Mr. D. V. Crockett, a descendant of Davy Crockett, is here with us. He will tell us the true story behind the legends. Now let’s get started!

**Wanda Know:** Contestants, are you ready? Here is the first piece of information. Davy Crockett had a pet parrot. He tried to teach the bird to say his name but the bird could only say “Davy.” That’s how he got his nickname.

**Player #1:** That sounds true to me. I don’t think parrots are too smart, even if they can speak.

**Player #2:** I never heard about him having a parrot. I think it’s a legend.

**Legendaire Chorus:** *(chanting)* It’s a legend; it’s a story.  
   It may be partly true,  
   but we don’t know for sure.

**Announcer:** There you have it! Our experts have ruled that Player #2 is correct—that information is a legend! Let’s give Player #2 the first point. And now, perhaps Mr. D. V. Crockett can tell us the true story behind the legend.

**D. V. Crockett:** You bet! Actually, my ancestor used the name “David.” A writer gave him the nickname “Davy.” After that, other writers used the name “Davy” when they told stories about him.
Wanda Know: All right then—on to our next piece of information. When he was 12, David walked seven miles in two hours in deep snow. He was escaping from a man who wanted to keep him on his ranch.

Player #1: That must be a legend. I know I could never do anything like that!

Player #2: Kids back then did all kinds of things that we don’t do now. And Davy Crockett was an extraordinary guy. I bet it’s true.

Factito Chorus: (chanting) It’s a fact; it’s a fact. We know it to be true—it’s something we can prove.

D. V. Crockett: You’re right again, Player #2. We know that it’s a fact because David wrote about it in his autobiography. David had worked helping a man drive a herd of cattle across Virginia. The man liked his work so much that he wanted to force Davy to stay on and keep working for him. But, as the story says, Davy would not let even deep snow or a seven-mile walk stop him from seeking his freedom!

Announcer: Well, Player #2 is in the lead with two points. Come on, Player #1. Let’s see if you can take this one!

Wanda Know: In 1814 David was the best alligator wrestler in the swamps of Florida. He could wrestle a dozen alligators at a time.

Player #1: No way! That must be a legend!
Player #2: Hmm, he fought bears and was a good hunter. I think it could be true.

Legendaire Chorus: *(chanting)* It's a legend; it's a story.
It may be partly true,
but we don't know for sure.

Announcer: Mr. Crockett, what was the real story?

D. V. Crockett: David was in Florida, but he was in the army. He was fighting the British and the Indians who were helping them. He tracked them through the swamps.

Announcer: And Player #1 is now on the board with one correct answer! Let's have our next question.

Wanda Know: David Crockett was a member of the Kentucky legislature. A few years later he became a congressman.

Player #1: No, I don't think this could possibly be true. Davy Crockett could hardly read or write. There's no way he could have been a lawmaker.

Player #2: I'm going to have to disagree. I think I read about this somewhere. I'm going to go ahead and say this one is true.

Factito Chorus: *(chanting)* It's a fact; it's a fact.
We know it to be true—
it's something we can prove.

Announcer: So that's another correct response for Player #2?
D. V. Crockett: That's right. Player #1 is correct in saying that David did not read or write well. But Player #2 is also correct—David served the people of Kentucky as a lawmaker. He really knew how to listen to people. That's what made people think he would truly represent their interests. In fact, David served in the state legislature and later as a congressman.

Announcer: Now here's our last question.

Wanda Know: We know that David fought at the Battle of the Alamo in Texas in 1836. However, some say that he escaped in a hot-air balloon. Then he lived on an island for the rest of his life.

Players #1 and #2: We're not sure, but we hope it's true.

Legendaire Chorus: (chanting) It's a legend; it's a story.
   It may be partly true,
   but we don't know for sure.

D. V. Crockett: David fought bravely, but he was killed in the Battle of the Alamo. However, his heroic deeds live on.

Announcer: Thank you both for playing. You will each get a book about David Crockett and an imitation coonskin cap. And Player #2 will join us again tomorrow as we look at the life of another legendary figure.

Wanda Know: For now, let's sign off with some words from David Crockett himself: "I'll leave this truth for others when I am dead—just be sure you are right and then go ahead."
The ugly Woodpecker—
(based on “The Ugly Duckling”)

Characters

Narrator
Pa Woodpecker
Ma Woodpecker
Wilson Woodpecker (brother)
Wilma Woodpecker (sister)

Danny Duck
Dottie Duck
The Ugly Woodpecker
Tonya Turtie
Terry Turtie

Narrator: A mother woodpecker was sitting on the three eggs in her nest. The first two eggs hatched. It was a boy and girl woodpecker. She named them Wilson and Wilma.

But the third egg would not hatch. It was larger than the other two eggs. And it was speckled, while the other two eggs were plain.

Pa Woodpecker: I think you’re sitting on a robin’s egg. Ma Woodpecker: Or maybe it’s the egg of some other bird like a goose or a peacock.

Ma Woodpecker: Stop kidding around, Pa Woodpecker. You know good and well that this is a woodpecker egg, even if it’s large and speckled.

Pa Woodpecker: Suit yourself.

*
Narrator: So Ma Woodpecker continued to sit on the egg. And after three long days, it began to crack. Out popped a strange creature that looked nothing like a woodpecker.

Ma Woodpecker: What a strange-looking bird.

Pa Woodpecker: My word. It has a beak like a bird. It has webbed feet, like some birds I know. But where are its wings? Where are its feathers? And what is this strange shell it has?

Wilson Woodpecker: Little brother, can you drill a hole in a tree with your beak like this: rat-a-tat-tat-tat-tat?

Narrator: The hatchling tried, but it simply hurt his beak.

Wilma Woodpecker: Little brother, can you fly like me: flap-flap-flap-flap-flap?

Narrator: The hatchling waved his arms, but he could not fly.

Wilson Woodpecker: What kind of woodpecker are you? You can't fly and you can't drill a hole with your beak.

Wilma Woodpecker: Yeah, what kind of woodpecker are you? You're the ugliest woodpecker I've ever seen.

Ma Woodpecker: Children, children, for shame!

Pa Woodpecker: Pipe down, children. I don't think this is really your little brother. I think this is a duck. We need to find a new home for him among his own kind.

Narrator: Pa Woodpecker picked up the hatchling and carried him down to the marsh. He left him with a couple of ducks named Danny and Dottie.

Danny: Who are you?

Dottie: Yes, please identify yourself.
The ugly Woodpecker: When I was born, I thought I was a woodpecker. But now I'm told that I'm a duck.

Danny Duck: A duck, you say. Can you make sounds like this: quack, quack, quack?

The ugly Woodpecker (tries to quack): Cough, cough, sorry.

Dottie Duck: Do you waddle when you walk?

The ugly Woodpecker: I'm not sure. Here, I'll walk a few steps and you tell me.

Danny Duck: You have a strange way of walking. You certainly don't waddle in a cool way like a duck.

Dottie Duck: That's for sure. You don't quack and you can't waddle. I don't know what you are. You're a disgrace to ducks. I think you must actually be a very ugly woodpecker.

Danny Duck: Yeah. Those woodpeckers just wanted to get rid of you. But you're certainly not cool enough to be a duck.

Narrator: The little creature's feelings were very hurt. If this is how ducks behaved, he didn't even want to be a duck. He moved away from them just as fast as his webbed feet would carry him.

Soon, he came upon two turtles named Tonya and Terry.

Tonya Turtle: Who are you?

The ugly Woodpecker: I don't know. I thought I was a woodpecker, but I couldn't drill holes with my beak. Then I thought maybe I was a duck. But I couldn't waddle and quack.

Tonya Turtle: No, silly, I know what you are. I was just asking who you are.

Terry Turtle: What's your name?

The ugly Woodpecker (excited): Wait a minute. You know what I am?
Tonya, Turtle: Well, you’re awfully turtle-y looking. You certainly aren’t a snake or an owl or a moose.

Terry Turtle: You’re a turtle, no doubt about it.

The Ugly Woodpecker: A turtle. But how can you be sure?

Tonya, Turtle: Well, you look exactly like us. But just to be sure, there is a simple turtle test. Can you pull your head inside your shell?

Narrator: The creature gave it a try. Sure enough, he was able to pull his head inside his shell.

Tonya, Turtle: You’re a turtle.

Terry Turtle: No question. You’re a turtle.

The Ugly Woodpecker: I’m a turtle! I’m a turtle!

Narrator: So it was that the Ugly Woodpecker learned that he was actually a turtle. He immediately changed his name to Thaddeus T. Turtle. He was adopted by Tonya and Terry and their brothers and sisters. Thaddeus T. Turtle was always nice to other animals no matter how unusual they looked and acted. And he lived happily ever after.

*the end*
-Little Late Riding Hood-
(based on “Little Red Riding Hood”)

Characters

Mom
Narrator
Little Late Riding Hood
Tricky Monkey
Kid with Skateboard
Grandma

Narrator: There once was a young girl. She was very little and always a little late. Everywhere she went, she wore a riding coat with a hood. She was known as Little Late Riding Hood.

