

Amplify.

Fluency Supplement

Grades 4 and 5

GRADES 4 AND 5 Core Knowledge Language Arts®



Core Knowledge®



Fluency Supplement

GRADES 4 AND 5

Core Knowledge Language Arts®



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Introduction

This *Fluency Supplement* was created to accompany Core Knowledge Language Arts (CKLA) materials for Grades 4 and 5. It consists of selections from a variety of genres including poetry, folklore, fables, and other selections. These selections provide additional opportunities for students to practice reading with fluency and expression (prosody). You may choose and use the selections at your discretion in any order, though they are arranged by text type, then genre.

There are sufficient selections so you may, if desired, use one selection per week. Follow these guidelines to use selections in this Supplement. For Lesson 1 in a unit, choose a selection and make sufficient copies for each student. Take time to model reading the selection aloud to students. Students would then take the selection home to practice reading aloud throughout the week, with the expectation that they be prepared to read the selection fluently and with prosody by the end of the week. During Lesson 5, select a few students to read the selection aloud, either individually or chorally. Be sure to provide opportunities for different students to read aloud each week. The selection chosen for Lesson 6 will be read aloud in Lesson 10; the selection chosen for Lesson 11 will be read aloud in Lesson 15.

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

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

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

Dear Family Member,

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

At the end of the week, your child may be called upon to practice reading the selection aloud in class.

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

NAME: _____

TAKE-HOME

DATE: _____

1. “The Arrow and the Song”

by Henry W. Longfellow

I shot an arrow into the air,
It fell to earth, I knew not where;
For, so swiftly it flew, the sight
Could not follow it in its flight.

I breathed a song into the air,
It fell to earth, I knew not where;
For who has sight so keen and strong
That it can follow the flight of song?

Long, long afterward, in an oak
I found the arrow, still unbroke;
And the song, from beginning to end,
I found again in the heart of a friend.

Word Count: 88

NAME: _____

QUESTIONS

DATE: _____

Comprehension Questions

“The Arrow and the Song”

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

1. **Literal** What two things did the author put out in the air?
 - » an arrow and a song

2. **Inferential** Why did the author lose these things?
 - » The arrow flew away too fast to follow it with sight. Nobody can see a song to follow where it goes.

3. **Literal** Where did the author find the arrow?
 - » The arrow was found unbroken in an oak (tree).

4. **Inferential** What happened to the song?
 - » The author found it in a friend’s heart, meaning a friend knew the song.

NAME: _____

TAKE-HOME

DATE: _____

2. “It Couldn’t Be Done”

by Edgar A. Guest

Somebody said that it couldn’t be done,
But he with a chuckle replied
That “maybe it couldn’t,” but he would be one
Who wouldn’t say so till he’d tried.
So he buckled right in with the trace of a grin
On his face. If he worried he hid it.
He started to sing as he tackled the thing
That couldn’t be done, and he did it.

Somebody scoffed: “Oh, you’ll never do that;
At least no one ever has done it’;
But he took off his coat and he took off his hat,
And the first thing we knew he’d begun it.
With a lift of his chin and a bit of a grin,
Without any doubting or quiddit,
He started to sing as he tackled the thing
That couldn’t be done, and he did it.

There are thousands to tell you it cannot be done,
There are thousands to prophesy failure;
There are thousands to point out to you one by one,
The dangers that wait to assail you.

But just buckle in with a bit of a grin,
Just take off your coat and go to it;
Just start to sing as you tackle the thing
That “cannot be done,” and you’ll do it.

Word Count: 206

NAME: _____

DATE: _____

Comprehension Questions

“It Couldn’t Be Done”

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

1. **Inferential** Why did the first person state he had to try it before saying it couldn’t be done?
 - » He thought it would be wrong to say that something couldn’t be done until he tried it out to see whether or not it could actually be done. If he tried it and he couldn’t do it, then he could truthfully say it couldn’t be done because he would know from experience.

2. **Literal** What did the second person do?
 - » something that someone said no one has ever done and he did it

3. **Evaluative** What is the message of this poem?
 - » Don’t listen to people who warn you something can’t be done. Try it for yourself. Once you get started and work to do it, you’ll find that it can likely be done.

NAME: _____

TAKE-HOME

DATE: _____

3. “Be the Best of Whatever You Are”

by Douglas Malloch

If you can't be a pine on the top of the hill
Be a scrub in the valley—but be
The best little scrub by the side of the rill;
Be a bush if you can't be a tree.

If you can't be a bush be a bit of the grass,
And some highway some happier make;
If you can't be a muskie then just be a bass—
But the liveliest bass in the lake!

We can't all be captains, we've got to be crew,
There's something for all of us here.
There's big work to do and there's lesser to do,
And the task we must do is the near.

If you can't be a highway then just be a trail,
If you can't be the sun be a star;
It isn't by size that you win or you fail—
Be the best of whatever you are!

Word Count: 148

NAME: _____

DATE: _____

Comprehension Questions

“Be the Best of Whatever You Are”

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

1. **Literal** If you can’t be a tree, what should you be?
 - » a bush

2. **Inferential** What does it mean that we can’t all be captains, we’ve got to be the crew?
 - » Not everyone can be in charge and do the big work; people are needed to do the lesser work too, which helps the captain and helps the big work.

3. **Evaluative** What is the message in this poem?
 - » The message is that no matter who or what you are, be the best you can be of that.

NAME: _____

DATE: _____

4. “Rain in Summer”

by Henry W. Longfellow

How beautiful is the rain!

After the dust and heat,

In the broad and fiery street,

In the narrow lane,

How beautiful is the rain!

How it clatters along the roofs,

Like the tramp of hoofs!

How it gushes and struggles out

From the throat of the overflowing spout!

Across the window pane

It pours and pours;

And swift and wide,

With a muddy tide,

Like a river down the gutter roars

The rain, the welcome rain!

In the country, on every side,
Where far and wide,
Like a leopard's tawny and spotted hide,
Stretches the plain,
To the dry grass and the drier grain
How welcome is the rain!

Word Count: 110

NAME: _____

QUESTIONS

DATE: _____

Comprehension Questions

“Rain in Summer”

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

1. **Literal** When is the rain welcome?
 - » after the dust and heat

2. **Literal** Where does the rain fall?
 - » in the street, in the lane, along the roofs, through a spout, across a window pane, down the gutters

3. **Inferential** If the rain is falling in the country in the last part of the poem, where is the rain falling in the first part of the poem? How do you know?
 - » in a city or town; the places the rain falls are found in a city or town—street, roofs (of multiple homes/buildings), gutters

NAME: _____

TAKE-HOME

DATE: _____

5. “Two Songs”

by Paul Laurence Dunbar

A bee that was searching for sweets one day
Through the gate of a rose garden happened to stray.
In the heart of a rose he hid away,
And forgot in his bliss the light of day,
As sipping his honey he buzzed in song;
Though day was waning, he lingered long,
For the rose was sweet, so sweet.

A robin sits pluming his ruddy breast,
And a madrigal sings to his love in her nest:
“Oh, the skies they are blue, the fields are green,
And the birds in your nest will soon be seen!”
She hangs on his words with a thrill of love,
And chirps to him as he sits above
For the song is sweet, so sweet.

A maiden was out on a summer’s day
With the winds and the waves and the flowers at play;
And she met with a youth of gentle air,
With the light of the sunshine on his hair.
Together they wandered the flowers among;
They loved, and loving they lingered long,
For to love is sweet, so sweet.

Bird of my lady's bower,
Sing her a song;
Tell her that every hour,
All the day long,
Thoughts of her come to me,
Filling my brain
With the warm ecstasy
Of love's refrain.

Little bird! happy bird!
Being so near,
Where e'en her slightest word
Thou mayest hear,
Seeing her glancing eyes,
Sheen of her hair,
Thou art in paradise,—
Would I were there.

I am so far away,
Thou art so near;
Plead with her, birdling gay,
Plead with my dear.
Rich be thy recompense,
Fine be thy fee,
If through thine eloquence
She hearken me.

Word Count: 277

NAME: _____

DATE: _____

Comprehension Questions

“Two Songs”

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

1. **Literal** What three things are so sweet?
 - » honey in the rose, the robin’s song, to love

2. **Inferential** Why did the bee stay in the rose after sundown?
 - » He was so happy drinking the honey, and it tasted so sweet, that he forgot about what time it was.

3. **Evaluative** Who is the second part of the poem for? How do you know?
 - » A lady that someone loves; the person tells the bird to sing the lady a song so the lady knows the person thinks of her all day and wishes he or she could be near her instead of the bird being near her.

NAME: _____

TAKE-HOME

DATE: _____

6. “The Fir Tree”

by Hans Christian Andersen
(Adaptation)

Out in the woods stood a nice little Fir Tree. The sun shone on him, there was fresh air, and around him grew many large-sized trees. But the little Fir wanted so very much to be a grown-up tree. At the end of a year he had shot up a good deal, and after another year he was another bit taller.

“I wish I was as big as the other trees,” he sighed. “Then I could spread out my branches with the tops to look into the wide world! The birds would build nests among my branches.”

Neither the sunbeams, nor the birds, nor the clouds which sailed above him, gave the little Tree any pleasure.

In winter, when the snow lay on the ground, a rabbit would often come along and jump right over the Tree. That made him so angry! But after two more winters, the Tree was so large that the rabbit had to go round it. “To grow and grow, to get older and be tall,” thought the Tree, “that is the most best thing in the world!”

In autumn the woodcutters always came and chopped down some of the largest trees. This happened every year, and the young Fir Tree trembled at the sight. The magnificent great trees fell to the earth with great noise and cracking. The branches were lopped off and the trees looked long and bare.

In spring, when the swallows and the storks came, the Tree asked them, “Don’t you know where the trees have been taken?”

The swallows did not know anything about it, but the Stork nodded his head. “Yes, I think I know. I met many ships as I was flying around. The ships had large masts, and I think they that smelled of fir.”

“Oh, I would love to fly across the sea! What does the sea look like?”

“That would take a long time to explain,” said the Stork, and with these words off he went.

“Rejoice in your growth!” said the Sunbeams. And the Wind kissed the Tree, and the Dew wept tears over him. The Fir did not understand and was still unhappy.

