

FLUENCY PACKET FOR 6 - 8 GRADE BAND

41 Passages

Instructions:

The packet below can be used regularly over the course of a school year to help students build fluency. There are enough passages to work on one per week.

We recommend that students who need it, practice reading one passage at least 3x daily for a week (15-20 repetitions).

1. First give students the opportunity to listen to a reading by a fluent reader, while “following along in their heads.” *It is essential that students hear the words pronounced accurately and the sentences read with proper punctuation attended to!*
2. Then have students read the passage aloud while monitored for accuracy.
3. When reading aloud, students should focus on reading at an **appropriate pace**, reading words and punctuation **accurately**, and reading with appropriate **expression**.
4. Students need feedback and active monitoring on their fluency progress. One idea is to do a “performance” toward the end of the week where students are expected to read the selection perfectly and be evaluated.
5. Students need to be encouraged. They know they do not read as well as they ought to and want to. It is very good to explain fluency and explain that it is fixable and has nothing at all to do with intelligence!
6. Students need to know they are obligated to understand what they read at all times. For this reason, comprehension questions and a list of high-value vocabulary words are also included with each passage.

After mastery of one passage, students should move on to the next passage and repeat the process. The packet has been organized by genre, but teachers should feel free to re-order the passages to best meet student and classroom needs.

Regular practice of this type **will** help students rapidly build grade-level fluency!

**Please note: These passages have been ordered by genre for ease of organization, but we encourage you to change the order to match your and your students’ needs. In addition, feel free to alternate between passages long and short passages, excerpt from longer passages, or break longer passages up into multiple smaller passages.*

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I Am Still The Greatest
By Muhammad Ali

I have always believed in myself, even as a young child growing up in Louisville, Ky. My parents instilled a sense of pride and confidence in me, and taught me and my brother that we could be the best at anything. I must have believed them, because I remember being the neighborhood marble champion and challenging my neighborhood buddies to see who could jump the tallest hedges or run a foot race the length of the block. Of course I knew when I made the challenge that I would win. I never even thought of losing.

In high school, I boasted weekly — if not daily — that one day I was going to be the heavyweight champion of the world. As part of my boxing training, I would run down Fourth Street in downtown Louisville, darting in and out of local shops, taking just enough time to tell them I was training for the Olympics and I was going to win a gold medal. And when I came back home, I was going to turn pro and become the world heavyweight champion in boxing. I never thought of the possibility of failing — only of the fame and glory I was going to get when I won. I could see it. I could almost feel it. When I proclaimed that I was the "Greatest of All Time," I believed in myself. And I still do.

Throughout my entire boxing career, my belief in my abilities triumphed over the skill of an opponent. My will was stronger than their skills. What I didn't know was that my will would be tested even more when I retired.

In 1984, I was conclusively diagnosed with Parkinson's disease. Since that diagnosis, my symptoms have increased and my ability to speak in audible tones has diminished. If there was anything that would strike at the core of my confidence in myself, it would be this insidious disease. But my confidence and will to continue to live life as I choose won't be compromised.

Early in 1996, I was asked to light the caldron at the Summer Olympic Games in Atlanta. Of course my immediate answer was yes. I never even thought of having Parkinson's or what physical challenges that would present for me.

When the moment came for me to walk out on the 140-foot-high scaffolding and take the torch from Janet Evans, I realized I had the eyes of the world on me. I also realized that as I held the Olympic torch high above my head, my tremors had taken over. Just at that moment, I heard a rumble in the stadium that became a pounding roar and then turned into a deafening applause. I was reminded of my 1960 Olympic experience in Rome, when I won the gold medal. Those 36 years between Rome and Atlanta flashed before me, and I realized that I had come full circle.

Nothing in life has defeated me. I am still the "Greatest." This I believe.

I Am Still The Greatest
Checking for Understanding

1. Give three examples from the text which support Muhammad Ali's statement that, "I have always believed in myself."
2. How was Muhammad Ali's will tested after he retired?

Vocabulary

- conclusively
- insidious
- diminished
- instilled
- compromised
- triumphed
- increased

<http://www.npr.org/templates/story/story.php?storyId=102649267>

Saying Thanks To My Ghosts
By Amy Tan

I didn't used to believe in ghosts, but I was trained to talk to them. My mother reminded me many times that I had the gift. It all stemmed from a lie I told when I was 4. The way my mother remembered it, I refused to get ready for bed one night, claiming there was a ghost in the bathroom. She was delighted to learn I was a spirit medium.

Thereafter, she questioned anything unusual — a sudden gust of wind, a vase that fell and shattered. She would ask me, "She here?" She meant my grandmother.

When I was a child, my mother told me that my grandmother died in great agony after she accidentally ate too much opium. My mother was 9 years old when she watched this happen.

When I was 14, my older brother was stricken with a brain tumor. My mother begged me to ask my grandmother to save him. When he died, she asked me to talk to him as well. "I don't know how," I protested. When my father died of a brain tumor six months after my brother, she made me use a Ouija board. She wanted to know if they still loved her. I spelled out the answer I knew she wanted to hear: Yes. Always.

When I became a fiction writer in my 30s, I wrote a story about a woman who killed herself eating too much opium. After my mother read a draft of that story, she had tears in her eyes. Now she had proof: My grandmother had talked to me and told me her true story. How else could I have known my grandmother had not died by accident but with the fury of suicide? She asked me, "She here now?" I answered honestly, "I don't know."

Over the years, I have included other details in my writing I could not possibly have known on my own: a place, a character, a song. I have come to feel differently about my ghostwriters. Sometimes their clues have come so plentifully, they've made me laugh like a child who can't open birthday presents fast enough. I must say thanks, not to blind luck but to my ghosts.

Ten years ago, I clearly saw a ghost, and she talked to me. It was my mother. She had died just 24 hours before. Her face was 10 times larger than life, in the form of a moving, pulsing hologram of sparkling lights. My mother was laughing at my surprise. She drew closer, and when she reached me, I felt as if I had been physically punched in the chest. It took my breath away and filled me with something absolute: love, but also joy and peace — and with that, understanding that love and joy and peace are all the same thing. Joy comes from love. Peace comes from love. "Now you know," my mother said.

I believe in ghosts. Whenever I want, they will always be there: my mother, my grandmother, my ghosts.

Saying Thanks To My Ghosts
Checking for Understanding

1. How does Amy Tan's belief about ghosts change throughout this story?
2. Who does Amy Tan thank for her writing success?

Vocabulary

- plentifully
- opium
- stemmed
- absolute

<http://www.npr.org/templates/story/story.php?storyId=103412215>

The Learning Curve of Gratitude
By Mary Chapin Carpenter

I believe in what I learned at the grocery store.

Eight weeks ago, I was released from the hospital after suffering a pulmonary embolism. I had just finished a tour and a week after returning home, severe chest pain and terrible breathlessness landed me in the ER. A scan revealed blood clots in my lungs.

Everyone told me how lucky I was. A pulmonary embolism can take your life in an instant. I was familiar enough with the medical term, but not familiar with the pain, the fear and the depression that followed.

Everything I had been looking forward to came to a screeching halt. I had to cancel my upcoming tour. I had to let my musicians and crewmembers go. The record company, the booking agency: I felt that I had let everyone down.

But there was nothing to do but get out of the hospital, go home and get well.

I tried hard to see my unexpected time off as a gift, but I would open a novel and couldn't concentrate. I would turn on the radio, then shut it off. Familiar clouds gathered above my head, and I couldn't make them go away with a pill or a movie or a walk. This unexpected time was becoming a curse, filling me with anxiety, fear and self-loathing — all of the ingredients of the darkness that is depression.

Sometimes, it's the smile of a stranger that helps. Sometimes it's a phone call from a long absent friend, checking on you. I found my lifeline at the grocery store.

One morning, the young man who rang up my groceries and asked me if I wanted paper or plastic also told me to enjoy the rest of my day. I looked at him and I knew he meant it. It stopped me in my tracks. I went out and I sat in my car and cried.

What I want more than ever is to appreciate that I have this day, and tomorrow and hopefully days beyond that. I am experiencing the learning curve of gratitude.

