

Grades 2–3 Text Exemplars

Stories

Gannett, Ruth Stiles. *My Father's Dragon*. Illustrated by Ruth Chrisman Gannett. New York: Random House, 1948. (1948).

From Chapter Seven “My Father Meets a Lion”

“Who are you?” the lion yelled at my father.

“My name is Elmer Elevator.”

“Where do you think you are going?”

“I’m going home,” said my father.

“That’s what you think!” said the lion. “Ordinarily I’d save you for afternoon tea, but I happen to be upset enough and hungry enough to eat you right now.” And he picked up my father in his front paws to feel how fat he was.

My father said, “Oh, please, Lion, before you eat me, tell me why you are so particularly upset today.”

“It’s my mane,” said the lion, as he was figuring out how many bites a little boy would make. “You see what a dreadful mess it is, and I don’t seem to be able to do anything about it. My mother is coming over on the dragon this afternoon, and if she sees me this way I’m afraid she’ll stop my allowance. She can’t stand messy manes! But I’m going to eat you now, so it won’t make any difference to you.”

“Oh, wait a minute,” said my father, “and I’ll give you just the things you need to make your mane a tidy and beautiful. I have them here in my pack.”

“You do?” said the lion, “Well, give them to me, and perhaps I’ll save you for afternoon tea after all,” and he put my father down on the ground.”

My father opened the pack and took out the comb and the brush and the seven hair ribbons of different colors. “Look,” he said, “I’ll show you what to do on your forelock, where you can watch me. First you brush a while, and then you comb, and then you brush again until all the twigs and snarls are gone. Then you divide it up into three and braid it like this and tie a ribbon around the end.”

As my father was doing this, the lion watched very carefully and began to look much happier. When my father tied the ribbon he was all smiles. “Oh, that’s wonderful, really wonderful!” said the lion. “Let me have the comb and brush and see if I can do it.” So my father gave him the comb and brush and the lion began busily grooming his mane. As a matter of fact, he was so busy that he didn’t even know when my father left.

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Averill, Esther. *The Fire Cat*. New York: HarperCollins, 1960. (1960)
From “The Fire Cat”

Joe took Pickles to the Chief, who was sitting at his desk.

“Oh!” said the Chief. “I know this young cat. He is the one who chases little cats.”

“How do you know?” asked Joe.

The Chief answered, “A Fire Chief knows many things.”

Just then the telephone began to ring. “Hello,” said the Chief. “Oh, hello, Mrs. Goodkind. Yes, Pickles is here. He came with Joe. What did you say? You think Pickles would like to live in our firehouse? Well, we shall see. Thank you, Mrs. Goodkind. Good-bye.”

The Chief looked at Pickles and said, “Mrs. Goodkind says you are not a bad cat. And Joe likes you. I will let you live here IF you will learn to be a good firehouse cat.”

Pickles walked quietly up the stairs after Joe. Joe and Pickles went into a room where the firemen lived.

The men were pleased to have a cat. They wanted to play with Pickles. But suddenly the fire bell rang. All the firemen ran to a big pole and down they went. The pole was the fast way to get to their trucks. Pickles could hear the trucks start up and rush off to the fire.

Pickles said to himself, “I must learn to do what the firemen do, I must learn to slide down the pole.”

He jumped and put his paws around the pole. Down he fell with a BUMP.

“Bumps or no bumps, I must try again,” said Pickles. Up the stairs he ran. Down the pole he came – and bumped. But by the time the firemen came back from the fire, Pickles could slide down the pole.

“What a wonderful cat you are!” said the firemen. The Chief did not say anything.

Pickles said to himself, “I must keep learning everything I can.” So he learned to jump up on one of the big trucks. And he learned to sit up straight on the seat while the truck raced to a fire.

“What a wonderful cat you are!” said the firemen. The Chief did not say anything.

Pickles said to himself, “Now I must learn to help the firemen with their work.”

At the next fire, he jumped down from the truck. He ran to a big hose, put his paws around it, and tried to help a fireman shoot water at the flames.

“What a wonderful cat you are!” said the firemen. The Chief did not say anything.

The next day the Chief called all the firemen to his desk. Then he called for Pickles. Pickles did not know what was going to happen. He said to himself, “Maybe the Chief does not like the way I work. Maybe he wants to send me back to my old yard.” But Pickles went to the Chief.

At the Chief’s desk stood all the firemen – and Mrs. Goodkind! The Chief said to Pickles, “I have asked Mrs. Goodkind to come because she was your first friend. Pickles, jump up on my desk. I have something to say to you.”

Pickles jumped up on the desk and looked at the Chief. Out of the desk the Chief took – a little fire hat!

“Pickles,” said the Chief, “I have watched you at your work. You have worked hard. The time has come for you to know that you are now our Fire Cat.”

And with these words, the Chief put the little hat on Pickles’ head.

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Steig, William. *Amos & Boris*. New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1971. (1971)

Shulevitz, Uri. *The Treasure*. New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1978. (1978)

Cameron, Ann. *The Stories Julian Tells*. New York: Random House, 1981. (1981)

**MacLachlan, Patricia. *Sarah, Plain and Tall*. New York: HarperCollins, 1985. (1985)
From Chapter I**

“Did Mama sing every day?” asked Caleb. “Every-single-day?” He sat close to the fire, his chin in his hand. It was dusk, and the dogs lay beside him on the warm hearthstones.

“Every-single-day,” I told him for the second time this week. For the twentieth time this month. The hundredth time this year? And the past few years?

“And did Papa sing, too?”

“Yes. Papa sang, too. Don’t get so close, Caleb. You’ll heat up.”

He pushed his chair back. It made a hollow scraping sound on the hearthstones. And the dogs stirred. Lottie, small and black, wagged her tail and lifted her head. Nick slept on.

I turned the bread dough over and over on the marble slab on the kitchen table.

“Well, Papa doesn’t sing anymore,” said Caleb very softly. A log broke apart and crackled in the fireplace. He looked up at me. “What did I look like when I was born?”

“You didn’t have any clothes on,” I told him.

“I know that,” he said.

“You looked like this.” I held the bread dough up in a round pale ball.

“I had hair,” said Caleb seriously.

“Not enough to talk about,” I said.

“And she named me Caleb,” he went on, filling in the old familiar story.

“I would have named you Troublesome,” I said, making Caleb smile.

“And Mama handed me to you in the yellow blanket and said...” He waited for me to finish the story. “And said...?”

I sighed. “And Mama said. ‘Isn’t he beautiful, Anna?’”

“And I was,” Caleb finished.

Caleb thought the story was over, and I didn’t tell him what I had really thought. He was homely and plain, and he had a terrible holler and a horrid smell. But these were not the worst of him. Mama died the next morning. That was the worst thing about Caleb.

“Isn’t he beautiful, Anna?” her last words to me. I had gone to bed thinking how wretched he looked. And I forgot to say good night.

I wiped my hands on my apron and went to the window. Outside, the prairie reached out and touched the places where the sky came down. Though the winter was nearly over, there were patches of snow everywhere. I looked at the long dirt road that crawled across the plains, remembering the morning that Mama had died, cruel and sunny. They had come for her in a wagon and taken her away to be buried. And then the cousins and aunts and uncles had come and tried to fill up the house. But they couldn’t.

Slowly, one by one, they left. And then the days seemed long and dark like winter days, even though it wasn’t winter. And Papa didn’t sing.

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**Rylant, Cynthia. *Henry and Mudge: The First Book of Their Adventures*. Illustrated by Suçie Stevenson. New York: Atheneum, 1996. (1987)
From “Henry and Mudge”**

Every day when Henry woke up, he saw Mudge’s big head. And every day when Mudge woke up, he saw Henry’s small face.

They ate breakfast at the same time; they ate supper at the same time.

And when Henry was at school, Mudge just lay around and waited. Mudge never went for a walk without Henry again. And Henry never worried that Mudge would leave.

Because sometimes, in their dreams, they saw long silent roads, big wide fields, deep streams, and pine trees.

In those dreams, Mudge was alone and Henry was alone. So when Mudge woke up and knew Henry was with him, he remembered the dream and stayed closer.

And when Henry woke up and knew Mudge was with him, he remembered the dream

and the looking
and the calling
and the fear
and he knew he would never lose Mudge again.

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Stevens, Janet. *Tops and Bottoms*. New York: Harcourt, 1985. (1995)

Once upon a time there lived a very lazy bear who had lots of money and lots of land. His father had been a hard worker and a smart business bear, and he had given all of his wealth to his son.

But all Bear wanted to do was sleep.