Word Count: 359

NAME: _____

DATE: _____

Comprehension Questions

“The Fir Tree”

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

1. **Literal** What did the Fir Tree want so very much?
 - » to be a grown-up tree

2. **Inferential** Why did the Fir Tree tremble each autumn when he saw the woodcutters chopping down some of the largest trees?
 - » He was afraid because he saw the great trees fall to the earth and their branches chopped off, leaving them bare; he also didn’t know where the trees were taken. He also knew one day he would be a large tree so he might get chopped down as well.

3. **Inferential** How did the Stork make the Fir Tree feel better about where the trees went?
 - » The Stork said he had met many large ships as he was flying around. This made the Fir Tree happy because he said he would love to fly across the sea just as the stork does.

NAME: _____

DATE: _____

7. “The Real Princess”

by Hans Christian Andersen
(Adaptation)

There was once a Prince who wished to marry a Princess. She had to be a real Princess. He traveled all over the world in hopes of finding such a lady, but there was always something wrong. Princesses he found in plenty, but whether they were real Princesses it was impossible for him to decide. There always seemed to him to be something not quite right about the ladies. At last he returned to his palace quite cast down, because he wished so much to have a real Princess for his wife.

One evening a fearful storm arose. It thundered and lightened, and the rain poured down from the sky in torrents. It was as dark as pitch. All at once there was heard a violent knocking at the door, and the old King, the Prince’s father, went out himself to open it.

It was a Princess who was standing outside the door. What with the rain and the wind, she was in a sad condition; the water trickled down from her hair, and her clothes clung to her body. She said she was a real Princess.

“Ah! We shall soon see that!” thought the old Queen mother. However, she said not a word of what she was going to do, but went quietly into the bedroom on her own. She took all the sheets off the bed, and put three little peas on the very bottom. She then laid twenty mattresses one upon another over the three peas, and put twenty feather beds over the mattresses.

Upon this bed the Princess was to pass the night.

The next morning she was asked how she had slept. “Oh, very badly indeed!” she replied. “I have scarcely closed my eyes the whole night through. I do not know what was in my bed, but I had something hard under me, and am all over black and blue. It hurt me so much!”

Now it was plain that the lady must be a real Princess, since she had been able to feel the three little peas through the twenty mattresses and twenty feather beds. No one but a real Princess could have had such a delicate sense of feeling.

The Prince accordingly made her his wife since he was now convinced that he had found a real Princess.

Word Count: 386

NAME: _____

QUESTIONS

DATE: _____

Comprehension Questions

“The Real Princess”

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

1. **Literal** Why did the Prince have trouble finding a Princess for a wife?
 - » He wanted to marry a real Princess but it was impossible for him to decide whether all the Princesses he found were real Princesses or not.

2. **Inferential** Why didn’t the Queen tell anyone about what she did?
 - » The Queen wanted to test the Princess to find out whether she was a real Princess. The Queen didn’t want anyone to know about her test.

3. **Literal** How did the Princess say she slept?
 - » Very badly; she said there was something hard under her and she was all black and blue because of it.

4. **Literal** What did the Prince find out about the Princess? How?
 - » that she was a real Princess because she felt something hard under all those layers on the bed

NAME: _____

TAKE-HOME

DATE: _____

8. “Grandfather Frog’s Big Mouth Gets Him in Trouble”

by Thornton W. Burgess

(Adaptation)

Grandfather Frog has a great big mouth. He learned a long time ago that a big mouth is handy for catching foolish green flies. But once in a while his big mouth gets him into trouble. It holds so much that it makes him greedy sometimes. He stuffs it full after his stomach already has all that it can hold, and then he can’t swallow. Then Grandfather Frog looks very foolish and silly.

One morning Grandfather Frog had a very good breakfast of foolish green flies and didn’t need another thing to eat. Little Joe Otter came along. He had been fishing and had eaten all he could. Now he was taking the rest of his catch to a secret hiding place.

Now Grandfather Frog is very fond of fish, and when he saw those that Little Joe Otter had, his eyes glistened, and in spite of his full stomach his mouth watered.

“Good morning, Grandfather Frog! Have you had your breakfast yet?” called Little Joe Otter.

Grandfather Frog wanted to say no, but he always tells the truth. “Yes,” he replied. “I have.”

“Ok. I thought that if you hadn’t, you might like a fish. But since you have already eaten, of course you don’t want one,” said Little Joe, his eyes beginning to twinkle. He held the fish out so Grandfather Frog could see just how plump and nice they were.

“Chugarum!” exclaimed Grandfather Frog. “Those certainly are very nice fish. It is very nice of you to think of a poor old fellow like me. I might find room for just a little teeny one, if you can spare it.”

Little Joe Otter knows all about Grandfather Frog's greediness. He looked at Grandfather Frog and saw how he was already stuffed full. The twinkle in his eyes grew more mischievous than ever as he said, "Of course I can. But I wouldn't think of giving such an old friend a teeny, weeny one."

Little Joe picked out the biggest fish he had and tossed it over to Grandfather Frog. It landed close by his nose with a great splash. It was almost half as big as Grandfather Frog himself. It was plump and looked so tempting that Grandfather Frog forgot all about his full stomach. He even forgot to be polite and thank Little Joe Otter. He just opened his great mouth and grabbed the fish. The fish had started down Grandfather Frog's throat head first.

Grandfather Frog has no teeth, so he cannot bite things in two. He has to swallow them whole. That is just what he started to do with the fish. It went all right until the head reached his stomach. But you can't put anything more into a thing already full, and Grandfather Frog's stomach was packed as full as it could be of foolish green flies. There the fish stuck, and gulp and swallow as hard as he could, Grandfather Frog couldn't make that fish go a bit farther. Then he tried to get it out again, but it had gone so far down his throat that he couldn't get it back. Grandfather Frog had a fish stuck in his throat and he couldn't do anything about it.

Word Count: 537

NAME: _____

QUESTIONS

DATE: _____

Comprehension Questions

“Grandfather Frog’s Big Mouth Gets Him in Trouble”

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

1. **Literal** Why did Grandfather Frog’s mouth water even though his stomach was full when he saw Little Joe Otter carrying fish?
 - » Grandfather Frog was very fond of fish.

2. **Inferential** Why did Grandfather Frog want to tell Little Joe Otter he hadn’t had his breakfast yet?
 - » Grandfather Frog hoped Little Joe Otter would give him some fish, since he liked fish so much, if he told Little Joe Otter he hadn’t had breakfast yet.

3. **Inferential** Why did Little Joe Otter give Grandfather Frog the biggest fish instead of a teeny, weeny one, as Grandfather Frog had asked for?
 - » Little Joe Otter knew how greedy Grandfather Frog was so he thought he’d teach Grandfather Frog a lesson by giving him a big fish, thinking Grandfather Frog wouldn’t be able to eat it.

4. **Literal** What happened when Grandfather Frog tried to eat the fish?
 - » The fish got stuck in his throat because it couldn’t go down any farther with his stomach full of flies.

NAME: _____

DATE: _____

9. “Spotty the Turtle Plays Doctor”

by Thornton W. Burgess
(Adaptation)

Greed’s a dreadful thing to see, as everybody will agree.

Little Joe Otter laughed as he watched Grandfather Frog try to swallow a fish almost as big as himself. Such greed would have been disgusting, if it hadn’t been so very, very funny. Grandfather Frog hitched this way and that way on his big green lily pad, trying his best to swallow. Twice he tumbled off with a splash into the Smiling Pool. Each time he scrambled back again and rolled his eyes in silent appeal to Little Joe Otter to help.

But Little Joe Otter was laughing so that he had to hold his sides, and he didn’t understand that Grandfather Frog really was in trouble. Billy Mink and Jerry Muskrat came along, and as soon as they saw Grandfather Frog, they began to laugh, too. They rolled over and over on the bank. It was the funniest thing they had seen for a long, long time.

“Did you ever see such greed?” gasped Billy Mink.

“Why don’t you pull it out and start over again?” shouted Little Joe Otter.

Now this is just what Grandfather Frog was trying to do. But Grandfather Frog’s hands are not made for grasping slippery things, and the tail of a fish is very slippery indeed. He tried first with one hand, then with the other, and at last with both. It was of no use at all. He couldn’t cough it up because it had gone too far down for that. The more he clawed at that waving tail with his hands, the funnier he looked, and the harder everyone laughed. They made such a noise that Spotty the Turtle slipped into the water and started to see what it was all about.

“What’s the joke?” he asked.

Little Joe Otter simply pointed to Grandfather Frog. Little Joe had laughed so much that he couldn’t even speak. Spotty looked over to the big green lily pad and started to laugh too. Then he saw great tears rolling down from Grandfather Frog’s eyes and heard choking sounds. He stopped laughing and started for Grandfather Frog as fast as he could swim. He climbed right up on the big green lily pad, and reaching out, grabbed the end of the fish tail in his beak-like mouth. Then Spotty the Turtle settled back and pulled, and Grandfather Frog settled back and pulled. Splash! Grandfather Frog had fallen backward on one side of the big green lily pad. Splash! Spotty the Turtle had fallen backward on the opposite side of the big green lily pad.

“Thank you! Thank you!” gasped Grandfather Frog, as he feebly crawled back on the lily-pad. “A minute more, and I would have choked to death.”

“Don’t mention it,” replied Spotty the Turtle.

“I never, never will,” promised Grandfather Frog.

Word Count: 468

NAME: _____

QUESTIONS

DATE: _____

Comprehension Questions

“Spotty the Turtle Plays Doctor”

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

1. **Literal** How did the other animals react to the fish being stuck in Grandfather Frog’s mouth?
 - » They thought it was very funny and laughed and laughed.
2. **Literal** Which animal finally understood that Grandfather Frog was in trouble?
 - » Spotty the Turtle
3. **Inferential** How did Spotty the Turtle save Grandfather Frog?
 - » Spotty the Turtle pulled the fish with his mouth while Grandfather Frog pulled in the other direction. The fish finally came out of Grandfather Frog’s mouth, and Grandfather Frog said he would have choked if Spotty the Turtle hadn’t pulled the fish out for him.
4. **Evaluative** What is the moral, or lesson, of the story about Grandfather Frog?
 - » Answers may vary, but could include: greed may get you what you want at first, but in the end it can hurt you.