I don't want to say "have a nice day" like a robot. I don't want to get mad at the elderly driver in front of me. I don't want to go crazy when my Internet access is messed up. I don't want to be jealous of someone else's success. You could say that this litany of sins indicates that I don't want to be human. The learning curve of gratitude, however, is showing me exactly how human I am.

I don't know if my doctors will ever be able to give me the precise reason why I had a life-threatening illness. I do know that the young man in the grocery store reminded me that every day is all there is, and that is my belief.

Tonight I will cook dinner, tell my husband how much I love him, curl up with the dogs, watch the sun go down over the mountains and climb into bed. I will think about how uncomplicated it all is. I will wonder at how it took me my entire life to appreciate just one day.

The Learning Curve of Gratitude
Checking for Understanding

1. How did Mary Chapin Carpenter's life change after her pulmonary embolism?
2. What is the Author's Viewpoint? Please make sure to use 4-6 examples from the text to support your answer.
3. What did Mary Chapin Carpenter mean when she said, "I found my lifeline at the grocery store"? Use evidence from the text to support your answer.

Vocabulary

- breathlessness

<http://www.npr.org/templates/story/story.php?storyId=11182405>

A God Who Remembers
By Elie Wiesel

I remember, May 1944: I was 15-and-a-half, and I was thrown into a haunted universe where the story of the human adventure seemed to swing irrevocably between horror and malediction. I remember, I remember because I was there with my father. I was still living with him there. We worked together. We returned to the camp together. We stayed in the same block. We slept in the same box. We shared bread and soup. Never were we so close to one another.

We talked a lot to each other, especially in the evenings, but never of death. I believed — I hoped — that I would not survive him, not even for one day. Without saying it to him, I thought I was the last of our line. With him, our past would die; with me, our future.

The moment the war ended, I believed — we all did — that anyone who survived death must bear witness. Some of us even believed that they survived in order to become witnesses. But then I knew deep down that it would be impossible to communicate the entire story. Nobody can. I personally decided to wait, to see during 10 years if I would be capable to find the proper words, the proper pace, the proper melody or maybe even the proper silence to describe the ineffable.

For in my tradition, as a Jew, I believe that whatever we receive we must share. When we endure an experience, the experience cannot stay with me alone. It must be opened, it must become an offering, it must be deepened and given and shared. And of course I am afraid that memories suppressed could come back with a fury, which is dangerous to all human beings, not only to those who directly were participants but to people everywhere, to the world, for everyone. So, therefore, those memories that are discarded, shamed, somehow they may come back in different ways — disguised, perhaps seeking another outlet.

Granted, our task is to inform. But information must be transformed into knowledge, knowledge into sensitivity and sensitivity into commitment. How can we therefore speak, unless we believe that our words have meaning, that our words will help others to prevent my past from becoming another person's — another peoples' — future. Yes, our stories are essential — essential to memory. I believe that the witnesses, especially the survivors, have the most important role. They can simply say, in the words of the prophet, "I was there."

What is a witness if not someone who has a tale to tell and lives only with one haunting desire: to tell it. Without memory, there is no culture. Without memory, there would be no civilization, no society, no future.

After all, God is God because he remembers.

A God Who Remembers
Checking for Understanding

1. What did Eli Wiesel mean when he said, “With him, our past would die; with me, our future”?
2. What message is Eli Wiesel conveying in this text?

Vocabulary

- irrevocably
- ineffable
- melody
- sensitivity
- independently
- participants
- society

<http://www.npr.org/templates/story/story.php?storyId=89357808>

When Mom Is Right, And Tells Police They're Wrong
By NPR STAFF

When Robert Holmes' parents moved to Edison, N.J., in 1956, they were one of the first African-American families to integrate the neighborhood.

"After we'd moved to Edison, there was a resentment that we had broken into the community," Holmes says.

Even at the age of 13, Holmes felt the animosity. The neighborhood had a private swim club that opened up to anyone who participated in the Memorial Day parade. Holmes was in the band.

"I arrived at the pool on Memorial Day having marched in the parade with my uniform still on, and they called the police," he says.

The pool managers and the police department told Holmes' mother that her son was not allowed in the pool. She started to ask why, but then she stopped herself. Instead, she told Holmes to crawl under the turnstile and go into the pool.

"I looked at my mother; I looked at the police," Holmes says. "And I will tell you that as a 13-year-old, I was more inclined to do what my mother said than to be afraid of the police. So I did it."

A policeman told Holmes' mother to get him. Holmes distinctly remembers her response: "If you want him out of the pool, you go take him out of the pool. And by the way, as you take him out, you tell him why he can't go in the pool today."

"No one came. No one got me out, and I stayed in the pool," Holmes says.

In standing up to the police, Holmes' mother wasn't looking to break barriers for herself.

"I think like a lot of African-American people at the time, my parents were looking ahead of their own generation to the next," Holmes says. "I think they were deciding, we're gonna do something so that our children will have a better life than we have for ourselves."

Holmes, now 67, is a professor at Rutgers School of Law.

When Mom Is Right, And Tells Police They're Wrong
Checking for Understanding

1. Describe Robert Holmes mom's personality using evidence from the text to support your answer.

2. What is the author's main purpose in the text? Use evidence from the text to support your answer.

Vocabulary

- Animosity
- Barriers
- Distinctly
- participated

<http://www.npr.org/2012/06/01/154100293/when-mom-is-right-and-tells-police-theyre-wrong>

Decades Later, Student Finds Teacher To Say 'Thank You'

By NPR Staff

John Cruitt, 62, spent decades tracking down his third-grade teacher. He wanted to talk with Cecile Doyle about 1958 — the year his mother, who was seriously ill with multiple sclerosis, passed away. Her death came just days before Christmas. Cruitt had been expecting to go home from school and decorate the Christmas tree.

"But I walked into the living room, and my aunt was there, and she said, 'Well, honey, Mommy passed away this morning.' "

Cruitt remembers seeing his teacher, Doyle, at his mother's wake.

"When I found out she died, I could certainly relate to that, because when I was 11, my own father died," Doyle tells Cruitt at StoryCorps in Monroe, N.Y. "And you just don't know how you're going to go on without that person."

When Cruitt returned to school, Doyle waited until all of the other children left the room at the end of the day, and told him that she was there if he needed her.

"Then you bent over and kissed me on the head. It was really the only time someone said to me, 'I know what you're feeling, and I know what you're missing,' " Cruitt says. "And I felt, in a very real way, that things really would be OK."

"Well, John, I really loved you as a student, and I'm so glad that I could be there with you for that time," says Doyle, 82.

Decades after his mother's death, when Cruitt became a teacher himself, he began to think more and more of Doyle.

"And I started to think to myself, here I am, with a memory of a teacher who changed my life, and I've never told her that," he says.

So, that's when he finally wrote a letter:

Dear Mrs. Doyle,

If you are not the Cecile Doyle who taught English at Emerson School in Kearny, N.J., then I'm embarrassed, and you can disregard the sentiments that follow.

My name is John Cruitt, and I was in your third-grade class during the 1958-1959 school year. Two days before Christmas, my mother passed away, and you told me that you were there if I needed you. I hope life has been as kind to you as you were to me.

God bless you, always. With great fondness,

John

Doyle says his letter, which arrived in February, could have not come at a better time. Her husband, who passed away this August, was struggling with Parkinson's disease.

"And I had just come home from the hospital, and I read this beautiful letter, and I just was overwhelmed," she says.

"Well the funny thing is, when I finally wrote to you again after 54 years, I typed the letter — I was afraid my penmanship wasn't going to meet your standards," Cruitt says as Doyle laughs.

"Well, after all this time, Mrs. Doyle, all I can say to you is ... thank you."

"John, what can I say — I'm just glad that we made a difference in each other's life."

Decades Later, Student Finds Teacher To Say 'Thank You'
Checking for Understanding

1. How are John Cruitt, and Cecile Doyle similar or different? Provide examples from the text to support your answer.
2. In the text, John Cruitt says, "I hope life has been as kind to you as you were to me." Provide evidence from the text that supports John's statement.

Vocabulary

- None listed

<http://www.npr.org/2012/12/28/168142027/decades-later-student-finds-teacher-to-say-thank-you>

Print Your Own Medicine

By Lee Cronin

Organic chemists make molecules, very complicated molecules, by chopping up a big molecule into small molecules and reverse engineering. And as a chemist, one of the things I wanted to ask my research group a couple of years ago is, could we make a really cool universal chemistry set? In essence, could we "app" chemistry?