Not far down the road lived a hare. Although Hare was clever, he sometimes got into trouble. He had once owned land, too, but now he had nothing. He had lost a risky bet with a tortoise and had sold off all of his land to Bear to pay off the debt.

Hare and his family were in very bad shape.

"The children are so hungry Father Hare! We must think of something!" Mrs. Hare cried one day. So Hare and Mrs. Hare put their heads together and cooked up a plan.

[...]

Bear stared at his pile. "But, Hare, all the best parts are in your half!"

"You chose the tops, Bear," Hare said.

"Now, Hare, you've tricked me. You plant this field again—and this season I want the bottoms!"

Hare agreed. "It's a done deal, Bear."

LaMarche, Jim. *The Raft*. New York: HarperCollins, 2000. (2000)

Somehow, on the river, it seemed like summer would never end. But of course it did.

On my last day, I got up extra early and crept down to the dock. The air was cool and a low pearly fog hung over the river. I untied the raft and quietly drifted downstream.

Ahead of me, through the fog, I saw two deer moving across the river, a doe and a fawn. When they reached the shore, the doe leaped easily up the steep bank, then turned to wait for her baby. But the fawn was in trouble. It kept slipping down the muddy bank. The doe returned to the water to help, but the more the fawn struggled, the deeper it got stuck in the mud.

I pushed off the river bottom and drove the raft hard onto the muddy bank, startling the doe. Then I dropped into the water. I was ankle-deep in mud.

"You're okay," I whispered to the fawn, praying that the raft would calm it. "I won't hurt you."

Gradually the fawn stopped struggling, as if it understood that I was there to help. I put my arms around it and pulled. It barely moved. I pulled again, then again. Slowly the fawn eased out of the mud, and finally it was free. Carefully I carried the fawn up the bank to its mother.

Then, quietly, I returned to the raft. From there I watched the doe nuzzle and clean her baby, and I knew what I had to do. I pulled the stub of a crayon from my pocket, and drew the fawn, in all its wildness, onto the old gray boards of the raft. When I had finished, I knew it was just right.

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**Rylant, Cynthia. *Poppleton in Winter*. Illustrated by Mark Teague. New York: Scholastic, 2001. (2001)
From "The Sleigh Ride"**

It was a very snowy day and Poppleton felt like a sleigh ride. He called his friend Cherry Sue.

"Would you like to go for a sleigh ride?" Poppleton asked.

"Sorry, Poppleton, I'm making cookies," said Cherry Sue.

Poppleton called his friend Hudson.

“Would you like to go for a sleigh ride?” Poppleton asked.

“Sorry,” said Hudson, “I’m baking a cake.”

Poppleton called his friend Fillmore.

“Would you like to go for a sleigh ride?” Poppleton asked.

“Sorry,” said Fillmore. “I’m stirring some fudge.”

Poppleton was disappointed. He couldn’t find one friend for a sleigh ride. And besides that, they were all making such good things to eat!

He sat in front of his window, feeling very sorry for himself. Suddenly the doorbell rang.

“SURPRISE!”

There stood all of Poppleton’s friends! With cookies and cake and fudge and presents! “HAPPY BIRTHDAY, POPPLETON!”

He had forgotten his own birthday! Everyone ate and laughed and played games with Poppleton.

Then, just before midnight, they all took him on a sleigh ride.

The moon was full and white. The stars twinkled. The owls hooted in the trees. Over the snow went the sleigh filled with Poppleton and all of his friends.

Poppleton didn’t even make a birthday wish. He had everything already.

From POPPLETON IN WINTER by Cynthia Rylant. Scholastic Inc./Blue Sky Press. Copyright © 2001 by Cynthia Rylant. Used by permission.

Rylant, Cynthia. *The Lighthouse Family: The Storm*. Illustrated by Preston McDaniels. New York: Simon & Schuster, 2002. (2002)

In a lonely lighthouse, far from city and town, far from the comfort of friends, lived a kindhearted cat named Pandora.

She had been living in this lighthouse all alone for four long years, and it was beginning to wear. She found herself sighing long, deep, lonely sighs. She sat on the rocks overlooking the waves far too long. Sometimes her nose got a sunburn.

And at night, when she tried to read by the lantern light, her mind wandered and she would think for hours on her childhood when she had friends and company.

Why did Pandora accept this lonely lighthouse life?

Because a lighthouse had once saved her.

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Osborne, Mary Pope. *The One-Eyed Giant (Book One of Tales from the Odyssey)*. New York: Disney Hyperion, 2002. (2002)

From Chapter Five: “The One-Eyed Giant”

A hideous giant lumbered into the clearing. He carried nearly half a forest’s worth of wood on his back. His monstrous head jutted from his body like a shaggy mountain peak. A single eye bulged in the center of his forehead.

The monster was Polyphemus. He was the most savage of all the Cyclopes, a race of fierce one-eyed giants who lived without laws or leader. The Cyclopes were ruthless creatures who were known to capture and devour any sailors who happened near their shores.

Polyphemus threw down his pile of wood. As it crashed to the ground, Odysseus and his men fled to the darkest corners of the cave.

Unaware that the Greeks were hiding inside, Polyphemus drove his animals into the cave. Then he rolled a huge boulder over its mouth to block out the light of day and imprison his flock inside.

Twenty-four wagons could not haul that rock away, Odysseus thought desperately. How will we escape this monster?

Odysseus' men trembled with terror as the giant made a small fire and milked his goats in the shadowy light. His milking done, he threw more wood on his fire. The flame blazed brightly, lighting up the corners of the cave where Odysseus and his men were hiding.

"What's this? Who are you? From where do you come?" the giant boomed. He glared at the Greeks with his single eye. "Are you pirates who steal the treasure of others?"

Odysseus' men were frozen with terror. But Odysseus hid his own fear and stepped toward the monster.

"We are not pirates," he said, "We are Greeks blown off course by storm winds. Will you offer us the gift of hospitality like a good host? If you do, mighty Zeus, king of the gods, will be pleased. Zeus is the guardian of all strangers."

"Fool!" the giant growled. "Who are you to tell me to please Zeus? I am a son of Poseidon, god of the seas! I am not afraid of Zeus!"

Odysseus men cowered in fear.

Polyphemus moved closer to Odysseus. He spoke in a soft, terrible voice. "But tell me, stranger, where is your ship? Near or far from shore?"

Odysseus knew Polyphemus was trying to trap him. "Our ship was destroyed in the storm," he lied. "It was dashed against the rocks. With these good men I escaped, I ask you again, will you welcome us?"

From Mary Pope Osborne's the One Eyed Giant © 2002 by Mary Pope Osborne. Reprinted by permission of Disney-Hyperion, an imprint of Disney Book Group LLC, All Rights Reserved.

**Silverman, Erica. *Cowgirl Kate and Cocoa*. Illustrated by Betsy Lewin. Orlando: Harcourt, 2005. (2005)
From Chapter 1: "A Story for Cocoa"**

Cowgirl Kate rode her horse, Cocoa, out to the pasture.

"It's time to herd cows," said Cowgirl Kate.

"I am thirsty," said Cocoa.

He stopped at the creek and took a drink.

"Are you ready now?" asked Cowgirl Kate.

"No," said Cocoa. "Now I am hungry."

Cowgirl Kate gave him an apple. He ate it in one bite. Then he sniffed the saddlebag.

Cowgirl Kate gave him another apple. He ate that in one bite, too. He sniffed the saddlebag again.

"You are a pig," said Cowgirl Kate.

"No," said Cocoa. "I am a horse."

"A cowhorse?" she asked.

"Of course," he said.

"But a cowhorse herds cows," she said.

"Just now, I am too full," he said.

Cowgirl Kate smiled. “Then I will tell you a story.”

“Once there was a cowgirl who needed a cowhorse. She went to a ranch and saw lots and lots of horses. Then she saw a horse whose coat was the color of chocolate. His tail and mane were the color of caramel. ‘Yum,’ said the cowgirl, ‘you are the colors of my favorite candy.’ The horse looked at her. He sniffed her.”

“‘Are you a real cowgirl?’ he asked. ‘I am a cowgirl from the boots up,’ she said. ‘Well, I am a cowhorse from the mane down,’ he said. ‘Will you work hard every day?’ the cowgirl asked.. The horse raised his head high. ‘Of course,’ he said, ‘a cowhorse always does his job.’ ‘At last,’ said the cowgirl, ‘I have found my horse.’”

“That was a good story,” said Cocoa. He raised his head high. “And now I am ready to herd cows.”