NAME: _____

TAKE-HOME

DATE: _____

10. “Old Mr. Toad Visits Grandfather Frog”

by Thornton W. Burgess
(Adaptation)

Grandfather Frog and old Mr. Toad were both born in the Smiling Pool. Grandfather Frog loved the Smiling Pool so well that he wouldn't leave. But Mr. Toad could hardly wait to leave the Smiling Pool and see the Great World. Grandfather Frog didn't expect ever to see him again. But he did, and right then and there began a dispute which they have kept up ever since. They could not agree whether it was best to go out into the Great World or remain at home.

Whenever old Mr. Toad visits Grandfather Frog, they argue on this same old subject. It was so on the day that Grandfather Frog had so nearly choked to death. When Mr. Toad had heard about it, he went to the Smiling Pool to tell Grandfather Frog how glad he was that Spotty the Turtle had saved him.

Old Mr. Toad told Grandfather Frog, “If you had been out in the Great World, you would have known that Little Joe Otter wasn't giving you that fish for nothing!”

“Chugarum! Go back to your Great World and learn to mind your own business!” exclaimed Grandfather Frog.

“What good are you to anybody? You do not know anything about what is going on or what other people are doing!” asked old Mr. Toad.

“I'm minding my own business and not bothering things that don't concern me, as seems to be the way out in the Great World you love,” said Grandfather Frog.

“I've learned this much out in the Great World, that lazy people come to no good end, and I know enough not to choke myself to death!” said Mr. Toad.

Grandfather Frog was angry. Mr. Toad's remarks were very personal, and nobody likes personal remarks when they are unpleasant, especially if they happen to be true. Grandfather Frog was trying his best to think of something sharp to say in reply, when Mr. Redwing, sitting in the top of a tree, shouted, "Here comes Farmer Brown's boy!"

Grandfather Frog forgot his anger and began to look anxious. He was afraid that Farmer Brown's boy had a pocketful of stones. Old Mr. Toad didn't look troubled the least bit.

"You'd better watch out, or you'll never visit the Smiling Pool again," called Grandfather Frog.

"Oh," replied old Mr. Toad, "I'm not afraid. Farmer Brown's boy is a friend of mine. I help him in his garden. How to make friends is one of the things the Great World has taught me."

"Humph!" said Grandfather Frog. And without waiting to even say goodbye, he dove into the Smiling Pool.

Word Count: 433

NAME: _____

DATE: _____

Comprehension Questions

“Old Mr. Toad Visits Grandfather Frog”

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

1. **Literal** What did old Mr. Toad and Grandfather Frog argue about?
 - » whether it was best to go out and see the Great World or remain at home
2. **Evaluative** If old Mr. Toad and Grandfather Frog argue every time they see each other, why did old Mr. Toad go to the Smiling Pool to tell Grandfather Frog how glad he was that Spotty the Turtle saved him?
 - » Answers may vary, but could include: old Mr. Toad liked having someone to argue with or someone to tell about the things he learned out in the Great World, such as knowing Little Joe Otter wasn’t trying to be friendly by giving Grandfather Frog the fish.
3. **Inferential** Why did Grandfather Frog want to stay in the Smiling Pool?
 - » He loved it there; he thought people out in the Great World don’t mind their business and that they bother with things that don’t concern them and Grandfather Frog doesn’t like that.
4. **Inferential** Why did Grandfather Frog dive into the Smiling Pool without saying goodbye to old Mr. Toad?
 - » He was afraid that Farmer Brown’s boy might have stones in his pocket, which he might throw at Grandfather Frog and hurt him.

NAME: _____

TAKE-HOME

DATE: _____

11. “Grandfather Frog Starts Out to See the Great World”

by Thornton W. Burgess
(Adaptation)

Grandfather Frog looked very serious as he sat on his big green lily pad. A foolish green fly actually brushed Grandfather Frog’s nose and he didn’t even notice it. Ever since he had fought with his cousin, old Mr. Toad, about going out into the Great World, Grandfather Frog had been thinking.

When Farmer Brown’s boy appeared, Grandfather Frog had hid under a lily pad. He watched old Mr. Toad sit and grin, for he wasn’t afraid of Farmer Brown’s boy. In fact, he had said that they were friends. When he saw Farmer Brown’s boy tickle old Mr. Toad under his chin with a straw, he knew that it was true.

Grandfather Frog had not come out of his hiding place until after old Mr. Toad and Farmer Brown’s boy had left. Then Grandfather Frog had climbed back on his big green lily pad and had sat there thinking very hard. And now, on this bright morning, he was still thinking.

The fact is Grandfather Frog was beginning to wonder if perhaps, after all, Mr. Toad was right. If the Great World had taught him how to make friends with Farmer Brown’s boy, there really must be some things worth learning there. Not for the world would Grandfather Frog have admitted to old Mr. Toad or to any one else that there was anything for him to learn. But right down in his heart he was beginning to think that there were things he couldn’t learn in the Smiling Pool. So he sat and thought and thought. Suddenly he made up his mind.

“Chugarum!” said he. “I’ll do it!”

“Do what?” asked Jerry Muskrat, who happened to be swimming past.

“I’ll go out and see for myself what this Great World old Mr. Toad talks about is like,” replied Grandfather Frog.

“Don’t you do it,” said Jerry Muskrat. “Don’t you do anything so foolish! You’re much too old, Grandfather Frog, to go out into the Great World.”

Few old people like to be told that they are too old to do things. “You just mind your own business!” he said sharply. “I know what is best for me. If my cousin, old Mr. Toad, can take care of himself out in the Great World, I can. I’m going, and that is all there is about it!”

With that Grandfather Frog dove into the Smiling Pool, swam across to a place where the bank was low, and without once looking back started across the Green Meadows to see the Great World.

Word Count: 421

NAME: _____

QUESTIONS

DATE: _____

Comprehension Questions

“Grandfather Frog Starts Out to See the Great World”

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

1. **Literal** What made Grandfather Frog think he should go out to see the Great World?
 - » Grandfather Frog thought if the Great World had taught old Mr. Toad how to make friends with Farmer Brown’s boy, then there were things worth learning there.

2. **Literal** Why did Jerry Muskrat say Grandfather Frog shouldn’t go out in the Great World?
 - » Jerry Muskrat said Grandfather Frog was too old to go out in the Great World.

3. **Inferential** Why does Grandfather Frog think he can go out in the Great World?
 - » Grandfather Frog said if his cousin old Mr. Toad can take care of himself out in the Great World, he can take care of himself there, too.

NAME: _____

DATE: _____

12. “Grandfather Frog Loses Heart”

by Thornton W. Burgess
(Adaptation)

Look before you leap; the water may be deep.

That is very good advice, but most people find that out when it is too late. Grandfather Frog did. He had heard that verse all his life. But Grandfather Frog seemed to have left all his wisdom behind him when he left the Smiling Pool to go out into the Great World. Grandfather Frog had been getting into scrapes ever since he started out on his foolish journey, and now here he was in still another. He had landed in it head first, with a great splash.

When he had seen the cool, sparkling water of the spring, he couldn't wait another second to get into it. He was so hot and dry and thirsty and uncomfortable. Grandfather Frog didn't look at all before he leapt. He just dove in with a great long jump. That water felt so good. For a few minutes he couldn't think of anything else. Grandfather Frog just closed his eyes and floated there in pure happiness.

He opened his eyes to look around. Then he blinked them rapidly for a minute or so. He rubbed them to make sure that he saw things correctly. His heart seemed to sink way, way down towards his toes. “Chugarum,” exclaimed Grandfather Frog, “Chugarum.” And after that for a long time he didn't say a word.

All around him rose perfectly straight smooth walls. He could look up and see a little of the blue sky right overhead and whispering leaves of trees and bushes. Over the edge of the smooth straight wall grasses were bending. But they were so far above his head. There wasn't any place to climb out. Grandfather Frog was in a prison.

A long time ago, Farmer Brown had cleared away all the dirt around the spring. Then

he had knocked the bottom out of a nice clean barrel and had dug down where the water bubbled up out of the sand. He set the barrel down in this hole and filled in the bottom with clean white sand for the water to bubble up through. About half-way up the barrel he had cut a little hole for the water to run out as fast as it bubbled in at the bottom. The water never could fill the barrel because when it reached that hole, it ran out. This left a straight, smooth wall up above, a wall altogether too high for Grandfather Frog to jump over from the inside.

Poor old Grandfather Frog. He wished more than ever that he never thought of leaving the Smiling Pool to see the Great World. Round and round he swam, but he couldn't see any way out of it. The little hole where the water ran out was too small for him to squeeze through, as he found out by trying and trying. So far as he could see, he just had to stay there all the rest of his life. Worse still, he knew that Farmer Brown's boy sometimes came to the spring for a drink, for he had seen him do it. That meant that the very next time he came, he would find Grandfather Frog because there was no place to hide. When Grandfather Frog thought of that, he just lost heart. Yes, Sir, he just lost heart. He gave up all hope of ever seeing the Smiling Pool again, and two big tears ran out of his big eyes.

Word Count: 577

NAME: _____

DATE: _____

Comprehension Questions

“Grandfather Frog Loses Heart”

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

1. **Evaluative** Why is the saying *Look before you leap; the water may be deep* good advice?
 - » Answers may vary, but should include: you should investigate what you are getting yourself into before you just start something new without knowing anything about it because you may get yourself into something that you can’t handle and can’t figure out how to get out of.

2. **Literal** What does it mean that Grandfather Frog lost heart?
 - » He gave up all hope of getting out and seeing the Smiling Pool again.

3. **Inferential** Why did Grandfather Frog lose heart?
 - » He couldn’t get out of the spring, which was in a barrel with walls that Grandfather Frog couldn’t jump over. He couldn’t squeeze through the hole to get out either. He knew when Farmer Brown’s boy came to get a drink from the spring, he would find Grandfather Frog and hurt him.

4. **Literal** What happened when Grandfather Frog lost heart?
 - » Two big tears ran out of his big eyes.

NAME: _____

TAKE-HOME

DATE: _____

13. “The Dear Old Smiling Pool Once More”

by Thornton W. Burgess
(Adaptation)

Black Cat was having a good time. But Grandfather Frog wasn't. It was great fun for Black Cat to slip a paw under Grandfather Frog and toss him up in the air but it was a dreadful time for Grandfather Frog. He was terribly frightened. Black Cat didn't always cover up her claws, and they pricked right through Grandfather Frog's white and yellow skin and hurt.