Now what would this mean, and how would we do it? Well to start to do this, we took a 3D printer and we started to print our beakers and our test tubes on one side and then print the molecule at the same time on the other side and combine them together in what we call reactionware. And so by printing the vessel and doing the chemistry at the same time, we may start to access this universal toolkit of chemistry.

Now what could this mean? Well if we can embed biological and chemical networks like a search engine, so if you have a cell that's ill that you need to cure or bacteria that you want to kill, if you have this embedded in your device at the same time, and you do the chemistry, you may be able to make drugs in a new way.

So how are we doing this in the lab? Well it requires software, it requires hardware and it requires chemical inks. And so the really cool bit is, the idea is that we want to have a universal set of inks that we put out with the printer, and you download the blueprint, the organic chemistry for that molecule and you make it in the device. And so you can make your molecule in the printer using this software.

So what could this mean? Well, ultimately, it could mean that you could print your own medicine. And this is what we're doing in the lab at the moment.

But to take baby steps to get there, first of all we want to look at drug design and production, or drug discovery and manufacturing. Because if we can manufacture it after we've discovered it, we could deploy it anywhere. You don't need to go to the chemist anymore. We can print drugs at point of need. We can download new diagnostics. Say a new super bug has emerged. You put it in your search engine, and you create the drug to treat the threat. So this allows you on-the-fly molecular assembly.

But perhaps for me the core bit going into the future is this idea of taking your own stem cells, with your genes and your environment, and you print your own personal medicine.

And if that doesn't seem fanciful enough, where do you think we're going to go? Well, you're going to have your own personal matter fabricator. Beam me up, Scotty.
(Applause)

Print Your Own Money
Checking for Understanding

1. Please summarize the key ideas of this piece.
2. What are some analogies or comparisons that Lee Cronin used to explain his “really cool universal chemistry set”?

Vocabulary

- universal
- deploy
- molecular
- ultimately
- chemist
- chemists
- fanciful
- network
- manufacture
- biological

http://www.ted.com/talks/lee_cronin_print_your_own_medicine.html

Why is 'x' the unknown?

By Terry Moore

I have the answer to a question that we've all asked. The question is, Why is it that the letter X represents the unknown? Now I know we learned that in math class, but now it's everywhere in the culture -- The X prize, the X-Files, Project X, TEDx. Where'd that come from?

About six years ago I decided that I would learn Arabic, which turns out to be a supremely logical language. To write a word or a phrase or a sentence in Arabic is like crafting an equation, because every part is extremely precise and carries a lot of information. That's one of the reasons so much of what we've come to think of as Western science and mathematics and engineering was really worked out in the first few centuries of the Common Era by the Persians and the Arabs and the Turks.

This includes the little system in Arabic called al-jebra. And al-jabr roughly translates to "the system for reconciling disparate parts." Al-jabr finally came into English as algebra. One example among many.

The Arabic texts containing this mathematical wisdom finally made their way to Europe -- which is to say Spain -- in the 11th and 12th centuries. And when they arrived there was tremendous interest in translating this wisdom into a European language.

But there were problems. One problem is there are some sounds in Arabic that just don't make it through a European voice box without lots of practice. Trust me on that one. Also, those very sounds tend not to be represented by the characters that are available in European languages.

Here's one of the culprits. This is the letter SHeen, and it makes the sound we think of as SH -- "sh." It's also the very first letter of the word shalan, which means "something" just like the English word "something" -- some undefined, unknown thing.

Now in Arabic, we can make this definite by adding the definite article "al." So this is al-shalan -- the unknown thing. And this is a word that appears throughout early mathematics, such as this 10th century derivation of proofs.

The problem for the Medieval Spanish scholars who were tasked with translating this material is that the letter SHeen and the word shalan can't be rendered into Spanish because Spanish doesn't have that SH, that "sh" sound. So by convention, they created a rule in which they borrowed the CK sound, "ck" sound, from the classical Greek in the form of the letter Kai.

Later when this material was translated into a common European language, which is to say Latin, they simply replaced the Greek Kai with the Latin X. And once that happened, once this material was in Latin, it formed the basis for mathematics textbooks for almost 600 years.

But now we have the answer to our question. Why is it that X is the unknown? X is the unknown because you can't say "sh" in Spanish. (Laughter) And I thought that was worth sharing.

(Applause)

Terry Moore: Why is 'x' the unknown?
Checking for Understanding

1. Briefly summarize why the letter X represents the unknown.
2. What is the author's viewpoint? Use evidence from the text to support your answer.

Vocabulary

- disparate
- reconciling
- undefined
- rendered
- supremely
- proofs
- derivation
- texts
- basis

http://www.ted.com/talks/terry_moore_why_is_x_the_unknown.html

After 30 Years Of Surgeries, Doctor And Patient Dance
By NPR Staff

When Marcela Gaviria was 7 years old, she was diagnosed with Ewing's sarcoma, a type of childhood bone cancer. She survived, and the cancer was cured — but it nearly took her leg.

When Gaviria was 12, she needed a bone transplant and met surgeon Dempsey Springfield, who performed the operation.

"I was pretty scared, I remember, and I think I survived a very sort of traumatic moment 'cause you were so kind," Gaviria, now 43, told Springfield at StoryCorps in Boston.

"What I remember about you were your bow ties. You just looked like such a Southern gentleman, and you'd show up every morning with such a big smile. And you were so warm and gentle, and I wanted to get better for you. I wanted your surgery to work on me."

Gaviria has spent the past 30 years dealing with damage that the cancer did to the bones in her leg and hip, and in all that time she's stuck with Springfield. Even when he has moved, she's traveled so he could keep treating her.

"I just don't trust other doctors as much," she tells him.

Neither Gaviria nor Springfield can remember how many surgeries they've been through together, but it's a lot. Gaviria says she has "shark-attack body" from all the scarring.

When she was a child, Gaviria complained to Springfield that she would never get married.

"I always wondered how difficult it would be for someone to sign up to my life," Gaviria says.

But this year, she did get married. At her wedding, her first dance was with Springfield.

"I wanted you to have the first dance," she told him. "That was just a way of celebrating the fact that a lot of what I'm able to do nowadays is because of your care."

"Your wedding is the first wedding of a patient that I have ever gone to," Springfield said. "It's so rewarding to see that all of that, you know, getting up before the sun comes up to get to the hospital pays off. It wasn't squandered."

"Well, I have a great surgeon that really cared to get it right," Gaviria says. "It's a beautiful thing."

Today, Gaviria walks with a cane. Despite all of the surgeries, there is still a very real possibility that Gaviria will lose her leg, so there are more surgeries in her future. But at least she knows a good surgeon.

After 30 Years Of Surgeries, Doctor And Patient Dance
Checking for Understanding

1. Why does Marcela Gavira feel so connected to Dr. Dempsey Springfield? Use evidence from the text to support your answer.
2. Describe Marcela Gavira's personality using evidence from the text to support your answer.

Vocabulary

- sarcoma
- squandered

<http://www.npr.org/2012/10/26/163183014/after-30-years-of-surgeries-doctor-and-patient-dance>

Latina Sisters Aimed High, Defying Low Expectations
by NPR STAFF

When Linda Hernandez was growing up in Lincoln, Neb., in the 1960s, her family was one of the few Latino families in town. And that sometimes made school life difficult, she says.

"We had to sit in the back of the class and stay after school and clean the erasers when the other kids didn't have to do that," says Linda, now 60. "But both my parents laid down the law and said, 'You had to go to school.' "

Linda and her older sister, Marta, did well academically. But the school's expectations were low. The school counselor told them not to worry about taking the SAT or ACT tests "because we were Hispanic women, [and] all we would do is have babies," Linda told StoryCorps in Albuquerque, N.M.

"So we went home and we told our parents, and my mother went in the back room and cried," Linda says. "And then that's when my brother said, 'Uh-uhn, it ain't happening.' We were very lucky that he was over 6 feet tall. So he walked us down to school and told our high school counselors, 'My sisters will take the test.' "

But then the sisters encountered another obstacle. "In order to take the test, you had to have a No. 2 pencil," Linda says. "My sister and I, we had to walk the alleys to find pop bottles — because that's when you could still turn them in and get money for them — so that we could have money to buy the pencils to go take the test."