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Poetry

Dickinson, Emily. “Autumn.” *The Complete Poems of Emily Dickinson*. Boston: Little, Brown, 1960. (1893)

The morns are meeker than they were.
The nuts are getting brown;
The berry’s cheek is plumper,
The rose is out of town.

The maple wears a gayer scarf,
The field a scarlet gown.
Lest I should be old-fashioned,
I’ll put a trinket on.

Rossetti, Christina. “Who Has Seen the Wind?” *Sing a Song of Popcorn: Every Child’s Book of Poems*. Selected by Beatrice Schenk de Regniers et al. Illustrated by Marcia Brown et al. New York: Scholastic, 1988. (1893)

Who has seen the wind?
Neither I nor you;
But when the leaves hang trembling
The wind is passing through.

Who has seen the wind?
Neither you nor I;
But when the trees bow down their heads
The wind is passing by.

Millay, Edna St. Vincent. “Afternoon on a Hill.” *The Selected Poetry of Edna St. Vincent Millay*. Edited by Nancy Milford. New York: Modern Library, 2001. (1917)

I will be the gladdest thing
Under the sun!
I will touch a hundred flowers
And not pick one.

I will look at cliffs and clouds
With quiet eyes,
Watch the wind bow down the grass,
And the grass rise.

And when lights begin to show
Up from the town,
I will mark which must be mine,
And then start down!

Frost, Robert. "Stopping by Woods on a Snowy Evening." *The Poetry of Robert Frost: The Collected Poems*. Edited by Edward Connery Lathem. New York: Henry Holt, 1979. (1923)

Field, Rachel. "Something Told the Wild Geese." *Branches Green*. New York: Macmillan, 1934. (1934)

Hughes, Langston. "Grandpa's Stories." *The Collected Poems of Langston Hughes*. New York: Knopf, 1994. (1958)

Jarrell, Randall. "A Bat Is Born." *The Bat Poet*. New York: HarperCollins, 1964. (1964)

A bat is born
 Naked and blind and pale.
 His mother makes a pocket of her tail
 And catches him. He clings to her long fur
 By his thumbs and toes and teeth.
 And then the mother dances through the night
 Doubling and looping, soaring, somersaulting—
 Her baby hangs on underneath.
 All night, in happiness, she hunts and flies
 Her sharp cries
 Like shining needlepoints of sound
 Go out into the night and, echoing back,
 Tell her what they have touched.
 She hears how far it is, how big it is,
 Which way it's going:
 She lives by hearing.
 The mother eats the moths and gnats she catches
 In full flight; in full flight

The mother drinks the water of the pond
 She skims across. Her baby hangs on tight.
 Her baby drinks the milk she makes him
 In moonlight or starlight, in mid-air.
 Their single shadow, printed on the moon
 Or fluttering across the stars,
 Whirls on all night; at daybreak
 The tired mother flaps home to her rafter.
 The others are all there.
 They hang themselves up by their toes,
 They wrap themselves in their brown wings.
 Bunched upside down, they sleep in air.
 Their sharp ears, their sharp teeth, their
 quick sharp faces
 Are dull and slow and mild.
 All the bright day, as the mother sleeps,
 She folds her wings about her sleeping child.

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Giovanni, Nikki. "Knoxville, Tennessee." *Sing a Song of Popcorn: Every Child's Book of Poems*. Selected by Beatrice Schenk de Regniers et al. Illustrated by Marcia Brown et al. New York: Scholastic, 1988. (1968)

I always like summer
 best
 you can eat fresh corn
 from daddy's garden
 and okra
 and greens
 and cabbage
 and lots of
 barbecue
 and buttermilk

and homemade ice-cream
at the church picnic

and listen to
gospel music
outside
at the church
homecoming
and you go to the mountains
with
your grandmother
and go barefooted
and be warm
all the time
not only when you go to bed
and sleep

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Merriam, Eve. "Weather." *Sing a Song of Popcorn: Every Child's Book of Poems*. Selected by Beatrice Schenk de Regniers et al. Illustrated by Marcia Brown et al. New York: Scholastic, 1988. (1969)

Soto, Gary. "Eating While Reading." *The 20th Century Children's Poetry Treasury*. Selected by Jack Prelutsky. Illustrated by Meilo So. New York: Knopf, 1999. (1995)

What is better
Than this book
And the churn of candy
In your mouth,
Or the balloon of bubble gum,
Or the crack of sunflower seeds,
Or the swig of soda,
Or the twist of beef jerky,
Or the slow slither
Of snow cone syrup
Running down your arms?

What is better than
This sweet dance
On the tongue,
And this book
That pulls you in?
It yells, "Over here!"
And you hurry along
With a red, sticky face.

"Eating While Reading" from CANTO FAMILIAR by Gary Soto. Copyright © 1995 by Gary Soto. Used by Permission of Houghton Mifflin Harcourt Publishing Company. All rights reserved.

Read-Aloud Stories

Kipling, Rudyard. "How the Camel Got His Hump." *Just So Stories*. New York: Puffin, 2008. (1902)

Now this is the next tale, and it tells how the Camel got his big hump.

In the beginning of years, when the world was so new and all, and the Animals were just beginning to work for Man, there was a Camel, and he lived in the middle of a Howling Desert because he did not want to work; and besides, he was a Howler himself. So he ate sticks and thorns and tamarisks and milkweed and prickles, most 'scruciating idle; and when anybody spoke to him he said "Humph!" Just "Humph!" and no more.

Presently the Horse came to him on Monday morning, with a saddle on his back and a bit in his mouth, and said, "Camel, O Camel, come out and trot like the rest of us."

"Humph!" said the Camel; and the Horse went away and told the Man.

Presently the Dog came to him, with a stick in his mouth, and said, "Camel, O Camel, come and fetch and carry like the rest of us."

"Humph!" said the Camel; and the Dog went away and told the Man.

Presently the Ox came to him, with the yoke on his neck and said, "Camel, O Camel, come and plough like the rest of us."

"Humph!" said the Camel; and the Ox went away and told the Man.

At the end of the day the Man called the Horse and the Dog and the Ox together, and said, "Three, O Three, I'm very sorry for you (with the world so new-and-all); but that Humph-thing in the Desert can't work, or he would have been here by now, so I am going to leave him alone, and you must work double-time to make up for it."

That made the Three very angry (with the world so new-and-all), and they held a palaver, and an indaba, and a punchayet, and a pow-wow on the edge of the Desert; and the Camel came chewing milkweed most 'scruciating idle, and laughed at them. Then he said "Humph!" and went away again.

Presently there came along the Djinn in charge of All Deserts, rolling in a cloud of dust (Djinns always travel that way because it is Magic), and he stopped to palaver and pow-wow with the Three.

"Djinn of All Deserts," said the Horse, "is it right for any one to be idle, with the world so new-and-all?"

"Certainly not," said the Djinn.

"Well," said the Horse, "there's a thing in the middle of your Howling Desert (and he's a Howler himself) with a long neck and long legs, and he hasn't done a stroke of work since Monday morning. He won't trot."

"Whew!" said the Djinn, whistling, "that's my Camel, for all the gold in Arabia! What does he say about it?"

"He says 'Humph!'" said the Dog; "and he won't fetch and carry."

"Does he say anything else?"

"Only 'Humph!'; and he won't plough," said the Ox.

"Very good," said the Djinn. "I'll humph him if you will kindly wait a minute."

**Thurber, James. *The Thirteen Clocks*. Illustrated by Marc Simont. New York: New York Review Children's Collection, 2008. (1950)
From Chapter 1**

Once upon a time, in a gloomy castle on a lonely hill, where there were thirteen clocks that wouldn't go, there lived a cold aggressive Duke, and his niece, the Princess Saralinda. She was warm in every wind and weather, but he was always cold. His hands were as cold as his smile and almost as cold as his heart. He wore gloves when he was asleep, and he wore gloves when he was awake, which made it difficult for him to pick up pins or coins or kernels of nuts, or to tear the wings from nightingales. He was six feet four, and forty-six, and even colder than he thought he was. One eye wore a velvet patch; the other glittered through a monocle, which made half of his body seem closer to you than the other half. He had lost one eye when he was twelve, for he was fond of peering into nests and lairs in search of birds and animals to maul. One afternoon, a mother shrike had mauled him first. His nights were spent in evil dreams, and his days were given to wicked schemes.

Wickedly scheming, he would limp and cackle through the cold corridors of the castle, planning new impossible feats for the suitors of Saralinda to perform. He did not wish to give her hand in marriage, since her hand was the only warm hand in the castle. Even the hands of his watch and the hands of all the thirteen clocks were frozen. They had all frozen at the same time, on a snowy night, seven years before, and after that it was always ten to five in the castle. Travelers and mariners would look up at the gloomy castle on the lonely hill and say, "Time lies frozen there. It's always Then. It's never Now."