At last Black Cat grew tired of playing, so catching up Grandfather Frog in her mouth, she started along the path from the spring to Long Lane.

“It's all over, and this is the end,” moaned Grandfather Frog. “I'm going to be eaten now. Why did I ever leave the Smiling Pool?”

Just then, Grandfather Frog heard a familiar sound. It was the whistle of Farmer Brown's boy. A little bit of hope began to stir in the heart of Grandfather Frog. He had been afraid of Farmer Brown's boy, but now if the boy should take him, he might be able to get away. He was very sure that he would never get away from Black Cat. The whistle drew nearer. Black Cat stopped.

“Hi, Black Cat! Have you been hunting? Come show me!” cried a voice.

Farmer Brown's boy stooped down to see what she had in her mouth.

“Why,” he exclaimed, “I do believe this is the very same frog that got away from me! You don't want him. I'll just put him in my pocket and take him up to the house.”

With that he dropped Grandfather Frog in his pocket. He patted Black Cat and started on his way, whistling merrily. It was dark and rather close in that pocket, but

Grandfather Frog didn't mind. It was a lot better than feeling sharp teeth and claws. After a while, he felt himself swung through the air, and he landed on the ground with a thump. Farmer Brown's boy had taken off his coat and thrown it down.

The whistling stopped. Everything was quiet. Grandfather Frog waited and listened, but not a sound could he hear. Then he saw a little ray of light creeping into his prison. He squirmed and pushed, and all of a sudden he was out of the pocket. The bright light made him blink. As soon as he could see, he looked to see where he was. Then he rubbed his eyes with both hands and looked again. He wasn't at Farmer Brown's house at all. He was right on the bank of the Smiling Pool, and a little way off was Farmer Brown's boy fishing!

"Chugarum!" cried Grandfather Frog, and it was the loudest, gladdest chugarum that the Smiling Pool ever had heard. "Chugarum!" he cried again, and with a great leap he dove with a splash into the dear old Smiling Pool, which smiled more than ever.

And never again has Grandfather Frog tried to see the Great World. He is quite content to leave it to those who like to dwell there. And since his own wonderful adventures, he has been ready to believe anything he is told about what happens there.

Word Count: 521

NAME: _____

DATE: _____

Comprehension Questions

“The Dear Old Smiling Pool Once More”

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

1. **Literal** What was Black Cat doing with Grandfather Frog at the beginning of the selection?
 - » Black Cat was slipping a paw under Grandfather Frog and tossing him up in the air.

2. **Literal** How did Grandfather Frog get back to the Smiling Pond?
 - » Farmer Brown’s boy took Grandfather Frog from Black Cat and put him in his pocket. Farmer Brown’s boy threw his coat on the ground, with Grandfather Frog still in the pocket. When Grandfather Frog pushed his way out of the pocket, he saw Farmer Brown’s boy off fishing. Grandfather Frog was on the bank of the Smiling Pool and he dove in.

3. **Inferential** What does Grandfather Frog mean by saying he is *quite content to leave the Great World to those who like to dwell there*?
 - » Grandfather Frog is happy to let those who live in the Great World deal with the Great World as he is done with it; he’d rather be in the Smiling Pool instead of out in the Great World.

NAME: _____

DATE: _____

14. “The King and the Fisherman Part I”

by Hartwell James
(Adaptation)

Once upon a time, there was a land ruled by a King who was very fond of fish. He was seated one day with his wife in the royal gardens that stretched down to the banks of a great river. Looking up, the King spied a boat gliding by. He saw that there was a fisherman with a large fish in the boat.

Noticing that the King was looking closely at him, and knowing how much the King liked this particular kind of fish, the fisherman brought his boat to the shore. He came before the King and begged that he would accept the fish as a present. The King was greatly pleased at this, and ordered that a large sum of money be given to the fisherman.

But before the fisherman had left the royal presence, the Queen turned toward the King and said, “You have done a foolish thing.” The King was astonished to hear her speak in this way, and asked how that could be.

The Queen replied, “The news of you giving so large a reward for so small a gift will spread through the city. It will be known as the fisherman’s gift. Every fisherman who catches a big fish will bring it to the palace, and should he not be paid in like manner, he will go away unhappy. He will secretly speak evil of you among his friends.”

“You speak the truth, light of my eyes,” said the King, “but cannot you see how mean it would be for a King to take back his gift?” Then sensing that the Queen was ready to argue, he turned away angrily, saying, “The matter is closed.”

However, later in the day, the Queen again approached the King. She said that if that worrying about being mean was his only reason for not taking back the gift, she would arrange it. “You must summon the fisherman,” she said, “and then ask him, ‘Is this fish

male or female?’ If he says male, then you will tell him that you wanted a female fish; but if he should say female, your reply will be that you wanted a male fish. In this way the matter will be properly fixed.”

Word Count: 372

NAME: _____

DATE: _____

Comprehension Questions

“The King and the Fisherman Part I”

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

1. **Literal** How did the King feel about fish?
 - » He was very fond of fish.

2. **Inferential** Why did the Queen say the King did a foolish thing by giving the fisherman money for the fish?
 - » The Queen said if all fishermen bring fish and don’t get money from the king, they will tell others evil things about the king. This could make people unhappy with the king and cause problems for him.

3. **Literal** What is the fisherman’s gift?
 - » money from the king for bringing him fish

4. **Evaluative** How would the Queen’s solution fix the problem?
 - » No matter how the fisherman answers the question of whether the fish is male or female, the king’s answer would be that he wanted the opposite of what the fisherman said. The king would return the fish and get back his money. Then the king wouldn’t have to pay any money to other fishermen.

NAME: _____

DATE: _____

15. “The King and the Fisherman Part II”

by Hartwell James
(Adaptation)

The King thought his wife’s idea was an easy way out of the problem. He commanded the fisherman to be brought before him. When the fisherman, who was a most intelligent man, stood before the King, the King said to him, “Oh fisherman, tell me, is this fish male or female?”

The fisherman replied, “The fish is neither male nor female.” The King smiled at the clever answer. To add to the Queen’s annoyance, the King directed one of his workers to give the fisherman even more money.

Then the fisherman placed the money in his leather bag and thanked the King. Swinging the bag over his shoulder, he hurried away, but not so quickly that he did not notice that he had dropped one small coin. Placing the bag on the ground, he stooped and picked up the coin. Again he went on his way, with the King and Queen carefully watching his every action.

“Look at that!” said the Queen. “He actually put down his bag to pick up one small coin. It upset him to think that the coin might reach the hands of one of the King’s servants, or go to some poor person who would buy bread and pray for the long life of the King.”

“Again you speak the truth,” replied the King. Once more the fisherman was brought into the royal courts. “Are you a human being or a beast?” the King asked him. “Although I made it possible for you to become rich without hard work, the beast within you could not allow you to leave even one small piece of money for others.” Then the King made him go forth and show his face no more within the city.

At this the fisherman fell on his knees and cried: “Hear me, O King, protector of the poor! I am your servant. May the King have a long life. I picked up the coin not for the value of it, but because on one side, it has the image of the King. I feared that someone, not seeing the coin, would tread it into the dirt, and thus defile the face of the King.”

This answer pleased the King, and he gave the fisherman another large sum of money. And the Queen was no longer angry, and she looked kindly upon the fisherman as he left with his bag heavy with money.

Word Count: 400

NAME: _____

DATE: _____

Comprehension Questions

“The King and the Fisherman Part II”

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

1. **Inferential** What did the fisherman do that showed he was intelligent?
 - » When the King asked him if the fish was male or female, the fisherman said it was neither male nor female. The fisherman’s response showed that he knew the King was trying to find a way to take back the money.
2. **Inferential** How did the Queen feel when the fisherman stopped to pick up the dropped coin?
 - » The Queen thought the fisherman was selfish, not wanting anyone else to get even one coin from the money the King gave him.
3. **Literal** What was the fisherman’s explanation for picking up the coin?
 - » He didn’t want anyone to accidentally step on the face of the King, which was on one side of the coin, and thus defile it.
4. **Literal** How did the King respond to the fisherman’s answer?
 - » The King was pleased with the fisherman’s answer and gave him more money.

NAME: _____

DATE: _____

16. “I Wonder Part I”

by Kate Douglas Wiggin and Nora Archibald Smith
(Adaptation)

Once upon a time there was a man who had three sons. Their names were Peter, Paul, and they called the youngest brother Youngling. The man didn't have one penny to rub against another. He told his sons that they must go out into the world and try to earn their bread.

Nearby the poor man's cottage was the King's palace. Against the windows of the palace, a great oak tree had sprung up and it took away all the light. The King said he would give treasure to the man who could chop down the oak tree, but no one could do it. As soon as one branch of the oak's trunk flew off, two grew in its place.

The King desired a well to hold water for the whole year. So the King said he would give both money and goods to anyone who could dig him a well that could hold water for a whole year, but no one could do it. The palace lay high, high up on a hill, and they could only dig a few inches before they came upon rock.

The King was set on having these two things done. He had sent out the word far and wide that whoever could cut the big oak in the King's courtyard, and get him a well that would hold water the whole year round, should have the Princess and half the kingdom.

Well! You may easily know there were many men who came to try their luck. All their hacking and digging did not work. The oak tree grew taller at every stroke of the axe, and the rock grew no softer.

So one day the three brothers thought they'd set off and try, too. Their father didn't stop them. When the brothers said they thought of going to the palace, their father said “Yes,” at once, and Peter, Paul, and Youngling went away from their home.

They had not gone far before they came to woods with fir trees. Up along one side of the woods rose a steep hillside, and as they went they heard something chopping away.

“I wonder what is making that chopping sound,” Youngling said.

Youngling decided to go see what was making the chopping sound. Peter and Paul teased him for going. But Youngling didn’t care what they said. He climbed the steep hillside toward where the noise came, and when he reached the place, what do you think he saw?

Why, an axe that stood there chopping away, all by itself, at the trunk of a fir tree.