Mom: I've baked some banana nut bread. I want you to walk over to Grandma's house and give it to her. Now it's a bit chilly outside, so make sure and wear your riding hood. And try to be punctual.

Little Late Riding Hood: I will. I promise.

Narrator: Little Late Riding Hood walked toward Grandma's house carrying a basket of banana nut bread. Suddenly, she saw a very large monkey.
Tricky Monkey: Well, hello there little girl.

Little Late Riding Hood (a bit frightened): Hello, Mr. Monkey.

Tricky Monkey: You can drop the "Mister." Just call me Monkey. Say, where are you going with that delicious banana bread?

Little Late Riding Hood: I’m going to my grandma’s house. My mom says I have to hurry.

Tricky Monkey: But it’s such a beautiful day. Why don’t we play hide-and-seek? I’ll go first. You cover your eyes and count to one hundred. Then you can try to find me.

Little Late Riding Hood: I should hurry to Grandma’s. But you’re right, it is a beautiful day. Oh, why not!

Narrator: Little Late Riding Hood covered her eyes and began to count.

Little Late Riding Hood: One... two... three...

Narrator: The Tricky Monkey ran over to a boy who was riding on a skateboard.

Tricky Monkey: Hey, kid, I’ll trade you my bright red mountain bike for that skateboard.

Kid: Okay.

Narrator: The Tricky Monkey jumped onto the skateboard and started skating away as fast as he could.

Kid: Hey, no fair. Where’s the bike you promised? Hey! Stop, thief! Stop, Monkey!

Narrator: But the Tricky Monkey was already speeding away. Meanwhile, Little Late Riding Hood was still counting.

Little Late Riding Hood: Twenty-six... twenty-seven... twenty-eight...
Narrator: The Tricky Monkey arrived at Grandma’s house. He knocked on the door and she answered.

Tricky Monkey: This is an emergency, ma’am. There has been a tornado and a hurricane spotted and an earthquake is on its way.

Grandma: Well, I don’t know. It looks so sunny outside. And you’re a very strange-looking young man.

Tricky Monkey: There’s no time to waste, ma’am. You need to go down to the basement right away. That’s the only safe place during a tornado hurricane earthquake.

Grandma: Well, all right. But I just don’t know. I just don’t know.

Narrator: Grandma went to the basement. The Tricky Monkey lumbered upstairs to her bedroom. He put on her pajamas and nightcap. He jumped into her bed. Meanwhile, Little Late Riding Hood was still counting.

Little Late Riding Hood: Ninety-eight... ninety-nine... one-hundred... Ready or not, Monkey, here I come.

Narrator: Suddenly, Little Late Riding Hood realized she was late to Grandma’s. She didn’t have time to play hide and go-seek with the monkey.

Little Late Riding Hood: Oh, no! Mom said not to be late to Grandma’s, I lost track of time playing that silly game.

Narrator: Little Late Riding Hood ran all the way to Grandma’s house. When she arrived, the door was wide open. She ran upstairs.

Little Late Riding Hood: Hi, Grandma. How are you feeling today?

Tricky Monkey (pretending to be Grandma): I feel very well, dear, thank you. Why don’t you come sit down beside the bed.
Narrator: When Little Late Riding Hood sat down, she noticed how strange her grandma looked.

Little Late Riding Hood: Why, Grandma. What long hairy arms you have.

Tricky Monkey: That's from sweeping up, dear. If you sweep up your whole life your arms simply become very long and very hairy.

Little Late Riding Hood: Why, Grandma. What big ears you have.

Tricky Monkey: That's from listening to music, dear. If you listen to music your whole life your ears get very big and very weird looking.

Little Late Riding Hood: Why, Grandma. What a big funny mouth you have.

Tricky Monkey (laughing): That's for eating banana nut bread!

Narrator: With that, the Tricky Monkey reached for the banana nut bread. But just then, Grandma stepped into the room and snatched the bread away.

Grandma: Too late. No banana bread for you!

Tricky Monkey: But, but—

Grandma: Shame on you, Monkey, trying to trick an old granny. Now leave here at once or I'll call the zookeeper.

Narrator: The Tricky Monkey, still dressed in Grandma's pajamas and nightcap, ran out of the house and was never seen again.

Grandma: Little Late Riding Hood, you're right on time. Let's enjoy this banana nut bread, and I'll make us a nice cup of tea.

*the end*
Millions of Cats

By Wanda Gag

Adapted for reader's theater by Aaron Shepard, from Wanda Gag's picture book published by Coward-McCann, New York, 1928, and reprinted by Putnam & Grosset, New York, 1988

For more reader’s theater, visit Aaron Shepard’s RT Page at www.aaronshep.com/rt

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PREVIEW: An old man has trouble making a choice when he finds a hill quite covered with cats.

GENRE: Fantasy
CULTURE: ———
THEME: Moderation; pride vs. humility
READERS: 5 or more
READER AGES: 7–11
LENGTH: 6 minutes

ROLES: Narrators 1–4, Old Man, Old Woman, Kitty, Cats

NOTES: The classic Millions of Cats has been described as the first modern picture book. For best effect, place NARRATORS 1 and 2 at far left, and 3 and 4 at far right, as seen from the audience. At least two CATS are needed—but the more, the better! When they speak all at once, it should be randomly, not in unison, and can extend under other spoken parts as needed.

NARRATOR 1: Once upon a time, there was

OLD MAN: A very old man.

OLD WOMAN: And a very old woman.

NARRATOR 4: They lived in a nice clean house that had flowers all around it.

NARRATOR 2: except where the door was. But they couldn't be happy.
NARRATOR 3: because they were so very lonely.

OLD WOMAN: If we only had a cat!

NARRATOR 1: ... sighed the very old woman.

OLD MAN: A cat?

NARRATOR 4: ... asked the very old man.

OLD WOMAN: Yes, a sweet little fluffy cat.

NARRATOR 2: ... said the very old woman.

OLD MAN: I will get you a cat, my dear.

NARRATOR 3: ... said the very old man. And he set out to look for one.

NARRATOR 1: He climbed over the sunny hills.

NARRATOR 4: He trudged through the cool valleys.

NARRATOR 2: He walked a long, long time,

NARRATOR 3: and at last he came to a hill that was quite covered with cats.

CATS & KITTY: Mew, mew, mew . . . .

NARRATOR 1: Cats here,

NARRATOR 4: cats there,

NARRATORS 2 & 3: cats and kittens everywhere.
NARRATOR 1: *Hundreds of cats,*

NARRATOR 4: *Thousands of cats,*

NARRATOR 2: *Millions*

NARRATOR 2 & 3: *And billions*

NARRATORS 1, 2, 3, & 4: *And trillions of cats.*

OLD MAN: Oh! Now I can choose the prettiest cat and take it home with me!

NARRATOR 1: So he chose one. It was white. But just as he was about to leave,

NARRATOR 4: he saw another one, all black and white, and it seemed just as pretty as the first. So he took this one also. But then he saw

NARRATOR 2: a fuzzy gray kitten way over here that was every bit as pretty as the others. So he took it too. And now he saw,

NARRATOR 3: way down in a corner, one that he thought too lovely to leave. So he took this too. And just then,

NARRATOR 1: over here, the very old man found a kitten that was black and very beautiful.

OLD MAN: It would be a shame to leave that one.

NARRATOR 1: So he took it. And now, over there,

NARRATOR 4: he saw a cat that had brown and yellow stripes like a baby tiger.
OLD MAN: I simply must take it!

NARRATOR 4: And he did.

NARRATOR 2: And so it happened

NARRATOR 3: that every time the very old man looked up,

NARRATOR 1: he saw another cat that was so pretty,

NARRATOR 4: he could not bear to leave it.

NARRATOR 2: Before he knew it,

NARRATOR 3: he had chosen them all!

CATS & KITTY: Mew, mew, mew . . .

NARRATOR 1: And so he went back over the sunny hills,

NARRATOR 4: and down through the cool valleys,

NARRATOR 2: to show all the pretty kittens

NARRATOR 3: to the very old woman.

NARRATOR 1: And all the hundreds of cats,

NARRATOR 4: thousands of cats,

NARRATOR 2: millions

NARRATOR 2 & 3: and billions

NARRATORS 1, 2, 3, & 4: and trillions of cats

NARRATOR 1: followed him.
CATS & KITTY: Mew, mew, mew . . .

NARRATOR 1: They came to a pond.

CATS & KITTY: Mew, mew! We are thirsty!

NARRATOR 1: . . . cried the hundreds of cats,

NARRATOR 4: thousands of cats,

NARRATOR 2: millions

NARRATOR 2 & 3: and billions

NARRATORS 1, 2, 3, & 4: and trillions of cats.

OLD MAN: Well, here is a great deal of water.

NARRATOR 4: . . . said the very old man.

NARRATOR 2: Each cat took a sip of water.