They bought the pencils, took the test and "both scored really high," Linda says. Marta received a four-year scholarship to the University of Nebraska, was accepted into medical school and became an OB-GYN. Linda, who works for the U.S. Postal Service as a labor relations specialist, eventually earned a degree in business management.

Linda says she knew her mother took pride in her children's academic work. She would always post their grades on the refrigerator while they were growing up, Linda says, "and if we got straight A's, they were on the refrigerator until the next time we got a report card."

But Linda didn't realize just how much her mother treasured those report cards until she passed away 10 years ago.

"When she knew that she was ill, she had gone and started making photo albums of us kids," Linda says. "I expected to see family photos that we had of us, but I didn't expect to see the report cards in there. And I didn't expect to see the little graduation announcement from when we graduated from high school. Those were in our photo albums, too.

"One thing that made her feel really good was that all her kids went to school," Linda says. "She was very proud of that."

Latina Sisters Aimed High, Defying Low Expectations
Checking for Understanding

1. In the text, Linda Hernandez states, “But the school’s expectations were low.” What evidence from the text best supports this statement?
2. What is the central idea of this text? Give three key details from this story that support the central idea.

Vocabulary

- Latino
- relations
- Hispanic

<http://www.npr.org/2013/03/01/173149122/latina-sisters-aimed-high-defying-low-expectations>

A Life Defined Not By Disability, But Love

By NPR Staff

When Bonnie Brown was pregnant with her daughter, Myra, she says she felt a mix of joy and anxiety.

"I hadn't ever been pregnant before," she says. "I never had really an idea of how to take care of a baby."

Brown, who is intellectually disabled, works at Wendy's while raising Myra as a single mom. Despite her disability, she says she never felt like her daughter was too much to handle.

"I think because I'm different it might seem hard for me, but I was going to give it all I got no matter what," she tells Myra, now 15, during a visit to StoryCorps.

Myra says she never realized her mom was "different," until she told her.

"I said to you, 'Myra, I know I am not like your friends' mothers, but I'm doing the best I can.' And you said, 'It's OK, Mommy,' " Brown recounts. "And that made me feel so good."

Myra remembers a time in third grade when her school held a parent-teacher conference. Before the meeting, Myra told her teacher in confidence that her mom's disabled.

"But the day after the interview, my teacher, she said that you seemed really intelligent. And that made me feel embarrassed," Myra says.

"Why?" her mom asks.

"Because I felt bad that I had said that, and then you had gone and you'd been fine," Myra says. "No offense taken," she responds.

Today, Myra is enrolled in gifted and talented classes at her high school in Lansdowne, Pa., and hopes to attend the University of Cambridge when she graduates.

As a single mom raising Myra, Brown gets help from Community Interactions in Philadelphia, an organization that provides services for her, like cooking and running errands.

Yet Brown says the hardest thing she's had to overcome is emotional hurt. People often blatantly stare at Brown when they're out in public, Myra explains.

"And I would say something [to them]. I guess I am kind of protective," Myra adds. Brown admits that she's also very protective of her daughter, but only because she cares about her so much. "I am really thankful because you understand me, and you love me, and you accept me. And ... thank you for that," Brown tells her daughter.

"I don't know, you kind of make it seem like I tolerate you — I love you. You're a good parent, and just because you're disabled doesn't mean that you do anything less for me," Myra says.

Just like other parents, Brown says she wants to see Myra succeed and go on to college. "I want you to make something of yourself," she tells her.

"I want you to know that even though our situation is unique, I'm happy that I am in it because I am happy that I am with you," Myra says.

"Thank you, Myra, and I feel the same way. And I won't never change it for anything in this world."

A Life Defined Not By Disability, But Love
Checking for Understanding

1. What is the author's main purpose of this text? Give evidence from the text to support your answer.
2. How have Myra's feelings about her mom changed over time? Give evidence from the text to support your answer.

Vocabulary

- recounts
- interactions
- blatantly
- intellectually

<http://www.npr.org/2013/02/08/171382156/a-life-defined-not-by-disability-but-love>

For A Boy With Little, Learning To Love A Castoff Trombone
By NPR Staff

Gilbert Zermeno came from a big family who didn't have much. They lived on the plains of West Texas and got by on the \$100 a week that Gilbert's father made working the cotton fields. So when Gilbert wanted to join the school band in sixth grade, his parents had to get creative, as he explained to his wife, Pat Powers-Zermeno, during a recent visit to StoryCorps in Phoenix.

"I was imagining myself playing the saxophone," he says. One day, he brought home a note from school to show his mom. "The school is bringing in an instrument salesman, and all the kids are going to be there that want to be in band," he told her.

There was a huge dust storm that day, Gilbert recalls, so his mother replied, "There's no way that we can drive in this dust storm, mi hijo [my son]. It's just too dangerous."

Undeterred, Gilbert made a plan. "I took this little statue of the Virgin of Guadalupe, and I put her on the window. And I said, 'I really want to be in the band. Please make this storm go away.' "

Ten minutes later, Gilbert says, the storm "just stopped. And I went over to Mom. I went, 'No wind.' "

"So now, she's in a really tough spot," he laughs.

So they got in the car and drove to school, Gilbert explains. "And there's all these new, shiny instruments. And the parents are just writing checks out. And my mom looks at one of the checks — it's like, 650 bucks. That's six weeks worth of work for my dad.

"So she says, 'Where's the band director? Donde esta el director?' So we went in, and the man said, 'Well, a senior left behind this trombone.' "

It wasn't a saxophone. It wasn't shiny. And it had "a bit of green rust around it," Gilbert says. "And he opens [the case], and the crushed velvet is no longer crushed — it's like, annihilated inside. And I'm just looking at it going, 'That is so pathetic.' "

The director wanted \$50 for the old trombone, so Gilbert's mother worked out a payment plan, sending \$20 initially, then \$5 each week.

"But I was horrible," Gilbert says. "I sat on the toilet in the bathroom, because it was the only room that had a door. And my poor mother had to listen to me play the same thing, over and over again. And she would be turning up the radio as loud as she could," he laughs. "But I also noticed that, the more I practiced and the better I got, the radio was turned down a little further. And I still have that trombone to this day." And that's why the couple's daughter plays the trombone today, says Pat, laughing.

"She could have played any instrument she wanted, and I encouraged that," Gilbert insists. "I said, 'No, mi hija [my daughter]. Really, you can play any instrument you want. I could be one of those parents who could write a check out for a saxophone — anything you want.' "

But Gilbert's daughter knew her mind. As Gilbert describes it, she just said, "No, I want to play the trombone."

For A Boy With Little, Learning To Love A Castoff Trombone
Checking for Understanding

1. What character trait(s) does Gilbert Zermeno possess? Use evidence from the text to support your answer.
2. Why does Gilbert Zermeno's daughter play the trombone? Use evidence from the text to support your answer.

Vocabulary

- annihilated
- initially
- undeterred

<http://www.npr.org/2013/06/21/193973081/for-a-boy-with-little-learning-to-love-a-cast-off-trombone>

The Farmer and the Stork
By Aesop

A farmer placed nets on his newly sown plow lands and caught a number of Cranes, which came to pick up his seed. With them he trapped a Stork that had fractured his leg in the net and was earnestly beseeching the Farmer to spare his life. "Pray save me, Master," he said, "and let me go free this once. My broken limb should excite your pity. Besides, I am no Crane, I am a Stork, a bird of excellent character; and see how I love and slave for my father and mother. Look too, at my feathers-- they are not the least like those of a Crane." The Farmer laughed aloud and said, "It may be all as you say, I only know this: I have taken you with these robbers, the Cranes, and you must die in their company."

Birds of a feather flock together.

The Farmer and the Stork

Checking for Understanding

1. What does “earnestly beseeching” mean as it is used in the following sentence: “With them he trapped a Stork that had fractured his leg in the net and was earnestly beseeching the Farmer to spare his life.”
2. Please explain what the moral of the story means.