Word Count: 431

NAME: _____

DATE: _____

Comprehension Questions

“I Wonder Part I”

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

1. **Inferential** Why did the man tell his sons they had to go out in the world and try to earn their bread?
 - » He didn’t have a penny to rub against another, which means he didn’t have any money, so his sons had to go out and find a way to get what they needed.
2. **Literal** What two things did the King want to have done?
 - » He wanted someone to chop down the oak tree growing against the palace windows and dig a well to hold water for a whole year.
3. **Literal** What made it difficult for men to complete the things the King wanted done?
 - » Every time a branch was cut off the tree, two more grew in its place. The castle was high on a hill and every time men tried to dig a well, they hit rock.
4. **Literal** What does Youngling discover when he goes off on his own?
 - » an axe chopping a tree all by itself

NAME: _____

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DATE: _____

17. “I Wonder Part II”

by Kate Douglas Wiggin and Nora Archibald Smith
(Adaptation)

“Good day,” said Youngling to the axe. “So you stand here all alone and chop?”

The axe said he had been chopping and hacking and waiting for Youngling for a long time. Youngling took the axe apart and placed it in his bag. He walked back down the hill to his brothers.

When the brothers had gone a bit farther, they came under a steep wall of rock, and up above they heard something digging and shoveling.

“I wonder,” said Youngling, “what it is digging and shoveling up at the top of the rock? I think it would be a piece of fun just to see what it really is.”

And so off he set to climb the rock, while his brothers laughed and teased him. When he got near the top, what do you think he saw? Why, a shovel that stood there digging away.

“Good day,” said Youngling. “So you stand here all alone and shovel?”

The shovel said he had been shoveling and waiting for Youngling for a long time. Youngling took the shovel, put it in his bag, and climbed down again to his brothers.

So they went on again a good bit until they came to a brook. They were all thirsty after their long walk, and so they lay down beside the brook to have a drink.

“I wonder where this water comes from,” Youngling said. So up alongside the brook he went, in spite of all that his brothers shouted after him. Nothing could stop him. On he went. And as he went up and up, the brook grew smaller and smaller, and at last, a little way farther

on, what do you think he saw? Why, a great walnut, and out of that the water trickled.

“Good day,” said Youngling again. “So you lie here and trickle, and run down all alone?”

The walnut said he had been trickling and waiting for Youngling.

Youngling took a lump of moss and plugged up the hole in the walnut so the water wouldn't run out. Then he put the Walnut into his wallet, and ran down to his brothers.

“Well, now,” said Peter and Paul, “have you found out where the water comes from? A rare sight it must have been!”

“Oh, after all, it was only a hole it ran out of,” said Youngling, and the others laughed and made fun of him again, but Youngling didn't mind that a bit.

Word Count: 408

NAME: _____

QUESTIONS

DATE: _____

Comprehension Questions

“I Wonder Part II”

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

1. **Literal** What two things did Youngling find and take with him?
 - » a shovel that digs and a walnut that trickles water

2. **Literal** What did the two things tell Youngling they had been waiting for?
 - » They both said they had been waiting for Youngling for a long time.

3. **Evaluative** Why do you think Youngling didn’t tell his brothers about the walnut he found?
 - » They teased him about going off before to find out about things, so perhaps he just thought they would tease him more or not believe what he had to say.

NAME: _____

DATE: _____

18. “I Wonder Part III”

by Kate Douglas Wiggin and Nora Archibald Smith
(Adaptation)

When the brothers had gone a little farther, they came to the King’s palace. So many men had come to try their luck. The oak tree was now twice as wide and tall as it had been at first since two branches grew for every one they chopped out with their axes.

The King had started to punish those who failed to cut down the oak tree. If a man failed, he was put on an island. But the two brothers were quite sure they could chop down the oak tree. Peter, as he was the oldest, was to try first. When Peter chopped into the tree, two new branches grew where he cut with the axe. So the King’s men seized him and put him out on the island.

Now Paul was to try his luck, but the same thing happened to him! When he had swung the axe for two or three strokes, the oak tree began to grow. The King’s men seized Paul and put him out on the island.

So now it was Youngling’s turn to try. He took his axe out of his bag and fitted it to its handle.

“Chop away!” said he to his axe, and away it chopped, making the wood chips fly, so that it wasn’t long before down came the oak.

When that was done, Youngling pulled out his shovel from his bag.

“Dig away!” said he to his spade, and so the spade began to dig until the earth and rock flew out in splinters, and he soon had the well deep enough.

And when he had got it big and deep, Youngling took out his walnut and laid it in one corner of the well, and pulled the plug of moss out.

“Trickle and run,” said Youngling, and so the walnut trickled and ran until the water gushed out of the hole in a stream, and in a short time the well was filled.

Since Youngling had chopped down the oak tree and dug a well in the palace yard, he got the Princess and half the kingdom. It was good that Peter and Paul were on an island so they didn’t have to hear everyone say, “Well, Youngling wasn’t so much out of his mind when he took to wondering about things after all!”

Word Count: 387

NAME: _____

DATE: _____

Comprehension Questions

“I Wonder Part III”

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

1. **Literal** What happened when Peter and Paul each tried to chop down the tree?

» They both failed and were put out on an island.

2. **Literal** What happened when it was Youngling’s turn to cut down the tree and dig a well?

» He put together the axe he had found, told it to cut down the tree, and it did. He told the spade he had found to dig a well, and it did. Finally, he put the walnut he had found in the well, pulled the moss plug out, and told it to trickle and run, and it did.

3. **Evaluative** What did people mean when they said *Youngling wasn’t so much out of his mind when he took to wondering about things after all*?

» Because Youngling wondered about things, he went to find out about them. He found the axe, the spade, and the walnut due to his wondering about things. Finding things because he wondered allowed him to complete the tasks for the King that nobody else could complete.

NAME: _____

DATE: _____

19. “Thomas Jefferson”

by Core Knowledge Staff

Our third president, Thomas Jefferson, was a wonderful writer. He wrote about nearly everything, because nearly everything interested him. One time, Jefferson was trying to write a very important paper about liberty. Like his friend George Washington, Jefferson thought the king of England was not being fair to the colonists in America, so it was time to start a new country. Not everyone in the colonies felt that way, though. Jefferson, Washington, and their friends needed to give good, strong reasons to make this big change. Leaders from all over America met to talk about what to say. They chose five people to work on a document explaining the reasons for a new nation, including Thomas Jefferson.

John Adams worked with Thomas Jefferson. Jefferson and Adams were great friends, though Adams was as different as he could be from Jefferson. However, they were alike in one thing: they agreed it was time to start a new nation. Since John Adams was older, Jefferson suggested, “John, you should write the paper explaining our ideas.”

“No, Thomas,” Adams replied. “I have angered many people by arguing for a new country and some of them do not like me. Everyone likes you, though, so they will be more likely to help. Besides, you are a better writer than I am.”

Jefferson wanted to make this document the best thing he had ever written. He would call it the “Declaration of Independence.” Jefferson’s declaration said that every person should feel safe to live, to be free, and to decide what to do in order to be happy. Jefferson’s declaration said that this was the reason to start a new nation: the United States of America. His friend John Adams smiled and said, “I told you, Thomas; you were the man to write it.”

Two days after Jefferson finished the Declaration of Independence—on the Fourth of July—the other leaders voted to officially begin our country, independent from England. That is why we call the Fourth of July “Independence Day.”

After the new nation was born, Americans read Thomas Jefferson’s document again and again whenever they were deciding how the country should work. People in other countries said, “We want to be free, too,” and followed America’s example by making changes in their countries. Jefferson’s words about liberty changed people’s lives all over the world.

Word Count: 391

NAME: _____

QUESTIONS

DATE: _____

Comprehension Questions

“Thomas Jefferson”

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

1. **Literal** What did Jefferson think of the king of England?
 - » that he was not being fair to the colonists in America

2. **Literal** Why did John Adams insist that Jefferson write a paper explaining the Founding Fathers’ ideas?
 - » because he knew Jefferson was a better writer and because he thought more people would listen to Thomas Jefferson because everyone liked him

3. **Inferential** What effect did Jefferson’s Declaration of Independence have on people in America and all around the world?
 - » It served as a guide when Americans were deciding how their new country should work. It changed people’s views of liberty all over the world.

NAME: _____

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20. “The Home of the President: Washington, D.C.”

by Core Knowledge Staff

The American flag is the symbol of our nation, the United States of America. It has red and white stripes and fifty stars. Each star is a symbol for one of the states in the United States of America. There is one very important city in the United States that is not in any of the fifty states. In fact, it is the nation’s capital. It’s the city where most of the decisions that affect the country are made: Washington, D.C.

Men from each of the original colonies helped write the Constitution, a plan for how the new country should be run. We call these men the “Founding Fathers.” The Founding Fathers wanted a leader who would listen to what the people wanted and work hard to get them what they needed. They decided the president would have to be elected by the people.

When the Founding Fathers started to think about where the president would live, they started to worry. If the president lived in the state he was from, it would make that state feel more important than all the others. The Founding Fathers were afraid that one of the states would try to take over and be in charge of the others. They decided to write into the Constitution that a special city should be built, no bigger than ten miles wide, which would serve as the nation’s capital. This capital city would not be in any state, so no state could say that it was in charge of the country. This city was to be called Washington, in honor of George Washington, our first president. Eventually, Washington grew into the area we now call the District of Columbia, or Washington, D.C.

If you visit Washington, D.C., today, you can see the White House, the house where the president lives. The president moves into this house when he or she becomes president, and then moves out when the next president is elected. But not just presidents live in the White House. Their families, and even their pets, come with them to live in the White House.

The president doesn't just live in the White House; he or she works there, too. The part of the White House where the president works is called the West Wing. The president's office has a special name, too: the Oval Office. Sometimes the president signs laws or gives speeches from the Oval Office.

Word Count: 402

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Comprehension Questions

“The Home of the President: Washington, D.C.”

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

1. ***Inferential*** Why did the Founding Fathers create the city of Washington, D.C.?
 - » because they wanted a place for the president to live that was not in any state so no state could say it was in charge of the whole country

2. ***Literal*** What important house located in Washington, D.C., does the president live in?
 - » the White House

3. ***Literal*** In what part of the White House does the president work?
 - » the West Wing

NAME: _____

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21. “Protecting the Environment Part I”

by Core Knowledge Staff

Today, I really need you to put on your thinking caps. You are very important to the future of planet Earth. Earth is your home. Conservation of Earth and its natural resources is very important. The everyday choices that you make in how to live your life can affect the health of the planet.