CATS & KITTY: (sip)

NARRATOR 3: The pond was gone!

CATS & KITTY: Mew, mew! Now we are hungry!

NARRATOR 1: . . . cried the hundreds of cats,

NARRATOR 4: thousands of cats,

NARRATOR 2: millions

NARRATOR 2 & 3: and billions

NARRATORS 1, 2, 3, & 4: and trillions of cats.
OLD MAN: There is much grass on the hills.

NARRATOR 4: . . . said the very old man.

NARRATOR 2: Each cat ate a mouthful of grass.

CATS & KITTY: (chew)

NARRATOR 3: Not a blade was left!

CATS & KITTY: Mew, mew, mew . . . .

NARRATOR 1: Pretty soon, the very old woman saw them coming.

OLD WOMAN: My dear! What are you doing? I asked for one little cat, and what do I see?

    Cats here,
    Cats there,
    Cats and kittens everywhere!
    Hundreds of cats,
    Thousands of cats,
    Millions and billions and trillions of cats!

    But we can never feed them all. They will eat us out of house and home!

OLD MAN: I never thought of that!

NARRATOR 4: . . . said the very old man.

OLD MAN: What shall we do?

NARRATOR 2: The very old woman thought for a while.

OLD WOMAN: I know! We will let the cats decide which one we should keep.
OLD MAN: Oh, yes!

NARRATOR 3: And the very old man called to the cats,

OLD MAN: Which one of you is the prettiest?

CATS: I am! ... No, I am! ... No, I am the prettiest! ...

NARRATOR 1: ... cried the hundreds of cats,

NARRATOR 4: thousands of cats,

NARRATOR 2: millions

NARRATOR 2 & 3: and billions

NARRATORS 1, 2, 3, & 4: and trillions of cats,

NARRATOR 1: for each cat thought it was the prettiest.

CATS: I am! ... No, I am! ... No, I am the prettiest! ...

NARRATOR 1: And they began to quarrel. They bit

NARRATOR 4: and scratched

NARRATOR 2: and clawed each other

NARRATOR 3: and made such a great noise

NARRATOR 1: that the very old man

NARRATOR 4: and the very old woman

NARRATOR 2: ran into the house

NARRATOR 3: as fast as they could.
CATS: I am! . . . No, I am! . . . No, I am the prettiest! . . .

NARRATOR 1: But after a while the noise stopped. The very old man

NARRATOR 4: and the very old woman

NARRATOR 2: peeped out to see what had happened.

NARRATOR 3: They could not see a single cat!

OLD WOMAN: I think they must have eaten each other all up. It's too bad!

OLD MAN: But look!

NARRATOR 1: The very old man pointed to a bunch of high grass.

NARRATOR 4: In it sat one little frightened kitten.

NARRATOR 2: They went out and picked it up.

NARRATOR 3: It was thin and scraggly.

OLD WOMAN: Poor little kitty.

OLD MAN: Dear little kitty, how does it happen that you were not eaten up with all those hundreds and thousands and millions and billions and trillions of cats?

KITTY: Oh, I'm just a very homely little cat. So when you asked who was the prettiest, I didn't say anything. So nobody bothered about me.

NARRATOR 1: They took the kitten into the house.

NARRATOR 4: The very old woman gave it a warm bath and brushed its fur till it was soft and shiny.
NARRATOR 2: Every day, they gave it plenty of milk,

NARRATOR 3: and soon it grew nice and plump.

OLD WOMAN: And it is a very pretty cat, after all!

OLD MAN: It is the most beautiful cat in the whole world! I ought to know, for I've seen

    Hundreds of cats,
    Thousands of cats,
    Millions and billions and trillions of cats!

    And not one was as pretty as this.
The Princess Mouse
A Tale of Finland

Told by Aaron Shepard

Adapted for reader's theater by the author, from his picture book published by
Atheneum, New York, 2003

For more reader's theater, visit Aaron Shepard's RT Page at
www.aaronshep.com/rt

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not be posted online without permission.

PREVIEW: When a young man seeks a wife by way of family tradition, he finds himself engaged
to a mouse.

GENRE: Folktales
CULTURE: Finnish
THEME: Kindness, humility, integrity
READERS: 8 or more
READER AGES: 8-12
LENGTH: 12 minutes

ROLES: Narrators 1-4, Mikko, Princess Mouse, Farmer, Brother, (Other Mice/Wedding Guests/
Servants), (Rats/Horses), (Coachman), (Footman), (Brother's Sweetheart)

NOTES: For best effect, place NARRATORS 1 and 2 at far left, and 3 and 4 at far right, as seen
from the audience. In scenes between MIKKO and PRINCESS MOUSE, they can suggest their size
difference if she looks up and he looks down as they face diagonally or toward the audience.
Below is the tune for "The Song of the Princess Mouse," an original composition. To hear the
music, and for other special features, visit www.aaronshep.com/extras.

NARRATOR 1: Once there was a farmer with two sons. One morning he said to them,

FARMER: Boys, you're old enough now to marry. But in our family, we have our own way to choose a bride.
NARRATOR 4: The younger son nodded and listened respectfully, but the older one said,

BROTHER: (rudely) You’ve told us, Father. We must each cut down a tree and see where it points.

FARMER: That’s right. Then walk that way till you find a sweetheart. That’s how we’ve done it, and that’s how we always will.

NARRATOR 2: Now, the older son already knew who he wanted to marry. He also knew how to cut a tree so it fell how he wanted. So, his tree fell and pointed to the farm where his sweetheart lived.

NARRATOR 3: The younger son, whose name was Mikko, didn’t have a sweetheart, but he thought he’d try his luck in the town. Well, maybe he cut the tree wrong, or maybe it had thoughts of its own, but it fell pointing to the forest.

BROTHER: (mockingly) Good job, Mikko! What sweetheart will you find there? A wolf or a fox?

MIKKO: (bristling) Never mind. I’ll find who I find.

NARRATOR 1: The two young men went their ways. Mikko walked through the forest for hours without seeing a soul. But at last he came to a cottage deep in the woods.

MIKKO: I knew I’d find a sweetheart!

NARRATOR 4: But when he went inside, he saw no one.

MIKKO: (sadly) All this way for nothing.

PRINCESS MOUSE: Maybe not!
NARRATOR 2: Mikko looked around, but the only living thing in sight was a little mouse on a table. Standing on its hind legs, it gazed at him with large, bright eyes.

MIKKO: Did you say something?

PRINCESS MOUSE: Of course I did! Now, why don’t you tell me your name and what you came for?

NARRATOR 3: Mikko had never talked with a mouse, but he felt it only polite to reply.

MIKKO: My name is Mikko, and I’ve come looking for a sweetheart.

PRINCESS MOUSE: \(\textit{squeals in delight}\) Why, Mikko, I’ll gladly be your sweetheart!

MIKKO: \(\textit{confused}\) But you’re only a mouse.

PRINCESS MOUSE: That may be true, but I can still love you faithfully. Besides, even a mouse can be special! Come feel my fur.

NARRATOR 1: With one finger, Mikko stroked the mouse’s back.

MIKKO: \(\textit{in surprise}\) Why, it feels like velvet! Just like the gown of a princess!

PRINCESS MOUSE: That’s right, Mikko.

NARRATOR 4: And as he petted her, she sang to him prettily.

PRINCESS MOUSE:

Mikko’s sweetheart will I be.  
What a fine young man is he!  
Gown of velvet I do wear,  
Like a princess fine and rare.
NARRATOR 2: Mikko looked into those large, bright eyes and thought she really was quite nice, for a mouse. And since he’d found no one else anyway, he said,

MIKKO: (kindly) All right, little mouse, you can be my sweetheart.

PRINCESS MOUSE: (happily) Oh, Mikko! I promise you won’t be sorry.

NARRATOR 3: Mikko wasn’t so sure, but he just stroked her fur and smiled.

NARRATOR 1: When Mikko got home, his brother was already there boasting to their father.

BROTHER: My sweetheart has rosy red cheeks and long golden hair.

FARMER: Sounds very nice. And what about yours, Mikko?

BROTHER: (laughing meanly) Yes, Mikko. Did you find a sweetheart with a nice fur coat? (keeps chuckling)

NARRATOR 4: Now, Mikko didn’t want to admit his sweetheart was a mouse. So he said,

MIKKO: Mine wears a velvet gown, like a princess!

BROTHER: (gasps)

NARRATOR 2: His brother stopped laughing.

NARRATOR 3: The farmer said,

FARMER: Well! It sounds like Mikko’s tree pointed a good way too! But now I must test both your sweethearts. Tomorrow you’ll ask them to weave you some cloth, then you’ll bring it home to me. That’s how we’ve done it, and that’s how we always will.
NARRATOR 1: They started out early next morning. When Mikko reached the cottage in the woods, there was the little mouse on the table, jumping up and down in happiness.

PRINCESS MOUSE: Oh, Mikko, I'm so glad you're here! Is this the day of our wedding?

NARRATOR 4: Mikko sighed and gently stroked her fur.