**White, E. B. *Charlotte's Web*. Illustrated by Garth Williams. New York: HarperCollins, 2001. (1952)
From Chapter 1: "Before Breakfast"**

"Where's Papa going with that ax?" said Fern to her mother as they were setting the table for breakfast.

"Out to the hoghouse," replied Mrs. Arable. "Some pigs were born last night."

"I don't see why he needs an ax," continued Fern, who was only eight.

"Well," said her mother, "one of the pigs is a runt. It's very small and weak, and it will never amount to anything. So your father has decided to do away with it."

"Do away with it?" shrieked Fern. "You mean kill it? Just because it's smaller than the others?"

Mrs. Arable put a pitcher of cream on the table. "Don't yell, Fern!" she said. "Your father is right. The pig would probably die anyway."

Fern pushed a chair out of the way and ran outdoors. The grass was wet and the earth smelled of springtime. Fern's sneakers were sopping by the time she caught up with her father.

"Please don't kill it!" she sobbed. "It's unfair." Mr. Arable stopped walking.

"Fern," he said gently, "you will have to learn to control yourself."

"Control myself?" yelled Fern. "This is a matter of life and death, and you talk about controlling myself!"

Tears ran down her cheeks and she took hold of the ax and tried to pull it out of her father's hand.

"Fern," said Mr. Arable, "I know more about raising a litter of pigs than you do. A weakling makes trouble. Now run along!"

"But it's unfair," cried Fern. "The pig couldn't help being born small, could it? If I had been very small at birth, would you have killed me?"

Mr. Arable smiled. "Certainly not," he said, looking down at his daughter with love. "But this is different. A little girl is one thing, a little runty pig is another."

"I see no difference," replied Fern, still hanging on to the ax. "This is the most terrible case of injustice I ever heard of."

**Selden, George. *The Cricket in Times Square*. Illustrated by Garth Williams. New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1960. (1960)
From Chapter Three: "Chester"**

Tucker Mouse had been watching the Bellinis and listening to what they said. Next to scrounging, eaves-dropping on human beings was what he enjoyed most. That was one of the reasons he lived in the Times Square subway station. As soon as the family disappeared, he darted out across the floor and scooted up to the newsstand. At one side the boards had separated and there was a wide space he could jump through. He'd been in a few times before—just exploring. For a moment he stood under the three-legged stool, letting his eyes get used to the darkness. Then he jumped up on it.

"Psst!" he whispered. "Hey, you up there—are you awake?"

There was no answer.

"Psst! Psst! Hey!" Tucker whispered again, louder this time.

From the shelf above came a scuffling, like little feet feeling their way to the edge. "Who is that going 'psst'?" said a voice.

"It's me," said Tucker. "Down here on the stool."

A black head, with two shiny black eyes, peered down at him. "Who are you?"

"A mouse," said Tucker. "Who are you?"

"I'm Chester Cricket, said the cricket. He had a high, musical voice. Everything he said seemed spoken in an unheard melody.

"My name's Tucker," said Tucker Mouse. "Can I come up?"

"I guess so," said Chester Cricket. "This isn't my house anyway."

Tucker jumped up beside the cricket and looked him all over. "A cricket," he said admiringly. "So you're a cricket. I never saw one before."

"I've seen mice before," the cricket said. "I knew quite a few back in Connecticut."

"Is that where you're from?" asked Tucker.

"Yes," said Chester. "I guess I'll never see it again," he added wistfully.

**Babbitt, Natalie. *The Search for Delicious*. New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1969. (1969)
From the Prologue**

There was a time once when the earth was still very young, a time some call the oldest days. This was long before there were any people about to dig parts of it up and cut parts of it off. People came along much later, building their towns and castles (which nearly always fell down after a while) and plaguing each other with quarrels and supper parties. The creatures who lived on earth in that early time stayed each in his own place and kept it beautiful. There were dwarfs in the mountains, woldwellers in the forests, mermaids in the lakes, and, of course, winds in the air.

There was one particular spot on the earth where a ring of mountains enclosed a very dry and dusty place. There were winds and dwarfs there, but no mermaids because there weren't any lakes, and there were no woldwellers either because forests couldn't grow in so dry a place.

Then a remarkable thing happened. Up in the mountains one day a dwarf was poking about with a sharp tool, looking for a good spot to begin mining. He poked and poked until he had made a very deep hole in the earth. Then he poked again and clear spring water came spurting up in the hole. He hurried in great excitement to tell the other dwarfs and they all came running to see the water. They were so pleased that they built over it a fine house of heavy stones and they made a special door out of a flat rock and balanced it in its place very carefully on carved hinges. Then one of them made a whistle out of a small stone which blew a certain very high note tuned to just the right warble so that when you blew it, the door of the rock house would open, and when you blew it again, the door would shut. They took turns being in charge of the whistle and they worked hard to keep the spring clean and beautiful.

**Curtis, Christopher Paul. *Bud, Not Buddy*. New York: Random House, 1999. (1999)
(Also listed as a narrative for grades 4-5)
From Chapter 1**

Here we go again. We were all standing in line waiting for breakfast when one of the caseworkers came in and tap-tap-taped down the line. Uh-oh, this meant bad news, either they'd found a foster home for somebody or somebody was about to get paddled. All the kids watched the woman as she moved along the line, her high-heeled shoes sounding like little fire-crackers going off on the wooden floor.

Shoot! She stopped at me and said, "Are you Buddy Caldwell?"

I said, "It's Bud, not Buddy, ma'am."

She put her hand on my shoulder and took me out of the line. Then she pulled Jerry, one of the littler boys, over. "Aren't you Jerry Clark?" He nodded.

"Boys, good news! Now that the school year has ended, you both have been accepted in new temporary-care homes starting this afternoon!"

Jerry asked the same thing I was thinking, "Together?"

She said, "Why no, Jerry, you'll be in a family with three little girls..."

Jerry looked like he'd just found out they were going to dip him in a pot of boiling milk.

"...and Bud..." She looked at some papers she was holding. "Oh, yes, the Amoses, you'll be with Mr. and Mrs. Amos and their son, who's twelve years old, that makes him just two years older than you, doesn't it, Bud?"

Yes, ma'am."

She said, "I'm sure you'll both be very happy."

Me and Jerry looked at each other.

The woman said, "Now, now, boys, no need to look so glum, I know you don't understand what it means, but there's a depression going on all over this country. People can't find jobs and these are very, very difficult times for everybody. We've been lucky enough to find two wonderful families who've opened their doors for you. I think it's best that we show our new foster families that we're very..."

She dragged out the word very, waiting for us to finish her sentence for her.

Jerry said, "Cheerful, helpful and grateful." I moved my lips and mumbled.

She smiled and said, "Unfortunately, you won't have time for breakfast. I'll have a couple of pieces of fruit put in a bag. In the meantime go to the sleep room and strip your beds and gather all of your things."

Here we go again. I felt like I was walking in my sleep as I followed Jerry back to the room where all the boys' beds were jim-jammed together. This was the third foster home I was going to and I'm used to packing up and leaving, but it still surprises me that there are always a few seconds, right after they tell you you've got to go, when my nose gets all runny and my throat gets all choky and my eyes get all sting-y. But the tears coming out doesn't happen to me anymore, I don't know when it first happened, but it seems like my eyes don't cry anymore.

Say, Allen. *The Sign Painter*. New York: Houghton Mifflin, 2000. (2000)

"Are you lost, son?" the man asked.

"Yes . . . I mean no. I need a job," the young man stammered looking not much more than a boy.

"Tell me what you can do."

"I can paint."

"Ah, an artist. Are you good at faces?"

"I think so."

"Can you paint them big?"

"Yes."

"All right, I'm interested." The man put down the brush, and said, "Come with me."

Excerpt from THE SIGN PAINTER by Allen Say. Copyright © 2000 by Allen Say. Used by Permission of Houghton Mifflin Harcourt Publishing Company. All rights reserved.

Read-Aloud Poetry

Lear, Edward. "The Jumblies." *Sing a Song of Popcorn: Every Child's Book of Poems*. Selected by Beatrice Schenk de Regniers et al. Illustrated by Marcia Brown et al. New York: Scholastic, 1988. (1871)

They went to sea in a sieve, they did;
 In a sieve they went to sea:
 In spite of all their friends could say,
 On a winter's morn, on a stormy day,
 In a sieve they went to sea.
 And when the sieve turned round and round,
 And every one cried, "You'll all be drowned!"