Humans can create unhealthy environments and cause disruptions to the balance of nature. We are dependent upon water and air to live, but we have done things to pollute both of these essential natural resources. We have many people on earth, and we have tapped into natural resources to try to support all of this life. What is a natural resource?

A resource is something that helps or supports you. If it is natural, it is something that is produced by nature. Natural resources are found in the environment. These include water, air, trees, fowl, and fish, but they also include things that are hidden beneath the ground, like minerals and oil. Air and water are renewable resources, meaning that they recycle themselves so that they are never used up. But, many natural resources are nonrenewable. They will not last forever. For example, it takes a long time for rich soil to form. The same is true of fossil fuels, like coal, oil, and gas. They take many, many years to form! So, you can see that if we use up all these natural resources, there will be nothing left for all the rest of the people who will follow us on the earth. It is important to remember that we are stewards of the earth. We must take care of Earth and its finite resources for our children and their children and so on.

Word Count: 285

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Comprehension Questions

“Protecting the Environment Part I”

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

1. **Inferential** How do you affect the health of the planet?
 - » The everyday choices you make in how you live your life affect the health of the planet; humans pollute water and air, and once they are polluted, they cannot be replaced for the people who will follow us on the earth.
2. **Literal** What is a natural resource?
 - » something produced by nature that helps support you
3. **Literal** What is the difference between a renewable and nonrenewable resource?
 - » Renewable resources recycle themselves; nonrenewable resources will not last forever.
4. **Inferential** Why do we have to take care of Earth and its finite resources?
 - » Many resources are not renewable and won’t last forever so we must take care of them to make sure they last for the people that will follow us on the earth.

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22. “Protecting the Environment Part II”

by Core Knowledge Staff

Protecting the environment means efficiently using resources and doing our best not to waste them. How can you help do that? Let’s first think about renewable resources like water and air. Both water and air are renewable, having been cycled through Earth’s atmosphere again and again for many, many years. But pollution makes even these renewable resources more difficult to use. You can help keep our air and water clean by making sure you work hard not to pollute them.

Let’s start with water. You know that Earth is covered mostly by water, so it is hard to imagine that we could ever run out of it. But most of that water is salty, and we can’t drink it, nor can our crops. However, humans have found ways of tapping into the aquifers. Aquifers are natural underground areas containing fresh water. These aquifers help satisfy the needs of Earth’s growing number of people. Even with these aquifers, however, it is possible that we could run out of usable water. Here are a few easy ways that you can help conserve water: Take shorter showers. Turn the faucet off when you are brushing your teeth. Make sure you have a full load of laundry when you wash clothes. Place a brick in the toilet tank so that it uses less water to flush. Recycle water by collecting rainwater in a garden barrel.

Litter is another pollutant. Litter is not only unattractive, but it can also be dangerous. For example, to sea turtles and other animals, plastic bags bobbing on the surface of the water look a lot like jellyfish that they want to eat. Once eaten, the plastic bags cannot be digested, and animals often die. Cigarette butts thrown on the ground can leach dangerous chemicals into the soil. So, what can you do to prevent litter? The easiest step is not to litter! You can also organize a litter brigade, collecting litter along the streets and waterways of your community.

Chemicals pollute our rivers and streams. Sometimes people pour grease down the drain. Other times, people flush medicines or pesticides down their toilets. Both of these things can pollute our drinking water. Where does your family dispose of old paints, car oil, weed killers, and leftover cleaning products? Your city might provide you with important information about where you can get rid of these products in a safe way. Find out and encourage your parents to find safer ways to dispose of dangerous waste. None of these substances should end up in our water. You can also use cleaners and products that are not harmful to the environment.

Word Count: 436

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Comprehension Questions

“Protecting the Environment Part II”

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

1. **Literal** How can you conserve water?
 - » take shorter showers; turn the faucet off when you are brushing your teeth; make sure you have a full load of laundry when you wash clothes; place a brick in the toilet tank so that it uses less water to flush; recycle water by collecting rainwater in a garden barrel

2. **Literal** How can litter be dangerous?
 - » animals can eat it and die; litter like cigarette butts can leach dangerous chemicals into the soil

3. **Inferential** How can you keep chemicals out of rivers and streams?
 - » dispose of dangerous waste in safe ways; use cleaners and products that are not harmful to the environment

23. “Protecting the Environment Part III”

by Core Knowledge Staff

Have you ever experienced a power outage? When the power goes out, your lights and everything else that runs on electricity cannot work. Power outages can be caused when too many people use energy at the same time. They are an inconvenience, but you know that the power will soon come on. Then you will be able to watch television and use the computer once again. How can you conserve, or save, energy? Be sure to turn off lights and appliances when you aren't using them. Close windows and doors when the heat or air conditioner is running. In the winter, turn the heat down and add an extra layer of clothing to stay warm. In the summer, minimize the use of air conditioning by using a fan. Carpool or ride on public transportation, like a bus or train, to cut down on using extra fuel in a personal car.

Scientists are working hard to develop new ways of supplying energy to our households, schools, and businesses. In the future, they hope to rely less on fossil fuels by gathering energy from the sun and the wind. Have you ever passed a row of windmills or seen solar panels on rooftops? There are already many places on Earth that rely on wind and solar energy. These are two forms of energy that hold great hope for the future.

There are so many things that you can do to help the earth right in your own home. I am sure that you have heard and seen the words *reduce*, *reuse*, and *recycle*. To reduce means to make something smaller. So, if you reduce the amount of trash that you throw away, you are throwing away less. What can you do with some of the trash that you are used to throwing in the garbage? You can reuse it or recycle it. For example, if you get a birthday present wrapped in beautiful paper, you can remove it carefully from the package and use it again to wrap another gift. Instead of using paper napkins at meals, use cloth napkins; wash them and use them over and over again. When you draw on one side of a piece of paper, turn it over and use the other side for another drawing. When you use

fewer paper products, fewer trees will need to be cut down. Instead of using plastic bags at the grocery store, take your own cloth bags and reuse them every time you shop. When you use less plastic, you use fewer nonrenewable resources. And, while you are shopping, look at the labels on paper products, laundry detergents, and dish soaps. Choose products that are “green,” “eco-friendly,” and nontoxic—products that are safe for the environment.

Word Count: 455

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Comprehension Questions

“Protecting the Environment Part III”

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

1. **Literal** How can you conserve energy and save fuel?
 - » turn off lights and appliances when you aren’t using them; close windows and doors when the heat or air conditioner is running; in the winter turn the heat down and add an extra layer of clothing to stay warm; in the summer minimize the use of air conditioning by using a fan; carpool or ride public transportation to cut down on using extra fuel in a personal car

2. **Literal** What are you doing if you reduce the amount of trash you throw away?
 - » You are throwing away less.

3. **Evaluative** How does reusing or recycling help the environment?
 - » If you reuse or recycle something, you are using it again and thus not throwing it away, making less trash. Less trash thrown away due to reusing and recycling means you need fewer new things, which means fewer natural resources are needed to make new things.

NAME: _____

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24. “The East African Savanna Habitat”

by Core Knowledge Staff

A savanna is another name for grassland, a wide-open, vast stretch of grass-covered land. There are not many trees or bushes. The East African Savanna has very warm weather all year round. It only has two seasons: the very rainy summer, and the very dry winter. The plants and animals that live here have adapted to these two very different kinds of weather.

Grass is the most important plant in the savannas. The grasses can survive the tough conditions of their habitat. The grass has adapted to these conditions by growing very deep roots. Even if the grass above ground is destroyed, the roots underground survive and the grass can grow back. This grass grows very quickly, as much as an inch per day!

Grass is food for many of the larger animals, like elephants, zebras, gazelles, and antelope. They chew on grass all day long. Animals depend on the nutrients in the grass to survive. It would seem that because so many animals eat the grass in the savanna every day, there wouldn't be very much grass left after a while. But, this grass grows back very quickly, so there's usually plenty for the different herbivores, like zebras and antelope, to eat! Plus, different animals are adapted to eat different parts of the grass.

Many animals get their meals from the acacia tree. Giraffes, with their long necks and tongues, eat twigs and leaves from the top of the acacia. Not only are giraffes' tongues long, they are also very tough. The twigs of the acacia tree are covered with sharp thorns that the giraffes eat along with the twigs and leaves! Giraffes eat many of the insects that live on the tree as well.

Acacias have adapted well to their habitat. Acacias have small leaves that don't dry out as quickly as larger leaves would in the dry, hot months. The roots of an acacia grow very deep into the ground, which allows them to collect water from far underground when there is not much rainfall. And, as we already know, their branches are covered by sharp thorns. These help keep some animals from eating too many of them. These trees are right at home in this habitat.

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Comprehension Questions

“The East African Savanna Habitat”

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

1. ***Inferential*** What does the East African Savanna habitat have a lot of and what is it missing?
 - » It has a lot of grass and wide-open space. It is missing a lot of trees and bushes.

2. ***Literal*** How are giraffes able to eat acacia trees?
 - » They have long necks so they can reach the leaves and twigs at the top and they have tough tongues so they can eat the thorns on the twigs.

3. ***Inferential*** What are the two main food sources for animals in the East African Savanna habitat?
 - » grass and acacia trees

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25. “The Tropical Rainforest Habitat”

by Core Knowledge Staff

Tropical places are warm and wet. A rainforest is a thick forest of plants that stay green year-round. There are tropical rainforests in many places around the world close to the equator. One rainforest is in South America, and is the largest tropical rainforest on Earth. It is the Amazon rainforest. The Amazon rainforest is so dense that you can easily get lost in it. It’s hot and very humid. The temperature is always very warm, and it rains heavily all year long. There are between eighty and two hundred forty inches of rainfall here every year. That makes this one of the wettest places you can find on land.

The Amazon rainforest has broadleaf trees. The trees stay green all year long. The evergreen trees replace their leaves gradually throughout the year as the leaves age and fall. The trees always look green and never have bare branches. Because the climate is the same all year round, plants do not need to slow down for cold winter weather. Animals that live here always have a good supply of food all year, too.