MIKKO: (glumly) Not yet, little mouse.

PRINCESS MOUSE: Why, Mikko, you look so sad! What's wrong?

MIKKO: My father wants you to weave some cloth. But how can you do that? You're only a mouse!

PRINCESS MOUSE: That may be true, but I'm also your sweetheart, and surely Mikko's sweetheart can weave! But you must be tired from your walk. Why don't you rest while I work?

MIKKO: (yawning) All right.

NARRATOR 2: Mikko lay down on a bed in the corner, and the little mouse sang him a pretty lullaby.

PRINCESS MOUSE:

    Mikko's sweetheart will I be.
    What a fine young man is he!
    Cloth of linen I will weave.
    I'll be done when he must leave.

NARRATOR 3: When the little mouse was sure that Mikko was asleep, she picked up a sleigh bell on a cord and rang it.

NARRATOR 1: Out of mouseholes all around the room poured hundreds of mice.
NARRATOR 4: They all stood before the table, gazing up at her.

PRINCESS MOUSE: Hurry! Each of you, fetch a strand of the finest flax.

NARRATOR 2: The mice rushed from the cottage.

NARRATOR 3: Then one, two, three, and back they were, each with a strand of flax.

NARRATOR 1: First they spun it into yarn on the spinning wheel.


NARRATOR 4: Some worked the pedal,

NARRATOR 2: some fed the flax,

NARRATOR 3: some rode around with the wheel.

NARRATOR 1: Then they strung the yarn on the loom and wove it into cloth.


NARRATOR 4: Some worked the pedals,

NARRATOR 2: some rocked the beater,

NARRATOR 3: some sailed the shuttle back and forth.

NARRATOR 1: At last they cut the cloth from the loom and tucked it in a nutshell.

PRINCESS: Now, off with you!
NARRATOR 4: And they all scampered back to their mouseholes.

PRINCESS MOUSE: (calling) Mikko, wake up! It’s time to go home! And here is something for your father.

NARRATOR 2: Mikko sleepily took the nutshell.

NARRATOR 3: He didn’t know why his father should want such a thing, but he said,

MIKKO: Thank you, little mouse.

NARRATOR 1: When he got home, his brother was proudly presenting the cloth from his sweetheart. The farmer looked it over.

FARMER: Strong and fairly even. Good enough for simple folks like us. And where is yours, Mikko?

NARRATOR 4: Mikko blushed and handed him the nutshell.

BROTHER: (scornfully) Look at that! Mikko asked for cloth, and his sweetheart gave him a nut!

NARRATOR 2: But the farmer opened the nutshell and peered inside. Then he pinched at something and started to pull. Out came linen, fine beyond belief. It kept coming too, yard after yard after yard.

NARRATOR 3: Mikko’s brother gaped with open mouth, and Mikko did too!

FARMER: There can be no better weaver than Mikko’s sweetheart! But both your sweethearts will do just fine. Tomorrow you’ll bring them home for the wedding. That’s how we’ve done it, and that’s how we always will.

NARRATOR 1: When Mikko arrived at the cottage next morning, the little mouse again jumped up and down.
PRINCESS MOUSE: Oh, Mikko, is this the day of our wedding?

MIKKO: (glumly) It is, little mouse.

NARRATOR 4: But he sounded more glum than ever.

PRINCESS MOUSE: Why, Mikko, what’s wrong?

MIKKO: (blurt ing out in distress) How can I bring home a mouse to marry? My brother and father and all our friends and neighbors will laugh and think I’m a fool!

PRINCESS MOUSE: (softly) They might think so, indeed. But, Mikko, what do you think?

NARRATOR 2: Mikko looked at the little mouse, gazing at him so seriously with her large, bright eyes.

NARRATOR 3: He thought about how she loved him and cared for him.

MIKKO: (decisively) I think you’re as sweet as any sweetheart could be. So let them laugh and think what they like. Today you’ll be my bride.

PRINCESS MOUSE: Oh, Mikko, you’ve made me the happiest mouse in the world!

NARRATOR 1: She rang her sleigh bell, and to Mikko’s astonishment, a little carriage raced into the room.

NARRATOR 4: It was made from a nutshell and pulled by four black rats. A mouse coachman sat in front, and a mouse footman behind.

PRINCESS MOUSE: Mikko, aren’t you going to help me down?
NARRATOR 2: Mikko lifted her from the table and set her in the carriage. The rats took off and the carriage sped from the cottage, so that Mikko had to rush to catch up.

NARRATOR 3: While he hurried along behind her, the little mouse sang a pretty song.

PRINCESS MOUSE:

Mikko’s sweetheart will I be.
What a fine young man is he!
In a carriage I will ride
When I go to be his bride.

NARRATOR 1: At last they reached the farm and then the spot for the wedding, on the bank of a lovely, swift-flowing stream.

NARRATOR 4: The guests were already there enjoying themselves. But as Mikko came up, they all grew silent and stared at the little carriage.

NARRATOR 2: Mikko’s brother stood with his bride, gaping in disbelief. Mikko and the little mouse went up to him.

BROTHER: (loudly) That’s the stupidest thing I ever saw.

NARRATOR 3: And with one quick kick, he sent the carriage, the rats, and the mice, all into the stream. Before Mikko could do a thing, the current bore them away.

MIKKO: (beside himself) What have you done! You’ve killed my sweetheart!

BROTHER: Are you crazy? That was only a mouse!

MIKKO: (defiantly but near tears) She may have been a mouse, but she was also my sweetheart, and I really did love her!
NARRATOR 1: He was about to swing at his brother, when his father called out.

FARMER: Mikko, look!

NARRATOR 4: All the guests were staring downstream and pointing and crying out in wonder.

NARRATOR 2: Mikko turned and to his amazement saw four black horses pulling a carriage out of the stream.

NARRATOR 3: A coachman sat in front and a footman behind, and inside was a soaked but lovely princess in a gown of pearly velvet.

NARRATOR 1: The carriage rode up along the bank and stopped right before him.

PRINCESS MOUSE: Mikko, aren't you going to help me down?

NARRATOR 4: Mikko stared blankly a moment, and then his eyes flew wide.

MIKKO: Are you the little mouse?

PRINCESS MOUSE: (laughing) I surely was, but no longer. A witch enchanted me, and the spell could be broken only by one brother who wanted to marry me and another who wanted to kill me. But, sweetheart, I need a change of clothes. I can’t be wet at our wedding!

NARRATOR 2: And a grand wedding it was, with Mikko’s bride the wonder of all. The farmer could hardly stop looking at her.

NARRATOR 3: Of course, Mikko’s brother was a bit jealous, but his own bride was really quite nice, so he couldn’t feel too bad.
NARRATOR 1: The next day, the princess brought Mikko back to her cottage—
NARRATOR 4: but it was a cottage no longer!
NARRATOR 2: It was a castle with hundreds of servants,
NARRATOR 3: and there they made their home happily.
NARRATOR 1: And if Mikko and the princess had any sons,
ALL: you know just how they chose their brides.
The Gifts of Wali Dad
A Tale of India and Pakistan

Told by Aaron Shepard

Adapted for reader's theater by the author, from his picture book published by Atheneum, New York, 1995

For more reader's theater, visit Aaron Shepard's RT Page at www.aaronshep.com/rt

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PREVIEW: Wali Dad, a humble grass-cutter, never asked for wealth—so why can't he give it away?

GENRE: Folk Tales
CULTURE: Asian Indian, Pakistani
THEME: Generosity

READERS: 15
READER AGES: 8–13
LENGTH: 10 minutes

ROLES: Narrators 1–4, Wali Dad, Merchant, Queen, King, Ministers 1 & 2, Peris 1 & 2, Servants 1–3

NOTES: For best effect, place NARRATORS 1 and 2 at far left, and 3 and 4 at far right, as seen from the audience. "Wali Dad" rhymes with "Wally Todd." "Paisa,” the smallest Indian coin, is pronounced “PAY-sa,” sounding like "pace a." "Khulistan" is pronounced "KU-lston," rhyming with "feud on." "Nekhabad" is pronounced "NEK-a-bod." "Peris" sounds like "Perry." Peris are an import into India from Persian mythology. Originally considered evil, their image changed gradually to benevolent beings akin to fairies or angels. It is said they feed only on the odor of perfume. To hear the names, and for other special features, visit www.aaronshep.com/extras.

NARRATOR 1: In a mud hut far from town lived an old grass-cutter named Wali Dad.

NARRATOR 4: Every morning, Wali Dad cut and bundled tall, wild grass. Every afternoon, he sold it as fodder in the marketplace.

NARRATOR 2: Each day, he earned thirty paisa. Ten of the small coins went for food. Ten went for clothes and other needs. And ten he saved in a clay pot under his bed.
NARRATOR 3: In this manner Wali Dad lived happily for many years.

NARRATOR 1: One evening, Wali Dad dragged out the pot to see how much money it held. He was amazed to find that his coins had filled it to the brim.