They called aloud, "Our sieve ain't big;
But we don't care a button, we don't care a fig:
In a sieve we'll go to sea!"

Far and few, far and few,
Are the lands where the Jumblies live:
Their heads are green, and their hands are blue
And they went to sea in a sieve.

They sailed away in a sieve, they did,
In a sieve they sailed so fast,
With only a beautiful pea-green veil
Tied with a ribbon, by way of a sail,
To a small tobacco-pipe mast.
And every one said who saw them go,
"Oh! won't they be soon upset, you know?
For the sky is dark, and the voyage is long;
And, happen what may, it's extremely wrong
In a sieve to sail so fast."

Far and few, far and few,
Are the lands where the Jumblies live:
Their heads are green, and their hands are blue
And they went to sea in a sieve.

The water it soon came in, it did;
The water it soon came in:
So, to keep them dry, they wrapped their feet
In a pinky paper all folded neat;
And they fastened it down with a pin.
And they passed the night in a crockery-jar;
And each of them said, "How wise we are!
Though the sky be dark, and the voyage be long,
Yet we never can think we were rash or wrong,
While round in our sieve we spin."

Far and few, far and few,
Are the lands where the Jumblies live:
Their heads are green, and their hands are blue
And they went to sea in a sieve.

And all night long they sailed away;
And when the sun went down,
They whistled and warbled a moony song
To the echoing sound of a coppery gong,
In the shade of the mountains brown."
O Timballoo! How happy we are
When we live in a sieve and a crockery-jar!
And all night long, in the moonlight pale,
We sail away with a pea-green sail
In the shade of the mountains brown

Far and few, far and few,
Are the lands where the Jumblies live:
Their heads are green, and their hands are blue
And they went to sea in a sieve.

They sailed to the Western Sea, they did,—
To a land all covered with trees:
And they bought an owl, and a useful cart,
And a pound of rice, and a cranberry-tart,
And a hive of silvery bees;
And they bought a pig, and some green jackdaws,
And a lovely monkey with lollipop paws,
And forty bottles of ring-bo-ree,
And no end of Stilton cheese.

Far and few, far and few,
 Are the lands where the Jumblies live:
 Their heads are green, and their hands are blue
 And they went to sea in a sieve.

And in twenty years they all came back,—
 In twenty years or more;
 And every one said, “How tall they’ve grown!
 For they’ve been to the Lakes, and the Terrible Zone,
 And the hills of the Chankly Bore.
 “And they drank their health, and gave them a feast
 Of dumplings made of beautiful yeast;
 And every one said, “If we only live,
 We, too, will go to sea in a sieve,
 To the hills of the Chankly Bore.

Far and few, far and few,
 Are the lands where the Jumblies live:
 Their heads are green, and their hands are blue
 And they went to sea in a sieve.

Browning, Robert. *The Pied Piper of Hamelin*. Illustrated by Kate Greenaway. New York: Knopf, 1993. (1888)

Hamelin Town’s in Brunswick,
 By famous Hanover city;
 The river Weser, deep and wide,
 Washes its wall on the southern side;
 A pleasanter spot you never spied;
 But, when begins my ditty,
 Almost five hundred years ago,
 To see the townfolk suffer so
 From vermin, was a pity.

Rats!
 They fought the dogs and killed the cats,
 And bit the babies in the cradles,
 And ate the cheeses out of the vats.
 And licked the soup from the cook’s own ladles,
 Split open the kegs of salted sprats,
 Made nests inside men’s Sunday hats,
 And even spoiled the women’s chats,
 By drowning their speaking
 With shrieking and squeaking
 In fifty different sharps and flats.

At last the people in a body
 To the Town Hall came flocking:
 “Tis clear,” cried they, “our Mayor’s a noddy;
 And as for our Corporation—shocking
 To think we buy gowns lined with ermine
 For dolts that can’t or won’t determine
 What’s best to rid us of our vermin!
 You hope, because you’re old and obese,
 To find in the furry civic robe ease?
 Rouse up, sirs! Give your brains a racking
 To find the remedy we’re lacking,
 Or, sure as fate, we’ll send you packing!”
 At this the Mayor and Corporation
 Quaked with a mighty consternation.

Johnson, Georgia Douglas. “Your World.” *Words with Wings: A Treasury of African-American Poetry and Art*. Selected by Belinda Rochelle. New York: HarperCollins, 2001. (1918)

Your world is as big as you make it.
I know, for I used to abide
In the narrowest nest in a corner,
My wings pressing close to my side.

But I sighted the distant horizon
Where the skyline encircled the sea
And I throbbed with a burning desire
To travel this immensity.

I battered the cordons around me
And cradled my wings on the breeze,
Then soared to the uttermost reaches
With rapture, with power, with ease!

Eliot, T. S. “The Song of the Jellicles.” *Old Possum’s Book of Practical Cats*. Illustrated by Edward Gorey. Orlando: Harcourt, 1982. (1939)

Fleischman, Paul. “Fireflies.” *Joyful Noise: Poems for Two Voices*. Illustrated by Eric Beddows. New York: HarperCollins, 1988. (1988)

Light	Light
Night	is the ink we use
is our parchment	Night
	We’re
fireflies	fireflies
flitting	flickering
	flashing
fireflies	fireflies
glimmering	gleaming
glowing	
Insect calligraphers	Insect calligraphers
practicing penmanship	copying sentences
Six-legged scribblers	Six-legged scribblers
of vanishing messages,	fleeting graffiti
Fine artists in flight	Fine artists in flight
adding dabs of light	bright brush strokes
Signing the June nights	Signing the June nights
as if they were paintings	as if they were paintings
flickering	We’re
fireflies	fireflies
fireflies.	flickering
	fireflies.

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Sample Performance Tasks for Stories and Poetry

- Students *ask and answer* questions regarding the plot of Patricia MacLachlan’s *Sarah, Plain and Tall*, explicitly referring to the book to form the basis for their answers. [RL.3.1]

- Students *explain* how Mark Teague's *illustrations* contribute to what is conveyed in Cynthia Rylant's *Poppleton in Winter* to *create the mood and emphasize aspects of characters and setting* in the story. [RL.3.7]
- Students read *fables* and *folktales from diverse cultures* that represent various origin tales, such as Rudyard Kipling's "How the Camel Got His Hump" and Natalie Babbitt's *The Search for Delicious*, and *paraphrase their central message, lesson, or moral*. [RL.2.2]
- Students *describe the overall story structure* of *The Thirteen Clocks* by James Thurber, *describing how the interactions of the characters of the Duke and Princess Saralinda introduce the beginning of the story* and how the suspenseful plot comes to an *end*. [RL.2.5]
- When discussing E. B. White's book *Charlotte's Web*, students *distinguish their own point of view* regarding Wilbur the Pig *from that of Fern Arable as well as from that of the narrator*. [RL.3.6]
- Students *describe how the character* of Bud in Christopher Paul Curtis' story *Bud, Not Buddy* *responds to a major event* in his life of being placed in a foster home. [RL.2.3]
- Students read Paul Fleischman's poem "Fireflies," *determining the meaning of words and phrases in the poem, particularly focusing on identifying his use of nonliteral language* (e.g., "light is the ink we use") and *talking about how it suggests meaning*. [RL.3.4]

Informational Texts

Aliki. *A Medieval Feast*. New York: HarperCollins, 1986. (1983)

It was announced from the palace that the King would soon make a long journey.

On the way to his destination, the King and his party would spend a few nights at Camdenton Manor. The lord of the manor knew what this meant. The king traveled with his Queen, his knights, squires, and other members of his court. There could be a hundred mouths to feed!

Preparations for the visit began at once. The lord and lady of the manor had their serfs to help them. The serfs lived in huts provided for them on the lord's estate, each with its own plot of land. In return, they were bound to serve the lord. They farmed his land, managed his manor house, and if there was a war, they had to go to battle with the lord and the King.

But now they prepared.

The manor had its own church, which was attended by everyone on the estate.

The manor house had to be cleaned, the rooms readied, tents set up for the horsemen, fields fenced for the horses. And above all, provisions had to be gathered for the great feast.

The Royal Suite was redecorated.

Silk was spun, new fabric was woven.

The Royal Crest was embroidered on linen and painted on the King's chair.

The lord and his party went hunting and hawking for fresh meat.

Hunting was a sport for the rich only. The wild animals that lived on the lord's estate belonged to him. Anyone caught poaching—hunting illegally—was severely punished.

Falcons and hawks were prized pets. They were trained to attack birds for their masters to capture.