Vocabulary

- excite
- beseeching
- slave

<http://www.aesopfables.com/cgi/aesop1.cgi?2&TheFarmerandtheStork&&farmstor2.ram>

The Kid and the Wolf

By Aesop

A kid, returning without protection from the pasture, was pursued by a Wolf. Seeing he could not escape, he turned round, and said: "I know, friend Wolf, that I must be your prey, but before I die I would ask of you one favor you will play me a tune to which I may dance." The Wolf complied, and while he was piping and the Kid was dancing, some hounds hearing the sound ran up and began chasing the Wolf. Turning to the Kid, he said, "It is just what I deserve; for I, who am only a butcher, should not have turned piper to please you."

In time of dire need, clever thinking is key
or Outwit your enemy to save your skin.

The Kid and the Wolf
Checking for Understanding

1. How would you describe the kid in this fable? Use evidence from the text to support your answer.

2. Please explain the meaning of the moral of the story.

Vocabulary

- None listed

<http://www.aesopfables.com/cgi/aesop1.cgi?3&TheKidandtheWolf&&kidwolf2.ram>

The Fox and the Stork

By Aesop

At one time the Fox and the Stork were on visiting terms and seemed very good friends. So the Fox invited the Stork to dinner, and for a joke put nothing before her but some soup in a very shallow dish. This the Fox could easily lap up, but the Stork could only wet the end of her long bill in it, and left the meal as hungry as when she began. "I am sorry," said the Fox, "the soup is not to your liking."

"Pray do not apologize," said the Stork. "I hope you will return this visit, and come and dine with me soon." So a day was appointed when the Fox should visit the Stork; but when they were seated at table all that was for their dinner was contained in a very long-necked jar with a narrow mouth, in which the Fox could not insert his snout, so all he could manage to do was to lick the outside of the jar.

"I will not apologize for the dinner," said the Stork: "One bad turn deserves another."

The Fox and the Stork
Checking for Understanding

1. How did the Fox and the Stork's relationship change from the beginning of the fable to the end?
2. What does the Stork mean when he says, "One bad turn deserves another"?

Vocabulary

- None listed

<http://www.aesopfables.com/cgi/aesop1.cgi?2&TheFoxandtheStork&&foxstork2.ram>

The Fox and the Mask

By Aesop

A Fox had by some means got into the storeroom of a theatre. Suddenly he observed a face glaring down on him and began to be very frightened; but looking more closely he found it was only a Mask such as actors use to put over their face. "Ah," said the Fox, "you look very fine; it is a pity you have not got any brains."

Outside show is a poor substitute for inner worth.

The Fox and the Mask

Checking for Understanding

1. What does the Fox mean when he said, “you loo very fine; it is a pity you have not got any brains”?
2. What does the moral of the story mean?

Vocabulary

- theatre
- observed

<http://www.aesopfables.com/cgi/aesop1.cgi?2&TheFoxandtheMask2&&foxmask2.ram>

The Farmer and the Snake

By Aesop

One winter a Farmer found a Snake stiff and frozen with cold. He had compassion on it, and taking it up, placed it in his bosom. The Snake was quickly revived by the warmth, and resuming its natural instincts, bit its benefactor, inflicting on him a mortal wound. "Oh," cried the Farmer with his last breath, "I am rightly served for pitying a scoundrel."

The greatest kindness will not bind the ungrateful.

The Farmer and the Snake

Checking for Understanding

1. What does the following sentence tell you about the Farmer: “He had compassion on it, and taking it up, placed it in his bosom.”
2. What does the moral of the story mean?

Vocabulary

- inflicting
- bosom
- benefactor
- revived
- resuming

<http://www.aesopfables.com/cgi/aesop1.cgi?2&TheFarmerandtheSnake&farmersnake.jpg&farmersnak2.ram>

The Crow and the Pitcher

By Aesop

A crow perishing with thirst saw a pitcher, and hoping to find water, flew to it with delight. When he reached it, he discovered to his grief that it contained so little water that he could not possibly get at it. He tried everything he could think of to reach the water, but all his efforts were in vain. At last he collected as many stones as he could carry and dropped them one by one with his beak into the pitcher, until he brought the water within his reach and thus saved his life.

Necessity is the mother of invention.

The Crow and the Pitcher

Checking for Understanding

1. What does “perishing” mean as it is used in the following sentence: “A crow perishing with thirst saw a pitcher, and hoping to find water, flew to it with delight.”
2. How did the crow’s mood change throughout this fable?
3. What does the moral of the story mean?

Vocabulary

- necessity
- perishing
- vain

The Bear and the Two Travelers

By Aesop

Two men were traveling together, when a Bear suddenly met them on their path. One of them climbed up quickly into a tree and concealed himself in the branches. The other, seeing that he must be attacked, fell flat on the ground, and when the Bear came up and felt him with his snout, and smelt him all over, he held his breath, and feigned the appearance of death as much as he could. The Bear soon left him, for it is said he will not touch a dead body. When he was quite gone, the other Traveler descended from the tree, and jocularly inquired of his friend what it was the Bear had whispered in his ear. "He gave me this advice," his companion replied. "Never travel with a friend who deserts you at the approach of danger."

Misfortune tests the sincerity of friends.

The Bear and the Two Travelers
Checking for Understanding

1. What does the word “feigned” mean in the following sentence:
“The other, seeing that he must be attacked, fell flat on the ground, and when the Bear came up and felt him with his snout, and smelt him all over, he held his breath, and feigned the appearance of death as much as he could”?
2. What advice did the bear give one of the men? What does it mean?

Vocabulary

- None listed

The Ant and the Dove
By Aesop

An Ant went to the bank of a river to quench its thirst, and being carried away by the rush of the stream, was on the point of drowning. A Dove sitting on a tree overhanging the water plucked a leaf and let it fall into the stream close to her. The Ant climbed onto it and floated in safety to the bank. Shortly afterwards a bird catcher came and stood under the tree, and laid his lime-twigs for the Dove, which sat in the branches. The Ant, perceiving his design, stung him in the foot. In pain the bird catcher threw down the twigs, and the noise made the Dove take wing.

One good turn deserves another

The Ant and the Dove

Checking for Understanding

1. How did the Dove help the ant?
2. What does the moral of the story mean?

Vocabulary

- perceiving

<http://www.aesopfables.com/cgi/aesop1.cgi?1&TheAntandtheDove&&antdove2.ram>

The Elephant and the Crocodile
By H. Berkeley Score

An Elephant and a Crocodile were once standing beside a river. They were disputing as to which was the better animal.

'Look at my strength,' said the Elephant. 'I can tear up a tree, roots and all, with my trunk.'

'Ah! But quantity is not quality, and your skin is not nearly so tough as mine,' replied the Crocodile, 'for neither spear, arrow, nor sword can pierce it.'

Just as they were coming to blows, a Lion happened to pass.

'Heyday, sirs!' said His Majesty, going up to them, 'let me know the cause of your quarrel.'

'Will you kindly tell us which is the better animal?' cried both at once.

'Certainly,' said the Lion. 'Do you see that soldier's steel helmet on yonder wall?' pointing at the same time across the river.

'Yes!' replied the beasts.

'Well, then,' continued the Lion, 'go and fetch it, and bring it to me, and I shall be able then to decide between you.'

Upon hearing this, off they started. The Crocodile, being used to the water, reached the opposite bank of the river first, and was not long in standing beside the wall.

Here he waited till the Elephant came up. The latter, seeing at a glance how matters stood, extended his long trunk, and reached the helmet quite easily.

They then made their way together back again across the river. The Elephant, anxious to keep up with the Crocodile in the water, forgot that he was carrying the helmet on his back, and a sudden lurch caused the prize to slip off and sink to the bottom. The Crocodile noticed the accident, so down he dived, and brought it up in his capacious mouth. They then returned, and the Crocodile laid the helmet at the Lion's feet. His Majesty took up the helmet, and addressing the Elephant, said:

'You, on account of your size and trunk, were able to reach the prize on the wall but, having lost it, you were unable to recover it. And you,' said the Lion, turning to the Crocodile, 'although unable to reach the helmet, were able to dive for it and save it. You are both wise and clever in your respective ways. Neither is better than the other.'

Moral: Every one has his special use in the world.

The Elephant and the Crocodile
Checking for Understanding

1. What does “latter” mean as it is used in the following sentence:
“Here he waited till the Elephant came up. The latter, seeing at a glance how matters stood, extended his long trunk, and reached the helmet quite easily.”
2. Explain the moral of the story using your own words. Make sure to include evidence from the text to support your answer.