WALI DAD: (to himself) What am I to do with all this money? I need nothing more than I have.

NARRATOR 4: Wali Dad thought and thought. At last he had an idea.

NARRATOR 2: The next day, Wali Dad loaded the money into a sack and carried it to a jeweler in the marketplace. He exchanged all his coins for a lovely gold bracelet.

NARRATOR 3: Then Wali Dad visited the home of a traveling merchant.

WALI DAD: Tell me, in all the world, who is the noblest lady?

MERCHANT: Without doubt, it is the young queen of Khaistan. I often visit her palace, just three days' journey to the east.

WALI DAD: Do me a kindness. The next time you pass that way, give her this little bracelet, with my compliments.

NARRATOR 1: The merchant was astonished, but he agreed to do what the ragged grass-cutter asked.

NARRATOR 4: Soon after, the merchant found himself at the palace of the queen of Khaistan. He presented the bracelet to her as a gift from Wali Dad.

QUEEN: (admiring the bracelet) How lovely! Your friend must accept a gift in return. My servants will load a camel with the finest silks.
NARRATOR 2: When the merchant arrived back home, he brought the silks to the hut of Wali Dad.

WALI DAD: Oh, no! This is worse than before! What am I to do with such finery?

MERCHAND: Perhaps you could give it to someone else.

NARRATOR 3: Wali Dad thought for a moment.

WALI DAD: Tell me, in all the world, who is the noblest man?

MERCHAND: That is simple. It is the young king of Nekabad. His palace, too, I often visit, just three days' journey to the west.

WALI DAD: Then do me another kindness. On your next trip there, give him these silks, with my compliments.

NARRATOR 1: The merchant was amused, but he agreed.

NARRATOR 4: On his next journey, he presented the silks to the king of Nekabad.

KING: A splendid gift! In return, your friend must have twelve of my finest horses.

NARRATOR 2: So the merchant brought the king's horses to Wali Dad.

WALI DAD: This grows worse and worse! What could I do with twelve horses? (thinks for a moment) I know who should have such a gift. I beg you, keep two horses for yourself, and take the rest to the queen of Khaistan!

NARRATOR 3: The merchant thought this was very funny, but he consented. On his next visit to the queen's palace, he gave her the horses.
NARRATOR 1: Now the queen was perplexed. She whispered to her prime minister,

QUEEN: Why does this Wali Dad persist in sending gifts? I have never even heard of him!

MINISTER 1: Why don't you discourage him? Send him a gift so rich, he can never hope to match it.

NARRATOR 4: So in return for the ten horses from Wali Dad, the queen sent back twenty mules loaded with silver.

NARRATOR 2: When the merchant and mules arrived back at the hut, Wali Dad groaned.

WALI DAD: What have I done to deserve this? Friend, spare an old man! Keep two mules and their silver for yourself, and take the rest to the king of Nekabad!

NARRATOR 3: The merchant was getting uneasy, but he could not refuse such a generous offer. So not long after, he found himself presenting the silver-laden mules to the king of Nekabad.

NARRATOR 1: The king, too, was perplexed and asked his prime minister for advice.

MINISTER 2: Perhaps this Wali Dad seeks to prove himself your better. Why not send him a gift he can never surpass?

NARRATOR 4: So the king sent back

NARRATOR 2: twenty camels with golden anklets,

NARRATOR 3: twenty horses with golden bridles and stirrups,

NARRATOR 1: twenty elephants with golden seats mounted on their backs,
NARRATOR 4: and twenty liveried servants to care for them all.

NARRATOR 2: When the merchant guided the servants and animals to Wali Dad’s hut, the grass-cutter was beside himself.

WALI DAD: Will bad fortune never end? Please, do not stop for a minute! Keep for yourself two of each animal, and take the rest to the queen of Khaistan!

MERCHAND: (distressed) How can I go to her again?

NARRATOR 3: But Wali Dad pleaded so hard, the merchant consented to go just once more.

NARRATOR 1: This time, the queen was stunned by the magnificence of Wali Dad’s gift. She turned again to her prime minister.

MINISTER 1: Clearly, the man wishes to marry you. Since his gifts are so fine, perhaps you should meet him!

NARRATOR 4: So the queen ordered a great caravan made ready, with countless horses, camels, and elephants. With the trembling merchant as guide, she and her court set out to visit the great Wali Dad.

NARRATOR 2: On the third day, the caravan made camp, and the queen sent the merchant ahead to tell Wali Dad of her coming. When Wali Dad heard the merchant’s news, his head sank to his hands.

WALI DAD: (mournfully) Oh, no! Now I will be paid for all my foolishness. I have brought shame on myself, on you, and on the queen. What are we to do?

MERCHAND: I fear we can do nothing!

NARRATOR 3: And the merchant headed back to the caravan.
NARRATOR 1: The next morning, Wali Dad rose before dawn.

WALI DAD: (sadly) Good-bye, old hut. I will never see you again.

NARRATOR 4: The old grass-cutter started down the road. But he had not gone far when he heard a voice.

PERI 1: (gently) Where are you going, Wali Dad?

NARRATOR 2: He turned and saw two radiant ladies.

NARRATOR 3: He knew at once they were peris from Paradise.

WALI DAD: (kneels) I am a stupid old man. Let me go my way. I cannot face my shame!

PERI 2: No shame can come to such as you. Though your clothes are poor, in your heart you are a king.

NARRATOR 1: The peri touched him on the shoulder.

NARRATOR 4: To his amazement, he saw his rags turn to fine clothes. A jeweled turban sat on his head. The rusty sickle at his waist was now a gleaming scimitar.

PERI 1: Return, Wali Dad. All is as it should be.

NARRATOR 2: Wali Dad looked behind him. Where his hut had stood, a splendid palace sparkled in the rising sun.

NARRATOR 3: In shock, he turned to the peris, but they had vanished.
NARRATOR 1: Wali Dad hurried back along the road. As he entered the palace, the guards gave a salute. Servants bowed to him, then rushed here and there, preparing for the visitors.

NARRATOR 4: Wali Dad wandered through countless rooms, gaping at riches beyond his imagining.

NARRATOR 2: Suddenly, three servants ran up.

SERVANT 1: *(announcing)* A caravan from the east!

SERVANT 2: No, a caravan from the west!

SERVANT 3: No, caravans from both east *and* west!

NARRATOR 3: The bewildered Wali Dad rushed outside to see two caravans halt before the palace. Coming from the east was a queen in a jeweled litter. Coming from the west was a king on a fine horse.

NARRATOR 1: Wali Dad hurried to the queen.

QUEEN: My dear Wali Dad, we meet at last. *(looks at KING)* But who is that magnificent king?

WALI DAD: I believe it is the king of Nekabad, Your Majesty. Please excuse me for a moment.

NARRATOR 4: He rushed over to the king.

KING: My dear Wali Dad, I had to meet the giver of such fine gifts. *(looks at QUEEN)* But who is that splendid queen?

WALI DAD: *(smiling)* The queen of Khaistan, Your Majesty. Please come and meet her.

NARRATOR 2: And so the king of Nekabad met the queen of Khaistan, and the two fell instantly in love.
NARRATOR 3: A few days later their marriage took place in the palace of Wali Dad. And the celebration went on for many days.

NARRATOR 1: At last Wali Dad had said good-bye to all his guests. The very next morning, he rose before dawn, crept quietly from the palace, and started down the road.

NARRATOR 4: But he had not gone far when he heard a voice.

PERI 1: Where are you going, Wali Dad?

NARRATOR 2: He turned and again saw the two peris.

WALI DAD: (kneels) Did I not tell you I am a stupid old man? I should be glad for what I have received, but—

PERI 2: Say no more. You shall have your heart's desire.

NARRATOR 3: And she touched him again.

***

NARRATOR 1: So Wali Dad became once more a grass-cutter,

NARRATOR 4: living happily in his hut for the rest of his days.

NARRATOR 2: And though he often thought warmly of his friends the king and queen,

NARRATOR 3: he was careful never to send them another gift.
The Legend of Lightning Larry

By Aaron Shepard

Adapted for reader's theater by the author, from his picture book published by Scribners, New York, 1993

For more reader's theater, visit Aaron Shepard's RT Page at www.aaronshep.com/rt

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PREVIEW: A cowboy with a huge smile, a gun that shoots bolts of light, and a bankering for lemonade takes on Evil-Eye McNevel's outlaw gang.

GENRE: Fables (original), tall tales, humor
CULTURE: American (Western frontier)
THEME: Peacemaking
READER AGES: 7–12
LENGTH: 8 minutes

ROLES: Citizens 1–8, Lightning Larry, Crooked Curt, Evil-Eye McNevel, Dismal Dan, Devilish Dick, Dreadful Dave, Sketchy Steve, Sickening Sid, Raunchy Ralph, Griny Gog, Creepy Cal, Moldy Mike, Loosy Luke, Gruesome Gus, (Other Citizens), (Musicians), (Bartender), (Bank Teller)

NOTES: CITIZENS serve as narrators. For best effect, place CITIZENS 1 to 4 at far left, and 5 to 8 at far right, as seen from the audience. If possible, all readers should speak with a Western drawl. For special features, visit www.aaronshep.com/extras.