The trees in the rainforest are incredibly tall. They grow as tall as thirteen-story buildings, and some grow much taller than that! The trees grow so thickly and so close together that from above, you can see only a canopy of thick green leaves. You can’t see the forest floor at all. Because the sun’s light can’t get through this canopy of leaves, everything under them is really dark.

The plants in the Amazon rainforest have adapted to this climate in many ways. Because it’s so dark in the rainforest underneath the canopy, most plants have large leaves so they can catch as much light as possible. Many of the plants have waxy leaves with ends that are tapered to help the water drip off them, like the water running off an umbrella.

Because the trees are so tall, they often have large roots that help hold them up. Also, their trunks are covered in smooth, thin bark. The trees don't need thick bark to protect them from cold weather. There are even some plants that grow high up on tree trunks and branches so that they can get to the sunlight that doesn't reach the forest floor!

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Comprehension Questions

“The Tropical Rainforest Habitat”

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

1. **Literal** What is the largest tropical rainforest on Earth?
 - » the Amazon rainforest

2. **Inferential** Why do animals that live in the Amazon rainforest have a good supply of food all year?
 - » The climate is the same all year round so plants don’t need to slow down their growth to adjust to cold weather. Because plants don’t need to slow down their growth, they stay green all year long and gradually replace old leaves. The trees are never bare and thus, animals have food all year long.

3. **Literal** Why can you see only a canopy of leaves from above the Amazon rainforest?
 - » The trees grow so thickly and close together that you can’t see the forest floor.

4. **Literal** How have plants adapted to the rainforest habitat?
 - » growing large leaves to catch light; growing waxy leaves to help water drip off them; growing tall to reach sunlight; large roots to hold up the trees; thin bark on trees because there is no need for protection from cold weather

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26. “The Saltwater Habitat”

by Core Knowledge Staff

Saltwater habitats contain lots of salt. This means that we can't use saltwater for drinking. It's hard to imagine, but more of the earth is covered in water than is covered with land. Most of that water is saltwater in oceans and seas. Oceans are huge areas of saltwater that stretch all around our planet, and they are home to almost half of the world's species of animals and millions of different plants. The water in the ocean comes from rain as well as from rivers and streams that flow into the ocean. Seas are smaller areas of saltwater that have land around them or around part of them.

The largest ocean is the Pacific. The beach, and any land that runs alongside the ocean, is called the coastline or shoreline. You may think that when you are standing on the land looking at the water that the land stops where the water starts. It certainly looks that way. But there is land under the water. The land slopes downward the farther you go out into the water, which means the water is getting deeper and deeper.

The interesting thing about the ocean floor, which is the land under the ocean water, is that it isn't flat. As on land, the earth beneath the ocean waters has both mountains and valleys. This makes some areas of water in the ocean deeper than others.

The Pacific Ocean is full of both plant and animal life, but not all of them share the same space. The conditions under the water are very different in various places. Some parts are deep and some are shallow. There are cool parts and there are warm parts. Some are dark and some are full of light.

There are plants and animals in nearly every part of the ocean. Some live way out in the deep, open waters far from the land, and some live in the shallow waters closer to the shore. Some animals, like turtles, jellyfish, and crabs, live closer to the shore where it's shallower and warmer. If you have ever been to the beach and walked in the water splashing on the sand, you've been in this shallow part of the ocean.

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Comprehension Questions

“The Saltwater Habitat”

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

1. ***Inferential*** Why can’t humans use most of the water on the earth?
 - » because it is saltwater and we can’t drink it

2. ***Literal*** How is the ocean floor similar to land?
 - » It has mountains and valleys.

3. ***Inferential*** Where in the ocean do animals live?
 - » Animals live in all different parts of the ocean; some live in the shallow parts of the ocean near the coastline and others live in deeper parts of the ocean.

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27. “The Sonoran Desert Habitat”

by Core Knowledge Staff

There are many deserts all over the world. You know you’re in a desert when it doesn’t rain very much. Many deserts can also be very hot. Because it’s so hot and dry, not too many plants or animals can live there.

The Sonoran Desert is in the southwestern part of the United States and the northwestern part of Mexico. The temperature is quite hot during the day, and it doesn’t rain very much. The heat and lack of rain make it hard for plants and animals to live in the desert. They must all be specially adapted to live in the hot weather and survive with very little rain.

How do they do it? Some plants can save and store water inside their plant parts when it does rain. Other plants grow only in shady areas near mountains or rocks.

Since there are very few plants that can be used as shelter, the animals that have adapted to living in the desert often make their homes underground. Living underground helps them to stay cool when it gets hot, and keeps them hidden from other animals that may want to eat them for lunch!

The saguaro cactus is the world’s largest cactus. Cacti don’t have leaves. They have prickly spines instead. The incredible saguaro lives for up to two hundred years. In that time can grow as high as a house and weigh as much as several cars! The most amazing thing about the saguaro is that it is a habitat in itself. Not only does it manage to thrive in the desert habitat, but it provides food, water, and shelter to many different animals.

It hardly ever rains in the desert, but when it does, the saguaro cactus saves and stores huge amounts of water in its roots and stems. The cactus saves the extra water and uses it to survive during those times when it is very dry and does not rain.

In the spring, white flowers grow on the saguaro. At night, when the desert cools down, these flowers open to show sweet nectar, which butterflies, bats, and birds feed on before the flowers close the next day when it once again becomes very hot. In the summer, red fruit begins to grow on the saguaro. Many animals eat the fruit of the cactus.

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Comprehension Questions

“The Sonoran Desert Habitat”

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

1. **Literal** What makes the Sonoran Desert a hard place to live?
 - » heat and lack of rain

2. **Literal** How do plants survive in the Sonoran Desert?
 - » Some plants save and store water inside their plant parts; other plants grow in shady areas near mountains or rocks.

3. **Literal** How do animals survive in the Sonoran Desert?
 - » They live underground.

4. **Inferential** What is unique about the saguaro cactus?
 - » It is a habitat in itself, providing food, water, and shelter to many different animals.

NAME: _____

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28. “Animals of the Arctic Habitat”

by Core Knowledge Staff

Let’s take a tour of one of the coldest habitats on Earth: the Arctic tundra. In the tundra, there aren’t very many plants. In fact, there are no trees at all. The Arctic tundra is very, very cold. The wind is incredibly strong, which makes the air feel even colder. The ground is frozen and nearly everything is covered in ice. In the winter, daylight lasts only a few hours, and at times the sun does not come out at all. The temperatures are so low that most people and animals would freeze. All of these things make the Arctic tundra one of the least friendly habitats on Earth for plants and animals. Some ice will still be here in the summer, but the top layer of ice melts so that the ground gets wet and muddy.

Some plants and animals can only live in the Arctic tundra in the summer months when the temperature is warmer. Some plants and animals are able to live there all year long. Arctic plants grow very close together and do not grow very tall, which keeps them from being blown away by the Arctic winds. The kinds of plants include mosses and different types of grasses.

The animals that call the Arctic tundra habitat home all year round have adapted to the harsh conditions. This means the animal has changed over the years and now has special things that help it live in that habitat. For example, animals in the Arctic often have heavy fur coats that help them stay warm in the cold temperatures.

One creature that has adapted to the Arctic tundra habitat is called a muskox. It is adapted to the Arctic in several ways. The muskox’s long shaggy coat has an extra layer of hair underneath that keeps it warm when the temperature is cold enough to turn a rat into a freeze pop. The muskox sheds its extra coat of hair in the warmer, summer months.

Muskoxen travel in herds so they can huddle together for added warmth. They also have hooves specially adapted to this habitat. Their hooves are very wide to keep them from slipping on the snow and ice, and in the winter muskoxen use their sharp hooves to dig under the snow to find plants to eat.

Word Count: 383

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Comprehension Questions

“Animals of the Arctic Habitat”

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

1. **Literal** What makes the Arctic tundra one of the least friendly habitats on the earth for plants and animals?
 - » cold; strong winds; frozen ground; little daylight in the winter; little food; low temperatures

2. **Literal** How do Arctic plants keep from blowing away?
 - » They grow very close together and don’t grow very tall.

3. **Evaluative** Why would animals have adapted to the harsh conditions of the Arctic habitat?
 - » so they can continue to live in the habitat despite the harsh conditions

NAME: _____

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29. “The Freshwater Habitat”

by Core Knowledge Staff

A lake is an area of water that is surrounded by land. There is a lot of water in the world; in fact, water covers most of the earth’s surface. But, only a tiny part of the world’s water is freshwater, the kind of water you can drink.

Freshwater is found in streams, rivers, lakes, and ponds. The water in these streams, rivers, lakes, and ponds comes from rain and from melting ice and snow. Isn’t it amazing to think that the water from the drinking fountain at school or from the faucets in your house all comes from rain?

Freshwater habitats have many kinds of fish, birds, insects, and other animals. Some lakes have water lilies. A water lily is a plant that lives in water near the edges of ponds and lakes. Plants are important in freshwater habitats because they make oxygen for animals to breathe. Plants are also food for the animals to eat, and they can provide shelter to protect animals from their predators. The leaves of the water lily are very large, round, and green, and they float on the surface of the water. The water lily is well adapted for living in this habitat. The lily’s large leaves let it get as much sunlight as it needs for food and energy.

Lilies are also food for many animals. Animals—like deer, porcupines, beavers, and turtles—all eat the leaves, while ducks and geese like to eat their roots. Some animals, like fish and frogs, use the lily leaves as hiding places, and the flowers bring bees and other insects.

Another plant that lives in lakes is called a cattail. This plant gets its name from the unusual way it looks. Cattails have long, thin stems with foot-long, furry, flower spikes at the top that turn from green in the early summer to brown in the fall. The flower spike feels soft and furry and looks a little like a cat’s tail. The plants can reach up to nine feet in height, which lets them get as much sunlight as they need.

As with water lilies, some animals use cattails for food and shelter. Muskrats and geese like to eat the roots of the cattail, and the juicy green shoots are a favorite of moose and elk. Many kinds of birds make their homes among the cattails. Cattails grow so thickly, so it's a good place for birds to build their nests and to lay and hatch their eggs. Predators like snakes and frogs also live among the cattails and search for animals like birds and insects for food.