They trapped rabbits and birds of all kinds, and fished for salmon and eels and trout.

Serfs hid in bushes and caught birds in traps. They set ferrets in burrows to chase out rabbits.

There were fruits and vegetables growing in the garden, herbs and flowers for sauces and salads, and bees made honey for sweetening.

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**Gibbons, Gail. *From Seed to Plant*. New York: Holiday House, 1993. (1991)
From "A 'From Seed to Plant' Project"**

How to raise bean plants

1. Find a clean glass jar. Take a piece of black construction paper and roll it up.
2. Slide the paper into the jar. Fill the jar with water.
3. Wedge the bean seeds between the black paper and the glass. Put the jar in a warm place.
4. In a few days the seeds will begin to sprout. Watch the roots grow down. The shoots will grow up.
5. Put dirt into a big clay pot.
6. Carefully remove the small plants from the glass jar. Place them in the soil, covering them up to the base of their shoots.
7. Water them...and watched them grow.

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Milton, Joyce. *Bats: Creatures of the Night*. Illustrated by Joyce Moffatt. New York: Grosset & Dunlap, 1993. (1993)

No one has lived on this farm for years.
The barn looks empty.
But it isn't!
Strange creatures are sleeping in the loft.
As the sun goes down, they take to the air.

From BATS: CREATURES OF THE NIGHT by Joyce Milton. Text © 1993 by Joyce Milton. Illustrations © 1993 by Judith Moffatt. Used by permission of Grosset & Dunlap, A Division of Penguin Young Readers Group, A Member of Penguin Group (USA) Inc. All rights reserved.

Beeler, Selby. *Throw Your Tooth on the Roof: Tooth Traditions Around the World*. Illustrated by G. Brian Karas. New York: Houghton Mifflin, 2001. (1998)

Has this ever happened to you?
You find a loose tooth in your mouth.
Yikes! You can wiggle it with your finger.
You can push it back and forth with your tongue.
Then one day it falls out.
There you are with your old baby tooth in your hand and a big hole in your mouth.
It happens to everyone, everywhere, all over the world.
"Look! Look! My tooth fell out! My tooth fell out!"
But what happens next?
What in the world do you do with your tooth?

North America

United States

I put my tooth under my pillow. While I'm sound asleep, the Tooth Fairy will come into my room, take my tooth, and leave some money in its place.

Mexico

When I go to sleep, I leave my tooth in a box on the bedside table. I hope El Ratón, the magic mouse, will take my tooth and bring me some money. He leaves more money for a front tooth.

Yupik

My mother wraps my tooth in a food, like meat or bread. Then I feed it to a female dog and say, “Replace this tooth with a better one.”

Yellowknife Déné

My mother or grandmother takes my tooth and puts it in a tree and then my family dances around it. This makes certain that my new tooth will grow in as straight as a tree.

Navajo

My mother saves my tooth until my mouth stops hurting. Then we take my tooth to the southeast, away from our house. We bury the tooth on the east side of a healthy young sagebrush, rabbit bush, or pinyon tree because we believe that east is the direction associated with childhood.

Excerpted from THROW YOUR TOOTH ON THE ROOF: Tooth Traditions From Around the World. Text Copyright © 1998 by Selby B. Beeler. Used by Permission of Houghton Mifflin Harcourt Publishing Company. All rights reserved.

Leonard, Heather. *Art Around the World*. New York: Rigby, 1998. (1998)

Ruffin, Frances E. *Martin Luther King and the March on Washington*. Illustrated by Stephen Marchesi. New York: Grosset & Dunlap, 2000. (2000)

August 28, 1963

It is a hot summer day in Washington, D.C.
More than 250,000 people are pouring into the city.
They have come by plane, by train, by car, and by bus.

From MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR. AND THE MARCH ON WASHINGTON: ALL ABOARD READING by Frances E. Ruffin, illustrated by Stephen Marchesi. Text © 2001 by Frances E. Ruffin. Illustrations © 2001 by Stephen Marchesi. Used by permission of Grosset & Dunlap, A Division of Penguin Young Readers Group, A Member of Penguin Group (USA) Inc. All rights reserved.

St. George, Judith. *So You Want to Be President?* Illustrated by David Small. New York: Philomel, 2000. (2000)

Every single President has taken this oath: “I do solemnly swear (or affirm) that I will faithfully execute the office of President of the United States, and will to the best of my ability, preserve, protect, and defend the Constitution of the United States.”

Only thirty-five words! But it’s a big order if you’re President of this country. Abraham Lincoln was tops at filling that order. “I know very well that many others might in this matter or as in others, do better than I can,” he said. “But...I am here. I must do the best I can, and bear the responsibility of taking the course which I feel I ought to take.”

That’s the bottom line. Tall, short, fat, thin, talkative, quiet, vain, humble, lawyer, teacher, or soldier—this is what most of our Presidents have tried to do, each in his own way. Some succeeded. Some failed. If you want to be President—a good President—pattern your self after the best. Our best have asked more of themselves than they thought they could give. They have had the courage, spirit, and will to do what they knew was right. Most of all, their first priority has always been the people and the country they served.

From SO YOU WANT TO BE PRESIDENT? By Judith St. George, illustrated by David Small. Text © 2000 by Judith St. George. Illustrations © 2000 by David Small. Used by permission of Philomel Books, A Division of Penguin Young Readers Group, A Member of Penguin Group (USA) Inc, all rights reserved.

Einspruch, Andrew. *Crittercam*. National Geographic Windows on Literacy Series. Washington, D.C.: National Geographic, 2004. (2004)

Kudlinski, Kathleen V. *Boy, Were We Wrong About Dinosaurs*. Illustrated by S. D. Schindler. New York: Dutton, 2005. (2005)

Long, long ago, before people knew anything about dinosaurs, giant bones were found in China. Wise men who saw the bones tried to guess what sort of enormous animal they could have come from.

After they studied the fossil bones, the ancient Chinese decided that they came from dragons. They thought these dragons must have been magic dragons to be so large. And they believed that dragons could still be alive.

Boy, were they wrong!

No one knows exactly what dinosaurs looked like. All that is left of them are fossil bones and a few other clues. Now that we think that many of our own past guesses about dinosaurs were just as wrong as those of ancient China.

Some of our mistakes were little ones. When the first fossil bones of *Iguanodon* were found, one was shaped like a rhino's horn. Scientists guessed that the strange horn fit like a spike on *Iguanodon's* nose

Boy, were we wrong about *Iguanodon*!

When a full set of fossil bones was found later, there were two pointed bones, they were part of *Iguanodon's* hands, not its nose!

Other new clues show us that we may have been wrong about every kind of dinosaur.

Some of our first drawings of dinosaurs showed them with their elbows and knees pointing out to the side, like a lizard's. With legs like that, big dinosaurs could only waddle clumsily on all fours or float underwater.

Now we know that their legs were straight under them, like a horse's. Dinosaurs were not clumsy. The sizes and shapes of their leg bones seem to show that some were as fast and graceful as deer.

From BOY, WERE WE WRONG ABOUT DINOSAURS by Kathleen Kudlinski, illustrated by S.D. Schindler. Text copyright © 2005 by Kathleen V. Kudlinski. Illustrations © 2005 by S.D. Schindler. Used by permission of Dutton Children's Books, A Division of Penguin Young Readers Group, A Member of Penguin Group (USA) Inc. All rights reserved.

Davies, Nicola. *Bat Loves the Night*. Illustrated by Sarah Fox-Davies. Cambridge, Mass.: Candlewick, 2001. (2001)

Floca, Brian. *Moonshot: The Flight of Apollo 11*. New York: Atheneum, 2009. (2009)

High above there is the Moon, cold and quiet, no air, no life, but glowing in the sky.

Here below there are three men who close themselves in special clothes, who—click—lock hands in heavy gloves, who—click—lock heads in large round helmets.

It is summer here in Florida, hot, and near the sea. But now these men are dressed for colder, stranger places. They walk with stiff and awkward steps in suits not made for Earth.

They have studied and practiced and trained, and said good-bye to family and friends. If all goes well, they will be gone for one week, gone where no one has been.

Their two small spaceships are *Columbia* and *Eagle*. They sit atop the rocket that will raise them into space, a monster of a machine: It stands thirty stories, it weighs six million pounds, a tower full of fuel and fire and valves and pipes and engines, too big to believe, but built to fly—the mighty, massive Saturn V.

The astronauts squeeze in to *Columbia's* sideways seats, lying on their backs, facing toward the sky—Neil Armstrong on the left, Michael Collins in the right, Buzz Aldrin in the middle.