CITIZEN 1: Well, you've heard about gunfighting good guys like Wild Bill Hickok and Wyatt Earp.

CITIZEN 8: But we'll tell you a name that strikes even greater fear into the hearts of bad men everywhere.

ALL (except LARRY): Lightning Larry!

CITIZEN 2: We'll never forget the day Larry rode into our little town of Brimstone and walked into the Cottonmouth Saloon. He strode up to the bar and smiled straight at the bartender.
LIGHTNING LARRY: (with a huge smile) Lemonade, please!

CITIZEN 7: Every head in the place turned to look.

CITIZEN 3: Now, standing next to Larry at the bar was Crooked Curt.

CITIZEN 6: Curt was one of a band of rustlers and thieves that had been terrorizing our town, led by a ferocious outlaw named Evil-Eye McNeely.

CITIZEN 4: Curt was wearing the usual outlaw scowl.

CITIZEN 5: Larry turned to him and smiled.

LIGHTNING LARRY: Mighty big frown you got there, mister!

CROOKED CURT: What’s it to you?

LIGHTNING LARRY: Well, maybe I could help remove it!

CROOKED CURT: I’d like to see you try!

CITIZEN 1: The rest of us got out of the way real fast.

CITIZEN 8: The bartender ducked behind the bar.

CITIZEN 2: Larry and Curt moved about ten paces from each other, hands at the ready.

CITIZEN 7: Larry was still smiling.

CITIZEN 3: Curt moved first. But he only just cleared his gun from its holster before Larry aimed and fired.

LIGHTNING LARRY: Zing!
CITIZEN 6: There was no bang and no bullet. Just a little bolt of light that hit Curt right in the heart.

CITIZEN 4: Curt just stood there, his eyes wide with surprise. Then he dropped his gun, and a huge grin spread over his face.

CITIZEN 5: He rushed up to Larry and pumped his hand.

CROOKED CURT: I'm mighty glad to know you, stranger! The drinks are on me. Lemonade for everyone!

* * *

CITIZEN 1: When Evil-Eye McNeveil and his outlaw gang heard that Crooked Curt had gone straight, they shuddered right down to their boots.

CITIZEN 8: Most any outlaw would rather die than smile!

CITIZEN 2: Evil-Eye's men were shook up, but they weren't about to let on.

CITIZEN 7: The very next day,

DISMAL DAN: Dismal Dan!

DEVILISH DICK: Devilish Dick!

DREADFUL DAVE: And Dreadful Dave!

CITIZEN 7: rode into Brimstone, yelling like crazy men and shooting wild.

DAN, DICK, & DAVE: (hoot and holler, prance, wave guns and shoot)

CITIZEN 3: Windows shattered
CITIZEN 6: and citizens scattered.

CITIZEN 4: Then Lightning Larry showed up. He never warned them.

CITIZEN 5: Never even stopped smiling.

CITIZEN 1: Just shot three little bolts of light.

LIGHTNING LARRY: Zing! Zing! Zing!

DAN, DICK, & DAVE: (stop and fall when hit)

CITIZEN 8: Hit those outlaws right in the heart.

CITIZEN 2: Larry’s shots knocked the outlaws to the ground. They lay there trying to figure out what had hit them. Then they got up and looked around.

DISMAL DAN: Looks like we did some damage, boys.

CITIZEN 7: . . . said Dismal Dan.

DEVILISH DICK: Hope nobody got hurt!

CITIZEN 3: . . . said Devilish Dick.

DREADFUL DAVE: We’d better get to work and fix this place up.

CITIZEN 6: . . . said Dreadful Dave.

CITIZEN 4: They spent the rest of the day replacing windows and apologizing to everyone who’d listen.

CITIZEN 5: Then for good measure, they picked up all the trash in the street.
CITIZEN 1: Evil-Eye McNeevil had lost three more of his meanest men,

CITIZEN 8: and he was furious!

CITIZEN 2: He decided to do something really nasty.

CITIZEN 7: The next day,

STINKY STEVE: Stinky Steve!

SICKENING SID: And Sickening Sid!

CITIZEN 7: walked into the 79th National Savings and Loan with guns in hand.

CITIZEN 3: They wore masks,

CITIZEN 6: but everyone knew who they were—from the smell.

STINKY STEVE: Stick up your hands.

CITIZEN 4: ... said Stinky Steve.

SICKENING SID: Give us all the money in your vault.

CITIZEN 5: ... ordered Sickening Sid.

CITIZEN 1: They were just backing out the door with the money bags, when Lightning Larry strolled by.

CITIZEN 8: Didn't even slow his step.

CITIZEN 2: Just shot those bandits in the back.

LIGHTNING LARRY: Zing! Zing!
CITIZEN 7: Went right through to the heart.

CITIZEN 3: The puzzled outlaws stopped and looked at each other.

STINKY STEVE: Seems a shame to steal the money of hardworking cowboys.

SICKENING SID: Wouldn't want to make their lives any harder.

CITIZEN 6: They holstered their guns and walked back to the teller.

CITIZEN 4: They plunked the money bags down on the counter.

SICKENING SID: Now, you keep that money safe.

CITIZEN 5: Then they pulled out their wallets and opened up accounts.

***

CITIZEN 1: That was the last straw for Evil-Eye McNeevil. It was time for a showdown!

CITIZEN 8: The next day at high noon, Larry was sipping lemonade at the Cottonmouth Saloon. Evil-Eye burst through the doors and stamped up to him.

EVIL-EYE MCNEEVIL: I'm Evil-Eye McNeevil!

LIGHTNING LARRY: (with a huge smile) Hello, Evil-Eye! Can I buy you a lemonade?

EVIL-EYE MCNEEVIL: This town ain't big enough for the both of us.

LIGHTNING LARRY: Seems pretty spacious to me!
EVIL-EYE McNEEVIL: I'll be waiting for you down by the Okey-Dokey Corral.

CITIZEN 8: And Evil-Eye stamped out.

CITIZEN 2: Larry finished his lemonade and walked out onto Main Street.

CITIZEN 7: Evil-Eye was waiting for him. But Evil-Eye wasn't alone.

CITIZEN 3: There on either side of him were

RAUNCHY RALPH: Raunchy Ralph!

GRIMY GREG: Grimy Greg!

CREEPY CAL: Creepy Cal!

MOLDY MIKE: Moldy Mike!

LOUSY LUKE: Lousy Luke!

GRUESOME GUS: And Gruesome Gus!

CITIZEN 6: And not a one of them looked friendly.

LIGHTNING LARRY: Nice day for a stroll!

CITIZEN 4: ... called Larry.

EVIL-EYE McNEEVIL: Draw!

CITIZEN 5: ... said Evil-Eye.

CITIZEN 1: All of us citizens of Brimstone were lining Main Street to see what would happen.
CITIZEN 8: Larry was still smiling, but we knew even Larry couldn’t outshoot all those outlaws together.

CITIZEN 2: Just then a voice came from the Cottonmouth Saloon.

CROOKED CURT: Like some help, Larry?

LIGHTNING LARRY: Wouldn’t mind it!

CITIZEN 7: Out stepped . . . Crooked Curt! And right behind him were Dismal Dan, Devilish Dick, Dreadful Dave, Stinky Steve, and Sickening Sid.

CITIZEN 3: They all took places beside Larry.

CROOKED CURT: Hello, Evil-Eye!

CITIZEN 6: . . . called Curt.

EVIL-EYE McNEEVIL: Traitors!

CITIZEN 4: . . . yelled Evil-Eye.

LIGHTNING LARRY: Draw!

CITIZEN 5: . . . said Larry, with a smile.

CITIZEN 1: Evil-Eye and his men drew their guns,

CITIZEN 8: but Larry and his friends were an eye-blink quicker.

CITIZEN 2: Their guns fired seven little bolts of light.

LARRY & FRIENDS: Zing!

CITIZEN 7: Hit those outlaws right in the you-know-what.
EVIL-EYE McNEEVIL: YIPPEE!

CITIZEN 3: . . . yelled Evil-Eye.

CITIZEN 6: He shot in the air.

EVIL-EYE McNEEVIL: Zing!

CITIZEN 4: There was no bang and no bullet.

CITIZEN 5: Just a little bolt of light.

LIGHTNING LARRY: All right, men! Let's clean up this town once and for all!

LARRY & ALL OUTLAWS: (shoot at all others) Zing! Zing! Zing! . . .

CITIZEN 1: And before we could duck for cover,

CITIZEN 8: Larry and Evil-Eye and the others

CITIZEN 2: turned their guns on the rest of us.

CITIZEN 7: Bolts of light flew everywhere.

CITIZEN 3: No one was spared—

CITIZEN 6: not a man,

CITIZEN 4: woman,

CITIZEN 5: or child!