Word Count: 434

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Comprehension Questions

“The Freshwater Habitat”

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

1. **Literal** Where does freshwater come from?
 - » rain and melting ice and snow

2. **Literal** Why are plants important in the freshwater habitat?
 - » They make oxygen for animals to breathe; they provide shelter to animals; they provide food to animals.

3. **Evaluative** Why might the freshwater habitat be described as active?
 - » Many plants and animals live there.

NAME: _____

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30. “Confucius”

by Core Knowledge Staff

Long ago in China, a baby was born. Known as Confucius, he was born at a time when all of China was experiencing great troubles. China, an enormous country, was divided into small areas ruled by many different leaders. No two leaders agreed with one another. They formed large armies and fought long wars against one another. Robbers rode through the countryside hurting other people. Greedy leaders wanted to conquer all of China for their own selfish reasons.

Confucius was born into a poor family more than two thousand years ago. His father died when he was very young. His mother believed that education was important and made sure that he learned from the wise teachers in his village. Confucius also taught himself many subjects. He learned that China had not always been so divided. It had once been a peaceful, united country ruled by wise men who wanted to help their people. Confucius began to dream of a time when people could live in a peaceful land led by wise sages once again. He wanted to spread the word that it was possible to live without wars and confusion. He wanted to give people hope for a better tomorrow.

Confucius decided to spend his life educating others and teaching them how to live in a more peaceful way. As he taught his students how to build a peaceful country, Confucius would often begin his lessons by asking them to start with their own families. Confucius reasoned that if people could not get along in small groups, how could they expect their leaders to control the behavior of whole cities and towns? Confucius believed that if people always treated one another with kindness, the world would be a better place. Confucius also believed that if leaders were able to stop all wars, feed the hungry, and make sure that people were safe in their cities and towns, everyone could live in a happier world.

In addition, Confucius believed that education was very important. He thought that it was necessary to study and learn all the time. In ancient China, only people with money were allowed to go to school. Confucius thought that this was wrong. He believed that all people, rich and poor, should have equal opportunities to learn. Learning never stops, according to Confucius.

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Comprehension Questions

“Confucius”

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

1. **Literal** What did Confucius begin to dream of?
 - » a time when people could live in a peaceful land led by wise sages once again

2. **Literal** What did Confucius believe about education?
 - » that all people should have an equal opportunity to learn

3. **Inferential** What was China like when Confucius was born?
 - » troubled and divided, with fighting everywhere

NAME: _____

TAKE-HOME

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31. “China’s Great Wall”

by Core Knowledge Staff

Long ago, in the cold, northern lands beyond the boundaries of China, a group of nomads lived by raising animals. They rode on horses, herding sheep and goats in search of grass for grazing. Life was hard for these nomadic people. Perhaps that is why they became such fierce warriors. They regularly crossed into China on horseback, stealing food, gold, and animals.

The Chinese thought of many ways to keep the attackers out. All along the northern border of China they built walls of earth, stone, and wood. The materials they used depended upon what was readily available in the areas where they lived. For hundreds of years, the Chinese built many separate walls to keep out northern invaders. But it was not until the rule of China’s “First Emperor” that the decision was made to connect the many walls together into one long wall. That was over two thousand years ago.

Work continued on the Great Wall for another fifteen hundred years! Soldiers, prisoners, and peasants struggled to obey the orders of each new and powerful emperor of China who wanted to finish the wall. It was not an easy task. The wall stretched out across the land, often built on the highest ground, like mountain ridges, to make it even more difficult for invaders to cross. The work was very dangerous, and many workers died in the process.

Spanning four thousand miles across northern China, the Great Wall was built to act like a fort. At places along the way, watchtowers were built. At one time there were nearly twenty-five thousand watchtowers. Soldiers kept watch for invading warriors. If they sensed danger, they used flags and drums to send signals from tower to tower.

With all of that hard work, do you think the Great Wall protected the Chinese as planned? It did for much of Chinese history. There were times, however, when some determined warriors broke through the wall. On two occasions, lasting for hundreds of years each, nomads from Central Asia forced the Chinese people to live under their harsh rule.

Word Count: 345

NAME: _____

DATE: _____

Comprehension Questions

“China’s Great Wall”

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

1. ***Inferential*** Why did the Chinese begin to build walls?
 - » to keep out the nomads and attackers who were stealing food, gold, and animals

2. ***Literal*** Why was it difficult to build the Great Wall?
 - » because it was very long and was often built on the highest ground

3. ***Literal*** Did the Great Wall protect the Chinese as planned? How do you know?
 - » For much of Chinese history it did. However, there were times when determined warriors broke through the wall.

NAME: _____

DATE: _____

32. “The History of Writing in China”

by Core Knowledge Staff

Instead of using letters from the alphabet, the Chinese language uses characters. A character is a symbol or picture used in a system of writing to represent spoken words. Each character represents a different spoken word or group of words. There are over fifty-six thousand Chinese symbols, or characters, compared to the twenty-six symbols, or letters, of the English alphabet. Most Chinese use only eight thousand in their everyday lives.

The writing system used in China today is very much like the one developed in the Yellow River Valley over three thousand years ago. It is quite remarkable to think that the Chinese are still writing with many of the same characters that their ancestors used many years ago.

How do we know that the Chinese writing system has survived all these years? Well, it has to do with a recent discovery of a most unusual writing surface. Today you write on paper. But Chinese farmers, digging in their fields, unearthed writing on a surface quite different from paper.

This unusual writing surface is bone! Long before paper was invented, the Chinese used ox bones and the hard protective underbellies of large river tortoises. For thousands of years, the Chinese also wrote on clay pottery, metal vases, silk cloth, wood, and bamboo strips. Bamboo, a woody plant that grows like a weed, was split and scraped to make the smooth, writing surface.

The Chinese invented paper! The first paper was made from a rope-like plant called hemp. This first paper was very thick and rough. They continued to experiment with other materials, like tree bark, fishing nets, wheat stalks, and cloth rags. They wanted to create a softer, smoother, lighter writing surface. Finally, a man discovered the right combination of materials for a paper that was just right and less expensive to create.

After creating a good paper, Chinese inventors came up with a solution for printing more books. Block printing was invented. The text, written on a thin piece of paper, was glued facedown to a wooden block. Then, each character was carved out to make a woodblock printing plate. A separate block was created for each page of the book. If you made a mistake, you had to start all over again! The method wasn't perfect for sure, but the Chinese never gave up. Over the years they developed better methods that spread throughout the world.

Word Count: 398

NAME: _____

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DATE: _____

Comprehension Questions

“The History of Writing in China”

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

1. **Literal** What is a character?
 - » a symbol or picture used in a system of writing to represent spoken words

2. **Literal** What are two writing surfaces historically used in China?
 - » Answers may vary, but should include two of the following: bone; underbellies of large river tortoises; clay pottery; metal vases; silk cloth; wood; bamboo strips

3. **Inferential** Why did the Chinese continue to experiment with other materials for making paper?
 - » The first paper was very thick and rough and the Chinese wanted to create a softer, smoother, lighter writing surface.

33. “The Importance of Silk”

by Core Knowledge Staff

Explorers risked their lives, traveling out from Europe, Asia, and Africa, in search of new lands and people. These explorers were not disappointed by what they found. Their discoveries included new types of clothing, tools, and everyday objects. And, as so often happens when people encounter new things, they wanted what the others had.

Thus, trade began between people from different lands. Over time, people from one area of the world started to take the same paths for trade to other areas of the world. One of the longest and most important trade routes was a web of roads known as The Silk Roads. These roads joined towns and shipping ports along the Mediterranean Sea and East Africa, to towns in the northernmost parts of China. For many hundreds of years, Chinese inventions spread to other continents along the five thousand miles of The Silk Roads.

Silk is a very fine cloth known for its light, strong texture. Silk is often used to make clothing, scarves, neckties, and decorative wall hangings. In fact, the Chinese used silk to send arrows flying on curved wooden bows, for musical instruments, and for fishing lines. Silk is so strong that the early Chinese even used it for paper and money! But silk is not a good material for building roads.

The name “The Silk Roads” has nothing to do with the material used to build the roads. Rather, this long network of roads was named for the beautiful silk fabric, invented by the Chinese. For many years silk was the main item traded on these roads. People wondered how to make this fabric. It had the ability to keep one warm in the winter and cool in the summer. They were willing to travel long distances over dangerous ground to buy and trade goods in exchange for the silk cloth. For many years, the Chinese kept how they made silk a deep secret.

Silk comes from special moths on mulberry trees. The moths are blind and unable to fly. They lay hundreds of tiny eggs, each about the size of a pinhead, on these leaves. When the eggs hatch, caterpillars appear and begin munching on the mulberry leaves. Each fattened caterpillar spins a single long thread around itself, forming a cocoon.

The Chinese discovered how to stop the growth of these caterpillars in order to make the fine, silk thread. Chinese women began collecting the eggs of the silkworms. Placing them in special trays, they fed chopped up mulberry leaves to the newly hatched caterpillars and waited for them to spin their cocoons. Once the spun cocoons rested for nine or ten days, they were baked to kill the caterpillars inside. Then the cocoons were plunged into hot water to loosen the thread so that it could be unwound and woven into fine cloth. This same process is still used in China and other silk-producing countries today.

Word Count: 484

NAME: _____

DATE: _____

Comprehension Questions

“The Importance of Silk”

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

1. **Literal** What were The Silk Roads?
 - » a long web of important trade routes, named for silk, the main item traded on these roads.

2. **Literal** What did people use silk to make?
 - » clothes, bows, musical instruments, and fishing line

3. **Inferential** What role do special moths play in the making of silk?
 - » The caterpillars of special moths are important for making silk. Nine or ten days after a caterpillar spins a cocoon, the spun cocoon is baked to kill the caterpillar inside. Then the cocoon is plunged into hot water to loosen the thread so it can be unwound and woven into a fine cloth.

4. **Evaluative** Why might the Chinese have kept the process of making silk a secret for as long as they could?
 - » Answers may vary, but could include that people were willing to travel long distances to buy and trade goods in exchange for the silk cloth. If the Chinese were the only ones who knew how to make this cloth, people would go to great lengths to get the cloth, which would mean the Chinese could trade for other things that may be worth even more than silk.



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