Click and they fasten straps.

Click and the hatch is sealed.

There they wait, while the Saturn hums beneath them.

Near the rocket, in Launch Control, and far away in Houston, in Mission Control, there are numbers, screens, and charts, ways of watching and checking every piece of the rocket and ships, the fuel, the valves, the pipes, the engines, the beats of the astronauts' hearts.

As the countdown closes, each man watching is asked the question: GO/NO GO?

And each man answers back: "GO." "GO." "GO."

Apollo 11 is GO for launch.

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Thomson, Sarah L. *Where Do Polar Bears Live?* Illustrated by Jason Chin. New York: HarperCollins, 2010. (2010)

This island is covered with snow. No trees grow. Nothing has green leaves. The land is white as far as you can see.

Then something small and round and black pokes up out of the snow.

A black nose sniffs the air. Then a smooth white head appears. A mother polar bear heaves herself out of her den.

A cub scrambles after her.

When the cub was born four months ago, he was no bigger than a guinea pig. Blind and helpless, he snuggled in his mother's fur. He drank her milk and grew, safe from the long Arctic winter.

Outside the den, on some days, it was fifty degrees below zero. From October to February, the sun never rose.

Now it is spring—even though snow still covers the land. The cub is about the size of a cocker spaniel. He's ready to leave the den. For the first time, he sees bright sunlight and feels the wind ruffle his fur

The cub tumbles and slides down icy hills. His play makes him strong and teaches him to walk and run in snow.

Like his mother, he cub is built to survive in the Arctic. Hi white fur will grow to be six inches thick—longer than your hand. The skin beneath the cub's fur is black. It soaks up the heat of the sun. Under the skin is a layer of fat. Like a snug blanket, this blubber keeps in the heat of the bear's body.

Polar bears get too hot more easily than they get too cold. They stretch out on the ice to cool off.

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Read-Aloud Informational Texts

**Freedman, Russell. *Lincoln: A Photobiography*. New York: Houghton Mifflin, 1989. (1987)
From Chapter One: "The Mysterious Mr. Lincoln"**

Abraham Lincoln wasn't the sort of man who could lose himself in a crowd. After all, he stood six feet four inches tall. And to top it off, he wore a high silk hat.

His height was mostly in his long bony legs. When he sat in a chair, he seemed no taller than anyone else. I was only when he stood up that he towered over other men.

At first glance, most people thought he was homely. Lincoln thought so too, once referring to his "poor, lean, lank face." As a young man he was sensitive about his gawky looks, but in time, he learned to laugh at himself. When a rival called him "two-faced" during a political debate, Lincoln replied: "I leave it to my audience. If I had another face, do you think I'd wear this one?"

According to those who knew him, Lincoln was a man of many faces. In repose, he often seemed sad and gloomy. But when he began to speak, his expression changed. "The dull, listless features dropped like a mask," said a Chicago newspaperman. "The eyes began to sparkle, the mouth to smile, the whole countenance was wreathed in animation, so that a stranger would have said, 'Why, this man, so angular and solemn a moment ago, is really handsome.'"

Lincoln was the most photographed man of his time, but his friends insisted that no photo ever did him justice. It's no wonder. Back then cameras required long exposures. The person being photographed had to "freeze" as the seconds ticked by. If he blinked an eye, the picture would be blurred. That's why Lincoln looks so stiff and formal in his photos. We never see him laughing or joking.

Coles, Robert. *The Story of Ruby Bridges*. Illustrated by George Ford. New York: Scholastic, 1995. (1995)

Ruby Bridges was born in a small cabin near Tylertown, Mississippi.

"We were very poor, very, very poor," Ruby said. "My daddy worked picking crops. We just barely got by. There were

times when we didn't have much to eat. The people who owned the land were bringing in machines to pick the crops, so my daddy lost his job, and that's when we had to move.

"I remember us leaving. I was four, I think."

In 1957, the family moved to New Orleans. Ruby's father became a janitor. Her mother took care of the children during the day. After they were tucked in bed, Ruby's mother went to work scrubbing floors in a bank.

Every Sunday, the family went to church.

"We wanted our children to be near God's spirit," Ruby's mother said. "We wanted them to start feeling close to Him from the start."

At that time, black children and white children went to separate schools in New Orleans. The black children were not able to receive the same education as the white children. It wasn't fair. And it was against the nation's law.

In 1960, a judge ordered four black girls to go to two white elementary schools. Three of the girls were sent to McDonogh 19. Six-year-old Ruby Bridges was sent to first grade in the William Frantz Elementary School.

Ruby's parents were proud that their daughter had been chosen to take part in an important event in American history. They went to church.

"We sat there and prayed to God," Ruby's mother said, "that we'd all be strong and we'd have courage and we'd get through any trouble; and Ruby would be a good girl and she'd hold her head up high and be a credit to her own people and a credit to all the American people. We prayed long and we prayed hard."

On Ruby's first day, a large crowd of angry white people gathered outside the Frantz Elementary School. The people carried signs that said they didn't want black children in a white school. People called Ruby names; some wanted to hurt her. The city and state police did not help Ruby.

The President of the United States ordered federal marshals to walk with Ruby into the school building. The marshals carried guns.

Every day, for weeks that turned into months, Ruby experienced that kind of school day.

She walked to the Frantz School surrounded by marshals. Wearing a clean dress and a bow in her hair and carrying her lunch pail, Ruby walked slowly for the first few blocks. As Ruby approached the school, she saw a crowd of people marching up and down the street. Men and women and children shouted at her. They pushed toward her. The marshals kept them from Ruby by threatening to arrest them.

Ruby would hurry through the crowd and not say a word.

From THE STORY OF RUBY BRIDGES by Robert Coles. Copyright © 1995 by Robert Coles. Used by permission of Scholastic Inc.

Wick, Walter. *A Drop of Water: A Book of Science and Wonder*. New York: Scholastic, 1997. (1997)

From "Soap Bubbles"

There are few objects you can make that have both the dazzling beauty and delicate precision of a soap bubble. Shown here at actual size, this bubble is a nearly perfect sphere. Its shimmering liquid skin is five hundred times thinner than a human hair.

Bubbles made of plain water break almost as quickly as they form. That's because surface tension is so strong the bubbles collapse. Adding soap to water weakens water's surface tension. This allows a film of soapy water to stretch and stretch without breaking.

When you blow a bubble, it looks somewhat like a drop of water emerging from a faucet. And just like the surface of a drop of water, the bubble's surface shrinks to form a sphere. Spheres and circles are mathematical shapes. Because they can form spontaneously, they are also shapes of nature.

From A DROP OF WATER: A BOOK OF SCIENCE AND WONDER by Walter Wick. Scholastic Inc./Scholastic Press. Copyright © 1997 by Walter Wick. Used by permission.

Smith, David J. *If the World Were a Village: A Book about the World's People*. Illustrated by Shelagh Armstrong. Toronto: Kids Can Press, 2002. (2002)
From “Welcome to the Global Village”

Earth is a crowded place and it is getting more crowded all the time. As for January 1, 2002 the world’s population was 6 billion, 200 million—that’s 6,200,000,000. Twenty-three countries have more than fifty million (50,000,000) people. Ten countries each have more than one hundred million (100,000,000) people. China has nearly one billion, three hundred million people (1,300,000,000).

Numbers like this are hard to understand, but what if we imagined the whole population of the world as a village of just 100 people? In this imaginary village, each person would represent about sixty-two million (62,000,000) people from the real world.

One hundred people would fit nicely into a small village. By learning about the villagers—who they are and how they live—perhaps we can find out more about our neighbors in the real world and the problems our planet may face in the future.

Ready to enter the global village? Go down into the valley and walk through the gates. Dawn is chasing away the night shadows. The smell of wood smoke hangs in the air. A baby awakes and cries.

Come and meet the people of the global village.

*Material from *If the World Were a Village: A Book about the World's People* written by David J. Smith is used by permission of Kids Can Press Ltd., Toronto. Text © 2002 David J. Smith.*

Aliki. *Ah, Music!* New York: Harper Collins, 2005. (2003)

What is music?

Music is sound.

If you hum a tune, play an instrument, or clap out a rhythm, you are making music. You are listening to it, too.

[...]

Music through the Ages

Music grew from one century to the next. In the early and middle ages, new forms of music developed. Christianity inspired church music. Music became polyphonic—played and sung in two or more melodic parts. Notations were invented. Music was no longer a one-time performance. Now it would be written and preserved for other musicians and generations.

Used by permission of HarperCollins Publishers.