ALL (except LARRY): YIPPEE!

CITIZEN 1: You never saw such a happy crowd!
STORIES ON STAGE

THE LEGEND OF LIGHTNING LARRY

CITIZEN 8: We all rushed around

CITIZEN 2: and pumped each other’s hands

CITIZEN 7: and hugged each other.

CITIZEN 3: Then the musicians got out instruments and we had
dancing too. Main Street was one huge party,

CITIZEN 6: all the rest of that day

CITIZEN 4: and on through the night.

CITIZEN 5: We never drank so much lemonade in all our days!

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CITIZEN 1: With all the commotion, only a few of us saw Larry ride
into the sunset.

CITIZEN 8: Can’t say where he went.

CITIZEN 2: Can’t say what he’s doing now.

CITIZEN 7: But we bet he still aims for the heart.

ALL: (shooting at audience) Zing!
Mike Rides a Bike

Characters
Mike   Ivy
Spike  Liza

Mike: Hi, Spike.
      Do you like my new bike?

Spike: Yes! It’s really nice.
       I like the bright red stripes.

Mike: It’s the nicest bike I could find.

Spike: Is it fun to ride?

Mike: I don’t know.
      I haven’t tried.

Spike: Why?

Mike: I never rode a bike in my life!

Spike: Then it’s about time!
       Climb on!

Mike: This is nice! I’m riding!
      Oh no! I’m sliding!
      I’m falling!

Ivy and Liza: Are you all right?
Mike: I’m fine.
Ivy: We were passing by.
Liza: And we heard a cry.
Spike: Mike is learning how to ride a bike.
Ivy and Liza: We know the right way to ride.
We can teach you, Mike.
Mike: You don’t mind?
That’s very kind.
Ivy: Here, try it like this.
Mike: Here I go. YIKES!
Right onto the sidewalk!
Liza: Try again, Mike.
Spike: You have to practice a long time.
Mike: Okay, I’ll try again.
Hey! I can ride! I can ride!
Spike, Ivy, and Liza: Look at Mike fly by!
We knew he could ride!
He just had to try . . .
Mike: And try, and try . . .
All: And try!

The End
Hugo’s Unicorn

Characters
Hugo  Dad
Mom

Hugo:  Mom! Dad!
       I just saw a unicorn!

Mom:   Unicorns don’t go out to eat, Hugo.

Dad:   Hugo, look at your menu.

Hugo:  You never believe me.
        It’s no use.

Mom:   The music will start soon.
        We need to go.

Hugo:  There goes the unicorn again!
        Its horn was huge!

Dad:   Unicorns don’t listen to music, Hugo.

Mom:   Hugo, I am not amused.

Hugo:  You never believe me.
        It’s no use.

Dad:   Don’t argue with your mom.
        It’s time for the museum now.
Hugo: Hey! There's the unicorn!
Mom: Unicorns don't look at art, Hugo. Stop being cute.
Hugo: It just ran around the corner!
Dad: There are no such things as unicorns.
Mom: Oh! Here is a unicorn. But this is just a painting, Hugo.
Hugo: No! It's real! You never believe me! It's no use!
Dad: Sorry, Hugo. Let's go home.
Mom: I was thinking about that painting. It was very unusual.
Dad: How so?
Mom: I'm sure that unicorn winked at me!
Dad: Oh no, not this again.
Hugo: Don't worry, Mom. I believe you!

The End
The Legend of Slappy Hooper
An American Tall Tale

Told by Aaron Shepard

Adapted for reader's theater by the author, from his picture book published by
Scribner, New York, 1993

For more reader's theater, visit Aaron Shepard's RT Page at
www.aaronshep.com/rt

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PREVIEW: Slappy is the world's biggest, fastest, bestest sign painter, but he's too good—his
pictures keep coming to life.

GENRE: Tall tales, folktales
CULTURE: American
THEME: Pursuit of excellence

READERS: 8 or more
READER AGES: 8–13
LENGTH: 10 minutes

ROLES: Narrator 1–3, Slappy, Rosc Red, Baldwin Eagle, Ray Sunshine, Michael, (Vacationers),
(Firefighters)

NOTES: The legend of "Slappy Hooper, World's Biggest, Fastest, and Bestest Sign Painter" was
collected in Chicago in 1938 by Jack Conroy for the Federal Writers' Project of the Works
Progress Administration. It was first published in B. A. Botkin's A Treasury of American
Folklore, Crown, New York, 1944. This is a free retelling. For special features, visit
www.aaronshep.com/extras.

NARRATOR 1: You've heard about Paul Bunyan, the greatest
lumberjack of all time.

NARRATOR 3: And you've heard about Pecos Bill, the greatest
cowboy.

NARRATOR 2: Now let us tell you about the world's

NARRATOR 1: biggest,
NARRATOR 2: fastest,

NARRATOR 3: bestest

NARRATOR 2: sign painter.

SLAPPY: (proudly, to audience, in booming voice) That’s me! Slappy Hooper!

NARRATOR 1: You’d better believe Slappy was biggest! Why, he was seven feet tall with shoulders to match, and he weighed three hundred pounds, even without his cap and coverall and brush and bucket.

NARRATOR 2: And fastest?

SLAPPY: Just give me an eight-inch brush! (slaps paint on a wall)

NARRATOR 1: Slip!

NARRATOR 2: Stop!

NARRATOR 3: Slap!

NARRATOR 2: The job was done.

SLAPPY: And so smooth, you’d never see a brush stroke.

NARRATOR 3: And you bet Slappy was bestest! That was on account of his pictures.

SLAPPY: No one else ever made them so true to life!

NARRATOR 3: In fact, some folks said they were too true to life.

NARRATOR 1: Slappy’s trouble started with the huge red rose he painted on the sign for Rose’s Florist Shop.
ROSE RED: Slappy, it's so real!

NARRATOR 1: ... said Miss Rose Red, the owner.

ROSE RED: Why, I can just about smell the fragrance!

NARRATOR 2: But a week later, Rose Red fluttered into Slappy’s sign shop.

ROSE RED: Slappy, that sign of yours was too good.

SLAPPY: (puzzled) Too good?

ROSE RED: That's right! The bees got wind of it and swarmed all over that rose, trying to get in. They scared away all my customers! That was bad enough, but wait till you see what's happened now!

NARRATOR 3: When they reached the florist shop, Slappy saw that the bees were gone. But the rose had withered and died!

ROSE RED: No one buys from a florist with a withered flower on her sign. That's the last thing you'll paint for me, Slappy Hooper!

NARRATOR 1: The story got around, but most folks just laughed, and they still wanted Slappy to do their signs.

NARRATOR 2: His next job was to paint a billboard for the Eagle Messenger Service. Slappy painted an eagle three times larger than life.

BALDWIN EAGLE: Amazing!

NARRATOR 2: ... said Mr. Baldwin Eagle.

BALDWIN EAGLE: It's so real, I could swear I saw it blink! Wait a minute. I did see it blink!
NARRATOR 3: Then the bird flapped its wings and flew right off the billboard!

BALDWIN EAGLE: That sign was too good. That's the last time you'll work for me, Slappy Hooper!

NARRATOR 1: Folks were getting scared to hire Slappy. But at last he got a job from the Sunshine Travel Agency.

NARRATOR 2: The billboard was to show a man and woman on a beach, toasting under a hot sun. Slappy painted it the day after a big snowstorm.

RAY SUNSHINE: Wonderful!

NARRATOR 3: . . . said Mr. Ray Sunshine.

RAY SUNSHINE: Why, that sun makes me feel hot! And look! The snow on the sidewalk is melting!

NARRATOR 3: But a couple of days later, Slappy got a call.

RAY SUNSHINE: Slappy, your sign is too good. Get down here right away!

NARRATOR 1: When Slappy arrived, he saw that the sidewalk and street in front of the billboard were covered with beach chairs. People sat around in swimsuits and sunglasses, sipping lemonade and splashing suntan lotion.

RAY SUNSHINE: They're blocking traffic, and the mayor blames me! Besides, they won't need my travel agency if they take their vacations here! You've got to do something, Slappy.
NARRATOR 2: So Slippy set up his gear and got to work. He painted
the sun on the billboard much hotter. Before long, the crowd was
sweating buckets and complaining of sunburn. Then everyone packed
up and left.

RAY SUNSHINE: Good work, Slappy! (gasps and points) Look at that!

NARRATOR 2: The man and woman on the billboard were walking
off, too!

NARRATOR 3: Just then, a lick of flame shot up the wall of the
building across the street. Slappy’s sign had set it on fire! In a few
minutes, fire trucks clanged up and firefighters turned hoses on
the flames.

RAY SUNSHINE: Slappy! Try something else!

NARRATOR 1: Slappy got back to work. He painted a storm cloud
across that sun. But he had to jump clear when the cloud shot bolts
of lightning!

NARRATOR 2: Then the storm broke.

NARRATOR 3: Slappy’s cloud rained so hard, the billboard overflowed
and flooded all of Main Street!