Vocabulary

- respective
- capacious
- heyday
- moral
- disputing
- quantity

<http://www.gutenberg.org/files/20117/20117-h/20117-h.htm>

Icarus and Dædalus
By Josephine Preston Peabody

Among all those mortals who grew so wise that they learned the secrets of the gods, none was more cunning than Dædalus.

He once built, for King Minos of Crete, a wonderful Labyrinth of winding ways so cunningly tangled up and twisted around that, once inside, you could never find your way out again without a magic clue. But the king's favor veered with the wind, and one day he had his master architect imprisoned in a tower. Dædalus managed to escape from his cell; but it seemed impossible to leave the island, since every ship that came or went was well guarded by order of the king.

At length, watching the sea-gulls in the air,—the only creatures that were sure of liberty,—he thought of a plan for himself and his young son Icarus, who was captive with him.

Little by little, he gathered a store of feathers great and small. He fastened these together with thread, moulded them in with wax, and so fashioned two great wings like those of a bird. When they were done, Dædalus fitted them to his own shoulders, and after one or two efforts, he found that by waving his arms he could winnow the air and cleave it, as a swimmer does the sea. He held himself aloft, wavered this way and that, with the wind, and at last, like a great fledgling, he learned to fly.

Without delay, he fell to work on a pair of wings for the boy Icarus, and taught him carefully how to use them, bidding him beware of rash adventures among the stars. "Remember," said the father, "never to fly very low or very high, for the fogs about the earth would weigh you down, but the blaze of the sun will surely melt your feathers apart if you go too near."

For Icarus, these cautions went in one ear and out by the other. Who could remember to be careful when he was to fly for the first time? Are birds careful? Not they! And not an idea remained in the boy's head but the one joy of escape.

The day came, and the fair wind that was to set them free. The father bird put on his wings, and, while the light urged them to be gone, he waited to see that all was well with Icarus, for the two could not fly hand in hand. Up they rose, the boy after his father. The hateful ground of Crete sank beneath them; and the country folk, who caught a glimpse of them when they were high above the tree-tops, took it for a vision of the gods,—Apollo, perhaps, with Cupid after him.

At first there was a terror in the joy. The wide vacancy of the air dazed them,—a glance downward made their brains reel. But when a great wind filled their wings, and Icarus felt himself sustained, like a halcyon-bird in the hollow of a wave, like a child uplifted by his mother, he forgot everything in the world but joy. He forgot Crete and the other islands that he had passed over: he saw but vaguely that winged thing in the distance before him that was his father Dædalus. He longed for one draught of flight to quench the thirst of his captivity: he stretched out his arms to the sky and made towards the highest heavens.

Alas for him! Warmer and warmer grew the air. Those arms, that had seemed to uphold him, relaxed. His wings wavered, drooped. He fluttered his young hands vainly,—he was falling,—and in that terror he remembered. The heat of the sun had melted the wax from his wings; the feathers were falling, one by one, like snowflakes; and there was none to help.

He fell like a leaf tossed down the wind, down, down, with one cry that overtook Dædalus far away. When he returned, and sought high and low for the poor boy, he saw nothing but the bird-like feathers afloat on the water, and he knew that Icarus was drowned.

The nearest island he named Icaria, in memory of the child; but he, in heavy grief, went to the temple of Apollo in Sicily, and there hung up his wings as an offering. Never again did he attempt to fly.

Icarus and Daedalus
Checking for Understanding

1. Who was King Minos of Crete's master architect?
2. Why might the author have chosen to include the following paragraph in the story:

“For Icarus, these cautions went in one ear and out by the other. Who could remember to be careful when he was to fly for the first time? Are birds careful? Not they! And not an idea remained in the boy's head but the one joy of escape.”
3. Reread the following sentence: “He fluttered his young hands vainly,—he was falling,—and in that terror he remembered.” What did Icarus remember?
4. Why did Dædalus never again attempt to fly?

Vocabulary

- cunningly
- moulded
- vacancy
- uplifted
- sustained
- captive
- fogs
- cautions
- fledgling
- folk

The Spider and the Fly

By Mary Howitt

“Will you walk into my parlor?” said the Spider to the Fly,
“’Tis the prettiest little parlor that ever you did spy;
The way into my parlor is up a winding stair,
And I have many curious things to show when you are there.”
“Oh, no, no,” said the little Fly, “to ask me is in vain;
For who goes up your winding stair can ne’er come down again.”
“I’m sure you must be weary, dear, with soaring up so high;
Will you rest upon my little bed?” said the Spider to the Fly.
“There are pretty curtains drawn around, the sheets are fine and thin;
And if you like to rest a while, I’ll snugly tuck you in!”
“Oh, no, no,” said the little Fly, “for I’ve often heard it said,
They never, never wake again, who sleep upon your bed!”
Said the cunning Spider to the Fly, “Dear friend, what can I do
To prove the warm affection I’ve always felt for you?
I have, within my pantry, good store of all that’s nice;
I’m sure you’re very welcome—will you please to take a slice?”
“Oh, no, no,” said the little Fly, “kind sir, that cannot be,
I’ve heard what’s in your pantry, and I do not wish to see!”
“Sweet creature,” said the Spider, “you’re witty and you’re wise;
How handsome are your gauzy wings, how brilliant are your eyes!
I have a little looking-glass upon my parlor shelf;
If you’ll step in one moment, dear, you shall behold yourself.”
“I thank you, gentle sir,” she said, “for what you’re pleased to say,
And bidding you good morning now, I’ll call another day.”
The Spider turned him round about, and went into his den,
For well he knew the silly Fly would soon be back again;
So he wove a subtle web in a little corner sly,
And set his table ready to dine upon the Fly.
Then he came out to his door again, and merrily did sing:
“Come hither, hither, pretty Fly, with the pearl and silver wing;
Your robes are green and purple, there’s a crest upon your head;
Your eyes are like the diamond bright, but mine are dull as lead.”
Alas, alas! how very soon this silly little Fly,
Hearing his wily, flattering words, came slowly flitting by:
With buzzing wings she hung aloft, then near and nearer drew—
Thinking only of her brilliant eyes, and green and purple hue;
Thinking only of her crested head—poor foolish thing! At last,
Up jumped the cunning Spider, and fiercely held her fast.
He dragged her up his winding stair, into his dismal den
Within his little parlor—but she ne’er came out again!

The Spider and the Fly
Checking for Understanding

1. What are the different ways the Spider tried to invite the Fly into his parlor?
2. How did the Spider finally trick the Fly into his parlor? What does that tell you about the Fly?
3. How and why does the Fly's response to the Spider change from the beginning to the end of the text?

Vocabulary

- behold
- wily
- flitting
- vain

http://famousliteraryworks.com/howitt_the_spider_and_the_fly_funny.htm

Generosity
By J. Erskine Clarke

A father of a family wished to settle his property between his three sons. He therefore made three equal parts of his chief possessions and gave one part to each son. There remained over a diamond ring of great value, which he reserved for the son who should perform the noblest and most generous action within the space of three months. The sons separated, and at the appointed time presented themselves before him.

The eldest son said, 'Father, during my absence I had in my power all the riches and fortune of a person who entrusted them to me without any security of any kind; he asked me for them, and I returned them to him with the greatest honesty.'

'You have done, my son,' replied the father, 'only what was your duty, and I should die of shame if you were capable of doing otherwise, for honesty is a duty; what you did was just, but not generous.'

It was now the second son's turn, and he spoke thus: 'I was on the banks of a lake, when, seeing a child fall in, I threw myself in, and with great danger to myself drew him out. I did it in the presence of some countrymen, who will testify to the truth of it.'

'Well and good,' replied the father, 'but there is only humanity in that action.'

At last came the turn of the third son, who spoke thus: 'I found my mortal enemy, who had strayed during the night, and was sleeping on the edge of a precipice in such a manner that the least false movement on waking would have thrown him over. His life was in my hands; I was careful to wake him with precaution, and drew him out of danger.'

'Ah, my son!' exclaimed the father, overjoyed, embracing him, 'without doubt you deserve the ring.'