Mark, Jan. *The Museum Book: A Guide to Strange and Wonderful Collections*. Illustrated by Richard Holland. Cambridge, Mass.: Candlewick, 2007. (2007)
From Chapter One

Suppose you went into a museum and you didn’t know what it was. Imagine: it’s raining, there’s a large building nearby with an open door, and you don’t have to pay to go in. It looks like an ancient Greek temple. Temples are places of worship, so you’d better go in quietly.

But inside it doesn’t seem much like any temple or mosque or church you have ever been in. That is, it looks like all of them, but the furniture is out of place. Perhaps it’s a hotel; it has fifty rooms, but there is only one bed, although it is a very splendid bed. Apparently Queen Elizabeth I slept in it. Or perhaps there are fifty beds, but they are all in one room and you can’t sleep in any of them. There are red velvet ropes to keep you out.

Farther down the corridor you notice a steam locomotive. It’s a train station! But there is no track except for a few yards that the engine is resting on, and already you have seen something else. Across the hall is a totem pole that goes right up to the roof, standing next to a Viking ship. Beyond it is a room full of glass cases displaying rocks, more kinds of rocks than you ever knew existed, from diamonds to meteorites. From where you are standing, you can see into the next room, where the glass cases are full of stuffed fish; and the next, which is lined with shelves of Roman pottery; and the next, which is crowded with birds; and after that, lions and giraffes and pandas and whales.

It must be a zoo.

[...]

Just then you see someone walking toward you who isn't dead—you hope. He is wearing a uniform with a badge on it that reads Guide.

"Enjoying yourself?" he says.

You say, "Where did you get all this stuff?"

"All?" he says. "These are just the things we show to the public. Down in the basement there's a hundred thousand times more. Do you know," he murmurs, "we've got twenty-seven two-headed sheep?"

"But why?" you ask. "Why do you have any two-headed sheep.

"Because people give them to us," he says. "And so that you can look at them. Where else would you see one? Where else would you be able to see the mummy case of King Tutankhamun, the first plane to fly the Atlantic, the first train engine, the last dodo, a diplodocus, the astrolabe of Ahmad of Isfahan (an example of the oldest scientific instrument in the world), chicken-skin gloves, the lantern carried by Guy Fawkes when he went to blow up the British Parliament buildings, a murderer's trigger finger—?"

"But where am I?" you say. "What is this place?"

And he says, "It's a museum."

THE MUSEUM BOOK. Text Copyright © 2007 Jan Mark. Reproduced by permission of the publisher, Candlewick Press, Somerville, MA.

D'Aluisio, Faith. *What the World Eats*. Photographed by Peter Menzel. New York: Random House, 2008. (2008)

Arnosky, Jim. *Wild Tracks! A Guide to Nature's Footprints*. New York: Sterling, 2008. (2008)

"Feline Tracks"

Of all the larger predators, wildcats are the most likely to use the same trails again and again. In deep snow, their habitual routes become gully trails in which the feline tracks going to and coming from their hunting grounds are preserved, down out of the wind, away from blowing snow.

A cat's sharp retractable claws do not show in its track unless the cat has lunged to catch its prey or scratched the ground to cover its droppings. Only cats thoroughly cover their droppings.

Bobcat, lion, and jaguar paws all have three-lobed heels. The lynx, the ocelot, and the jaguarondi have single lobed-heels.

The wildcats we have in North America are, from the smallest to the largest: ocelot, jaguarondi, bobcat, lynx, American lion, and jaguar.

From Wild Tracks! A Guide to Nature's Footprints © 2008 by Jim Arnosky. Used with permission from Sterling Publishing Co., Inc.

Deedy, Carmen Agra. *14 Cows for America*. In collaboration with Wilson Kimeli Naiyomah. Illustrated by Thomas Gonzalez. Atlanta: Peachtree, 2009. (2009)

The remote village waits for a story to be told. News travels slowly to this corner of Kenya. As Kimeli nears his village, he watches a herd of bull giraffes cross the open grassland. He smiles. He has been away a long time.

A girl sitting under a guava tree sees him first and cries out to the others. The children run to him with the speed and grace of cheetahs. He greets them with a gentle touch on his head, a warrior's blessing.

The rest of the tribe soon surrounds Kimeli. These are his people. These are the Maasai.

Once they were feared warriors. Now they live peaceably as nomadic cattle herders. They treat their cows as kindly as they do their children. They sign to them. They give them names. They shelter the young ones in their homes. Without the herd, the tribe might starve. To the Maasai, the cow is life.

"*Súpa*. Hello," Kimeli hears again and again. Everyone wants to greet him. His eyes find his mother across the *en-kāng*, the ring of huts with their roofs of sun-baked dung. She spreads her arms and calls to him, "*Aakúa*. Welcome, my son." Kimeli sighs. He is home.

This is sweeter and sadder because he cannot stay. He must return to the faraway country where he is learning to be a doctor. He thinks of New York then. He remembers September.

A child asks if he has brought any stories. Kimeli nods. He has brought with him one story. It has burned a hole in his heart.

But first he must speak with the elders.

Later, in a tradition as old as the Maasai, the rest of the tribe gathers under an acacia tree to hear the story. There is a terrible stillness in the air as the tale unfolds. With growing disbelief, men, women, and children listen. Buildings so tall they can touch the sky? Fires so hot they can melt iron? Smoke and dust so thick they can block out the sun?

The story ends. More than three thousand souls are lost. A great silence falls over the Maasai. Kimeli waits. He knows his people. They are fierce when provoked, but easily moved to kindness when they hear of suffering or injustice.

At last, an elder speaks. He is shaken, but above all, he is sad. “What can we do for these poor people?” Nearby, a cow lows. Heads turn toward the herd. “To the Maasai,” Kimeli says softly, “the cow is life.”

Turning to the elders, Kimeli offers his only cow, Enkarûs. He asks for their blessing. They give it gladly. But they want to offer something more.

The tribe sends word to the United States Embassy in Nairobi. In response, the embassy sends a diplomat. His jeep jounces along the dusty, rugged roads. He is hot and tired. He thinks he is going to meet with Maasai elders. He cannot be more wrong. As the jeep nears the edge of the village the man sits up. Clearly, this is no ordinary diplomatic visit. This is...

...a ceremony. Hundreds of Maasai greet the American in full tribal splendor. At the sight of the brilliant blood-red tunics and spectacular beaded collars, he can only marvel.

It is a day of sacred ritual. Young warriors dance, leaping into the air like fish from a stream. Women sing mournful songs. Children fill their bellies with milk. Speeches are exchanged. And now it is time.

Kimeli and his people gather on a sacred knoll, far from the village. The only sound is the gentle chiming of cowbells. The elders chant a blessing in Maa as the Maasai people of Kenya present...

...fourteen cows for America.

Because there is no nation so powerful it cannot be wounded, nor a people so small they cannot offer mighty comfort.

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Sample Performance Tasks for Informational Texts

- Students read Aiki’s description of *A Medieval Feast* and *demonstrate* their *understanding* of all that goes into such an *event* by *asking questions* pertaining to *who, what, where, when, why, and how* such a meal happens and by *answering using key details*. [RI.2.1]
- Students *describe the reasons* behind Joyce Milton’s statement that bats are nocturnal in her *Bats: Creatures of the Night* and how she *supports the points* she is *making in the text*. [RI.2.8]
- Students read Selby Beeler’s *Throw Your Tooth on the Roof: Tooth Traditions Around the World* and *identify what Beeler wants to answer* as well as explain the *main purpose of the text*. [RI.2.6]
- Students *determine the meanings of words and phrases* encountered in Sarah L. Thomson’s *Where Do Polar Bears Live?*, such as *cub, den, blubber, and the Arctic*. [RI.2.4]
- Students *explain how the main idea* that Lincoln had “many faces” in Russell Freedman’s *Lincoln: A Photobiography* is *supported by key details* in the text. [RI.3.2]

- Students read Robert Coles's retelling of a series of historical events in *The Story of Ruby Bridges*. Using their knowledge of how *cause and effect* gives order to events, they use specific language to describe the sequence of events that leads to Ruby desegregating her school. [RI.3.3]
- Students explain how the specific image of a soap bubble and other accompanying illustrations in Walter Wick's *A Drop of Water: A Book of Science and Wonder* contribute to and clarify their understanding of bubbles and water. [RI.2.7]
- Students use text features, such as the table of contents and headers, found in Alik's text *Ah, Music!* to identify relevant sections and locate information relevant to a given topic (e.g., rhythm, instruments, harmony) quickly and efficiently. [RI.3.5]