RAY SUNSHINE: Never again, Slappy Hooper!

NARRATOR 1: After that, no one on earth would hire Slappy. It looked
as if his sign-painting days were done.

NARRATOR 2: Slappy felt so low, he made up his mind to throw his
paint kit in the river. He dragged it onto the tallest bridge in town and
was just about to chuck it, when a voice thundered out beside him.

MICHAEL: Don’t dump that gear, Slappy. You’re going to need it!
NARRATOR 3: Right next to Slappy stood a man almost as big as Slappy himself. He wore a paint-splotched white coverall and a cap with two little angel wings sticking out. He carried an eight-inch brush.

SLAPPY: Who are you?

MICHAEL: I'm Michael, from the Heavenly Sign Company. The Boss has had an eye on you for some time, Slappy, and He likes your work. He's got a job for you—if you don't mind working in the rain.

SLAPPY: Tell me about it.

MICHAEL: We need someone to paint a rainbow this Wednesday. Most of the time, we handle all the rainbows ourselves. But it's going to rain in a bunch of places Wednesday, and we could sure use some help.

SLAPPY: I'm your man.

NARRATOR 3: . . . said Slappy.

NARRATOR 1: That Wednesday morning, Slappy rented a cannon, and set it in a big cow pasture. He tied two ropes to his scaffold, then ran the other ends through a couple of skyhooks. Then he loaded the skyhooks in the cannon and shot them straight up.

SLAPPY: BOOM! (looks up)

NARRATOR 1: Sure enough, the skyhooks caught on the sky.

NARRATOR 2: Slappy felt the first raindrops. He piled all his paints and brushes onto his scaffold, climbed on, and hoisted himself up, up, and up! He kept going till he was just under the clouds. Then he tied his ropes and started to paint.

NARRATOR 1: Slip!

NARRATOR 2: Slop!
NARRATOR 3: *Slap!*

NARRATOR 2: He had only just finished, when the sun popped through the clouds and lit up what he’d done.

NARRATOR 3: There never was a finer rainbow! It had every color you could imagine, each one blending perfectly with the next.

SLAPPY: *(proudly, looking over his work)* And not a brush stroke in sight!

NARRATOR 1: Just then, Slappy felt a big jolt. He looked up to see what had caused it.

SLAPPY: Oh, no!

NARRATOR 1: The sun had run smack into his skyhooks!

NARRATOR 2: Slappy shut his eyes and waited for the long drop to the ground. But it never came. When Slappy looked again, he saw why.

SLAPPY: *(amazed)* For heaven’s sake!

NARRATOR 2: Slappy’s hooks had caught on the sun itself! And the sun was pulling his rig across the sky!

NARRATOR 3: Now, another sign painter might have been frightened. But not Slappy Hooper! He was enjoying the ride!

NARRATOR 1: He’d covered a good distance when Michael appeared on the scaffold beside him.

MICHAEL: *(thundering)* The Boss liked your rainbow, Slappy.

SLAPPY: You mean, it wasn’t too good?
MICHAEL: If it isn't too good, it's not good enough! That's how we figure. Anyhow, now that you're here, the Boss has another job for you—if you don't mind working odd hours.

SLAPPY: Tell me about it.

MICHAEL: It's the sunrise and sunset. I guess you know, the Boss Himself has been painting them since time began. But He's done it so long, He'd like to give someone else a chance.

SLAPPY: I'm your man.

NARRATOR 3: . . . said Slappy Hooper.

NARRATOR 1: Slappy's been up there ever since.

NARRATOR 2: Of course, you can't see him, with the sun so bright—but he's there all the same.

NARRATOR 3: Night and day, the sun pulls Slappy and his rig around the world. And every time Slappy comes to a horizon, he reaches up with his eight-inch brush.

NARRATOR 1: Slip!

NARRATOR 2: Stop!

NARRATOR 3: Slap!

NARRATOR 2: The job is done.

SLAPPY: (to audience) And never a brush stroke in sight!
The Walking Sticks Buy Shoes

Characters

Holly
Fern
Elmer
Mom

Narrator: Our story takes place in a rainforest. The Walking Stick family is resting on a few of their favorite leaves late one evening.

Holly: Mom, all six of my sandals are too small. I need new ones.

Fern: Two of my sneakers have holes in them. And I don’t even like them anymore. They’re so out of style!

Elmer: I need new shoes for the track team. Tryouts are next week.

Mom: It’s time for a trip to Rainforest Footwear. We’ll all go on Saturday night. I’ll tell your father.

Narrator: During the week Mr. and Mrs. Walking Stick talk about ways to help their children learn about spending money. At daybreak on Saturday morning, they explain their plan.

Dad: Your mother and I want you to be responsible consumers who use money wisely. Instead of us paying for whatever you want this time, you’ll each get a budget.

Holly: What’s that?
**Mom:** A budget is a limited amount of money that you have to spend. Your dad and I will give each of you $75. You may spend your money any way you want, but that is all you will get. Think about what you want before we get to the store.

**Fern:** If we want shoes that cost more than our $75, can we spend our own money?

**Dad:** Yes, that’s fine with us.

**Elmer:** Can we keep the extra if we don’t spend it all?

**Mom:** Yes, you may. Now, why don’t you look at the newspaper ads, think about what you want, and get a good day’s sleep. Be ready to go at sunset.

**Narrator:** The kids go to bed. That evening they take the Perky Parrot Express to the Canopy Mall and go directly to Rainforest Footwear.

**Salesman:** Good evening, may I help you?

**Holly:** Wow, look at all the cool shoes. Yes, please, I’d like to try one pair of red, one pair of orange, and one pair of yellow sandals.

**Salesman:** Right away, miss. Have a seat here.

**Fern:** I like these Purple Puddle Jumpers, but they cost $25 a pair. If I buy three pairs, that’s my whole $75. I want to buy new antenna glitter, too.
Dad: Think about the benefit you’ll be getting. Remember, that’s the positive value that these shoes have for you. Of course, you also need to think about the opportunity cost—or what you’ll have to give up in order to get the thing that you really want or need.

Fern: So if I buy the Purple Puddle Jumpers, the glitter is my opportunity cost. I’ll have to give up buying the glitter if I spend all my money on the shoes. The benefit, though, would be having really cool, in-style shoes. Hmm, I have to think about this one.

Elmer: Dad, look at these Super Lightfoot Twig Trackers. They are awesome. I’d get my fastest times ever in them! But they cost $40 a pair. If I get three pairs, I’d have to use my own $45, too. I was planning to buy the new Mighty Mosquito video game.

Fern: (grabbing one of his arms) You, dear brother, need to think about your benefits and opportunity cost. Come over here, and I’ll explain it all.

Holly: (walking up with three shoeboxes) I’m finished. The sandals are on sale for $12.99 a pair. That came to $38.97. My change is $38.03. My budget is in great shape! Now I want to look around the rest of the mall. Mom, will you come with me?

Dad: Go ahead, Magnolia. I’ll stay here with these two. We’ll meet you at the Lovely Leaf Café in half an hour. (to Elmer and Fern) Have you two decided yet?
Fern: I have. I'll replace my two worn out sneakers with these $20 ones now. Then I'll buy the Purple Puddle Jumpers on sale next month. I'll sit for Mrs. Spider's kids to earn extra money. I can have the shoes and the glitter, too. I won't have an opportunity cost.

Dad: What a wise decision. How about you, Elmer?

Elmer: I gotta have these Twig Trackers. They feel great, and I know they'll help my speed. *(taking a big gulp)* The video game is my opportunity cost. I'll get the Twig Trackers and work hard on the track team.

Dad: It sounds like you really thought about it, Elmer. I'll charge the shoes and you can pay me back when we get home.

Elmer: Thanks, Dad.

Narrator: They pay for the shoes.

Salesman: Good-by now, and thanks for your business.

Narrator: The family has lunch at the Lovely Leaf Café.

Mom: How did you like using a budget?

Holly: It was easier to buy stuff when you and Dad paid for it, but I liked feeling responsible for my money.

Fern: I liked it, too.

Elmer: All that decision-making made me hungry. Let's eat! *(They all laugh as they eat their leaves)*.
APPENDIX F

Tables
Table 1- Bookshop Reading and STAR 360 Assessments - Initial Scores

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<tr>
<th>Student</th>
<th>Bookshop Reading Instructional Level (Fountas &amp; Pinnell)</th>
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Table 2- Garfield Survey - Fall 2016

Elementary Reading Attitude Survey  
“The Garfield Survey”        Fall 2016

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#3-How do you feel about reading for fun at home?
#13-How do you feel about reading in school?
Table 3- Reading Interest Survey -Fall 2016

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Table 14- Garfield Survey - Spring 2017

Elementary Reading Attitude Survey
“The Garfield Survey”  Fall 2016 & Spring 2017

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#3-How do you feel about reading for fun at home?
#13-How do you feel about reading in school?
Table 15- Reading Interest Survey - Fall 2016 & Spring 2017

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