Generosity

Checking for Understanding

1. What does “chief” mean as it is used in the following sentence: “He therefore made three equal parts of his chief possessions and gave one part to each son”?
2. How do you feel about the father’s decision to give the diamond ring to the third son rather than one of the other sons? Use evidence from the text to support your answer.

Vocabulary

- entrusted
- countrymen
- manner
- noblest

<http://www.gutenberg.org/files/20117/20117-h/20117-h.htm>

Outwitting Himself
By J. Erskine Clarke

A celebrated physician once attended the child of a wealthy French lady, who was so grateful for the recovery of her boy that she determined to give a larger fee than usual for his attendance. As he was taking leave on his final visit, the grateful mother handed to the doctor a handsome pocket-book, which she said she had worked with her own hands. The doctor bowed stiffly, and said, 'Madam, the pocket-book is quite a work of art, and I admire it exceedingly, but my fee is two thousand francs.'

'Not more?' she replied; and taking the pocket-book back, she removed from it five one-thousand franc-notes, and handed two of them to the doctor, bowing stiffly in her turn, and, replacing the other three notes in the rejected pocket-book, she retired.

Outwitting Himself
Checking for Understanding

1. Why did the doctor refuse the pocketbook? Use evidence from the text to support your answer.
2. Create a moral for this story.

Vocabulary

- Exceedingly

<http://www.gutenberg.org/files/20117/20117-h/20117-h.htm>

A Strong Motive

By M.H.

Robert Louis Stevenson tells of a Welsh blacksmith who, at the age of twenty-five, could neither read nor write. He then heard a chapter of *Robinson Crusoe* read aloud. It was the scene of the wreck, and he was so impressed by the thought of what he missed by his ignorance, that he set to work that very day, and was not satisfied until he had learned to read in Welsh. His disappointment was great when he found all his pains had been thrown away, for he could only obtain an English copy of the book. Nothing daunted, he began once more, and learned English, and at last had the joy and triumph of being able to read the delightful story for himself.

A strong motive and a steady purpose overcome the greatest difficulties.

A Strong Motive

Checking for Understanding

1. Describe the blacksmith's personality using evidence from the text to support your answer.
2. What does "daunted" mean as it is used in the following sentence: "Nothing daunted, he began once more, and learned English, and at last had the joy and triumph of being able to read the delightful story for himself."

Vocabulary

- ignorance
- difficulties

<http://www.gutenberg.org/files/20117/20117-h/20117-h.htm>

Song of the Witches
By William Shakespeare

Double, double toil and trouble;
Fire burn and caldron bubble.
Fillet of a fenny snake,
In the caldron boil and bake;
Eye of newt and toe of frog,
Wool of bat and tongue of dog,
Adder's fork and blind-worm's sting,
Lizard's leg and howlet's wing,
For a charm of powerful trouble,
Like a hell-broth boil and bubble.

Double, double toil and trouble;
Fire burn and caldron bubble.
Cool it with a baboon's blood,
Then the charm is firm and good.

Song of the Witches

Checking for Understanding

1. How does the author use rhythm in the poem?
2. How does the author use repetition and rhyme in the poem?
3. How does the title contribute to your understanding of the poem?

Vocabulary

- toil
- fillet
- caldron

<http://shakespeare.mit.edu/macbeth/macbeth.4.1.html>

I'm Nobody! Who are you?
By Emily Dickinson

I'm Nobody! Who are you?
Are you – Nobody – too?
Then there's a pair of us!
Don't tell! They'd advertise – you know!

How dreary – to be – Somebody!
How public – like a Frog –
To tell one's name – the livelong June –
To an admiring Bog!

I'm Nobody! Who are you?
Checking for Understanding

1. Who is "Nobody" in this poem?
2. How did the author use punctuation in this poem?

Vocabulary

- livelong

<http://shakespeare.mit.edu/macbeth/macbeth.4.1.html>

I Am

By Voltaraine de Cleyre

I am! The ages on the ages roll:
And what I am, I was, and I shall be:
by slow growth filling higher Destiny,
And Widening, ever, to the widening Goal.
I am the Stone that slept; down deep in me
That old, old sleep has left its centurine trace;
I am the plant that dreamed; and lo! still see
That dream-life dwelling on the Human Face.
I slept, I dreamed, I wakened: I am Man!
The hut grows Palaces; the depths breed light;
Still on! Forms pass; but Form yields kinglier
Might!
The singer, dying where his song began,
In Me yet lives; and yet again shall he
Unseal the lips of greater songs To Be;
For mine the thousand tongues of Immortality.

I Am

Checking for Understanding

1. How did the author use repetition in this poem?
2. How did the author use rhythm and rhyme in this poem?

Vocabulary

- yields
- dwelling
- immortality

<http://www.poemhunter.com/poem/i-am-399/>

Some One

by Walter de la Mare

Some one came knocking
At my wee, small door;
Someone came knocking;
I'm sure-sure-sure;
I listened, I opened,
I looked to left and right,
But nought there was a stirring
In the still dark night;
Only the busy beetle
Tap-tapping in the wall,
Only from the forest
The screech owl's call,
Only the cricket whistling
While the dewdrops fall,
So I know not who came knocking,
At all, at all, at all.

Some One
Checking for Understanding

1. Who do you think “Someone” is?
2. How did the author use repetition in this poem?
3. How did the author use rhythm and rhyme in this poem?

Vocabulary

- wee
- nought

<http://www.poemhunter.com/poem/some-one/>

I Dream'd in a Dream
By Walt Whitman

I dream'd in a dream I saw a city invincible to the attacks of the
whole of the rest of the earth,
I dream'd that was the new city of Friends,
Nothing was greater there than the quality of robust love, it led the rest,
It was seen every hour in the actions of the men of that city,
And in all their looks and words.

I Dream'd in a Dream

Checking for Understanding

1. What does “invincible” mean as it is used in the following sentence:
“I dream'd in a dream I saw a city invincible to the attacks of the whole of the rest of the earth”.
2. How did the author use rhythm and rhyme in this poem?

Vocabulary

- liberating

When you are old

W B Yeats

When you are old and grey and full of sleep,
And nodding by the fire, take down this book,
And slowly read, and dream of the soft look
Your eyes had once, and of their shadows deep;

How many loved your moments of glad grace,
And loved your beauty with love false or true,
But one man loved the pilgrim soul in you,
And loved the sorrows of your changing face;

And bending down beside the glowing bars,
Murmur, a little sadly, how Love fled
And paced upon the mountains overhead
And hid his face amid a crowd of stars.

When you are old
Checking for Understanding

1. What does the author advise you to do “when you are old and grey and full of sleep”?
2. How did the author use rhythm and rhyme in this poem?
3. What are some examples of figurative language in this text? How does this add to the reader’s understanding of the text?

Vocabulary

- amid
- sorrows

<http://www.publicdomainpoems.com/whenyouareold.html>

The House on the Hill
By Edwin Arlington Robinson

They are all gone away,
The House is shut and still,
There is nothing more to say.

Through broken walls and gray
The winds blow bleak and shrill:
They are all gone away.

Nor is there one to-day
To speak them good or ill:
There is nothing more to say.

Why is it then we stray
Around the sunken sill?
They are all gone away,

And our poor fancy-play
For them is wasted skill:
There is nothing more to say.

There is ruin and decay
In the House on the Hill:
They are all gone away,
There is nothing more to say.

The House on the Hill
Checking for Understanding

1. How did the author use repetition in this poem?
2. How did the author use rhythm and rhyme in this poem?
3. How would you describe the house on the hill?

Vocabulary

- None listed

<http://poetry.about.com/od/poemsbytitleh/l/blrobinsonhouseonthehill.htm>

The Last Night
By Clark Ashton Smith

I dreamed a dream: I stood upon a height,
A mountain's utmost eminence of snow,
Whence I beheld the plain outstretched below
To a far sea-horizon, dim and white.
Beneath the sun's expiring, ghastly light,
The dead world lay, phantasmally aglow;
Its last fear-weighted voice, a wind, came low;
The distant sea lay hushed, as with affright.

I watched, and lo! the pale and flickering sun,
In agony and fierce despair, flamed high,
And shadow-slain, went out upon the gloom.
Then Night, that grim, gigantic struggle won,
Impended for a breath on wings of doom,
And through the air fell like a falling sky.

The Last Night
Checking for Understanding

1. What are some examples of figurative language in this text? How does this add to the reader's understanding of the text?
2. How does this poem's form or structure contribute to its meaning?

Vocabulary

- None listed

<http://www.public-domain-poetry.com/clark-ashton-smith/last-night-38859>

The Price
By Clark Ashton Smith

Behind each thing a shadow lies;
Beauty hath e'er its cost:
Within the moonlight-flooded skies
How many stars are lost!

The Price

Checking for Understanding

1. How does the title contribute to your understanding of the poem?
2. What is the tone of this poem? What specific words or phrases help set the tone?

Vocabulary

- None listed

The Soul Of The Sea
By Clark Ashton Smith

A wind comes in from the sea,
And rolls through the hollow dark
Like loud, tempestuous waters.
As the swift recurrent tide,
It pours adown the sky,
And rears at the cliffs of night
Uppiled against the vast.

Like the soul of the sea -
Hungry, unsatisfied
With ravin of shores and of ships -
Come forth on the land to seek
New prey of tideless coasts,
It raves, made hoarse with desire,
And the sounds of the night are dumb
With the sound of its passing.

The Soul Of The Sea
Checking for Understanding

1. According to the author, what is “like the soul of the sea”?
2. What are some examples of figurative language in this text? How does this add to the reader’s understanding of the text?

Vocabulary

- tempestuous
- recurrent
- unsatisfied

http://www.ted.com/talks/terry_moore_why_is_x_the_unknown.html - 211646

The Star Spangled Banner
By Frances Scott Key
Music by John Stafford Smith

1.

O say can you see by the dawn's early light,
What so proudly we hail'd at the twilight's last gleaming?
Whose broad stripes and bright stars thro' the perilous fight,
O'er the ramparts we watch'd were so gallantly streaming?
And the rockets red glare, the bombs bursting in air,
Gave proof through the night that our flag was still there.

CHORUS

[repeated two times in the original version, after each verse]

Oh say, does that star spangled banner yet wave,
O'er the land of the free and the home of the brave?

2.

On the shore dimly seen thro' the mist of the deep,
Where the foe's haughty host in dread silence reposes,
What is that which the breeze, o'er the towering steep
As it fitfully blows, half conceals, half discloses?
Now it catches the gleam of the morning's first beam,
In full glory reflected now shines in the stream.

3.

And where is that band who so vauntingly swore,
That the havoc of war and the battle's confusion,
A home and a country shall leave us no more?
Their blood has wash'd out their foul footsteps' pollution.
No refuge could save the hirelings and slave
From the terror of flight or the gloom of the grave.

4.

O thus be it ever, when freemen shall stand
Between their lov'd home, and the war's desolation;
Blest with vict'ry and peace, may the heav'n rescued land,
Praise the Power that hath made and preserv'd us a nation.
Then conquer we must, when our cause it is just,
And this be our motto, "In God is our trust."

The Star Spangled Banner
Checking for Understanding

1. What is being described in stanza 2:

“On the shore dimly seen thro' the mist of the deep,
Where the foe's haughty host in dread silence reposes,
What is that which the breeze, o'er the towering steep
As it fitfully blows, half conceals, half discloses?
Now it catches the gleam of the morning's first beam,
In full glory reflected now shines in the stream.”

2. How did the author use rhyme and rhythm in this poem?

Vocabulary

- desolation
- blest
- conceals
- repose
- disclose
- freemen
- havoc
- perilous
- hath
- unchained

<http://www.pdmusic.org/1800s/14tssb.txt>

America the Beautiful

By Katherine Lee Bates, Music by Samuel A. Ward

1.

O beautiful for spacious skies,
For amber waves of grain,
For purple mountain majesties
Above the fruited plain!

[CHORUS]

America! America!
God shed His grace on thee,
And crown thy good with brotherhood
From sea to shining sea.

2.

O beautiful for pilgrim feet,
Whose stern, impassioned stress
A thoroughfare for freedom beat
Across the wilderness!

[CHORUS]

America! America!
God mend thine ev-ery flaw,
Confirm thy soul in self-control,
Thy liberty in law.

3.

O beautiful for heroes proved
In liberating strife,
Who more than self their country loved,
And mercy more than life!

[CHORUS]

America! America!
May God thy gold refine,
Till all success be nobelness,
And ev-ery gain divine.

4.

O beautiful for patriot dream
That sees beyond the years
Thine alabaster cities gleam,
Undimmed by human tears!

[CHORUS]

America! America!
God shed His grace on thee,
And crown thy good with brotherhood
From sea to shining sea.
America the Beautiful

America the Beautiful
Checking for Understanding

1. How did the author use rhythm and rhyme in this song?
2. How does the author use repetition in this song?
3. Reread stanza 3 and explain the meaning in your own words:
 “O beautiful for heroes proved
 In liberating strife,
 Who more that self their country loved,
 And mercy more than life!”

Vocabulary

- liberating
- impassioned
- strife
- thoroughfare
- brotherhood
- thine

<http://www.pdmusic.org/1900s/10atb.txt>

Keep the Home-Fires Burning
(Till the Boys Come Home)

By Lena Guilbert Ford

Music by Ivor Novello

1.

They were summoned from the hillside,
They were called in from the glen,
And the Country found them ready
At the stirring call for men.
Let no tears add to their hardship,
As the Soldiers pass along
And although your heart is breaking,
Make it sing this cheery song.

REFRAIN: sung after each verse
Keep the Home-fires burning,
While your hearts are yearning,
Though your lads are far away
They dream of Home;
There's a silver lining
Through the dark cloud shining,
Turn the dark cloud inside out,
Till the boys come Home.

2.

Over seas there came a pleading,
"Help a Nation in distress!"
And we gave our glorious laddies,
Honor made us do no less.
For no gallant Son of Freedom
To a tyrant's yoke should bend,
And a noble heart must answer
To the sacred call of "Friend!"

Keep the Home-Fires Burning
Checking for Understanding

1. How did the author use rhythm and rhyme in this song?
2. How does the author use repetition in this song?
3. How does the title contribute to your understanding of the song?

Vocabulary

- None listed

<http://www.pdmusic.org/1900s/14kthfb.txt>

Emblems of Mem'ry Are These Tears
By Anonymous

Emblems of Mem 'ry are these tears
Sad and distressing to the Mind
Flowing for all succeeding Years
From ev'ry Patriot left behind
Could they alas his life restore
Well might Columbia mourn
Yet let the annual Tribute pour
To wet the Hero's Urn
Yet let the annual Tribute pour
To wet the Hero's Urn to wet the Hero's Urn

Emblems of Mem'ry are these tears
Sad and distressing to the Mind
Flowing for all succeeding Years
From ev'ry Patriot left behind
Flowing for all succeeding Years
From ev'ry Patriot left behind
From ev'ry Patriot left behind.

Emblems of Mem'ry Are These Tears
Checking for Understanding

1. How does the author use repetition in this song?
2. What is the mood of this song? Use evidence from the text to support your answer.

Vocabulary

- None listed

<http://www.pdmusic.org/1800s/00eomatt.txt>

Stars of the Summer Night
By Henry Wadsworth Longfellow
Music by Berthold Tours

1

Stars of the summer night!
Far in yon azure deeps,
Hide, hide your golden light!
She sleeps! my lady sleeps! She sleeps!

2

Moon of the summer night!
Far down yon western steeps,
Sink, sink in silver light!
She sleeps! my lady sleeps! She sleeps.

3

Wind of the summer night!
Where yonder woodbine creeps,
Fold, fold thy pinions light!
Fold, fold thy pinions light!
She sleeps! She sleeps!
She sleeps, my lady sleeps.

4

Dreams of the summer night.
Tell her, her lover keeps watch.
Her lover keeps watch!
while in slumbers light She sleeps!
She sleeps! my lady sleeps,
my lady sleeps, my lady sleeps,
my lady sleeps! She sleeps!

Stars of the Summer Night
Checking for Understanding

1. How does the author use repetition and rhyme in this song?
2. Who might the author be speaking about in this song?

Vocabulary

- slumbers
- pinions
- deeps
- azure

<http://www.pdmusic.org/1800s/40sotsn-bt.txt>

Fluency Packet 6-8
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