

Appendix B

INFORMAL READING INVENTORY*

Summary Sheet

Name _____ Age _____

Grade _____ Teacher _____

Reader Level	Word Recognition in Isolation (No. of Errors)	Oral Reading			Silent Reading		Listening Capacity	
		W.R.	Comp.		Comp.			
		No. of Errors/ Total No. Wds	% Errors	% Correct	% Errors	% Correct	% Errors	% Correct
Preprimer								
Primer								
First								
2 ¹								
2 ²								
3 ¹								
3 ²								
4								
5								
6								
7								
8								

*The Informal Reading Inventory is based on the Silver Burdett & Ginn series *World of Reading*, 1989

Level at which Word Recognition Inventory (WRI) was begun	_____
Level at which oral reading was begun	_____
Oral reading—word recognition	
Independent level	_____
Instructional level	_____
Frustration level	_____
Oral reading—comprehension	
Independent level	_____
Instructional level	_____
Frustration level	_____
Silent reading—comprehension	
Independent level	_____
Instructional level	_____
Frustration level	_____
Listening capacity level	_____
Word analysis	
Consonants—single	
initial	_____
medial	_____
final	_____
Consonants—double	
blends	_____
digraphs	_____
Consonants—silent	_____
Vowels—single	
short	_____
long	_____
Vowels—double	
digraphs	_____
diphthongs	_____
Effect of final <i>e</i> on vowel	_____
Vowel controlled by <i>r</i>	_____
Structural analysis	
prefixes	_____
suffixes	_____

combining forms _____

inflectional endings _____

Compound words _____

Accent _____

Special Notes on Strengths and Weaknesses

Comments on Behavior During the Testing

Recommendations

SPECIAL NOTES

Information on the following is given in the body of Chapter 8:

1. Code for marking oral reading errors (p. 154)
2. The scoring of oral reading errors (p. 155)
3. Criteria for estimating the reading levels (p. 164)
4. Administering the IRI (pp. 155–164)
5. Examples (pp. 156–167)

Partial credit may be given for comprehension questions if an answer consists of more than one part. For example, if the answer to a question consists of three names, and the student has named only one, the student should get one-third credit. If the answer to a question consists of two things, and the student gives only one, the student should receive half credit.

Do not count mispronunciations of difficult proper nouns in the oral reading passages as errors. You may pronounce these for the children if necessary. Also, do not count as errors dialectical equivalents (nonstandard dialects); however, these should be noted.

In addition, the term *main idea* is used rather than *central idea*, even though the oral and silent passages are usually more than one paragraph. (See “Finding the Central Idea of a Group of Paragraphs” in Chapter 10, page 222.)

Word Recognition Inventory (WRI)

<i>Preprimer</i>		<i>Primer</i>		<i>First</i>	
1. water	_____	1. blow	_____	1. soup	_____
2. play	_____	2. little	_____	2. tents	_____
3. sand	_____	3. many	_____	3. afternoon	_____
4. look	_____	4. bright	_____	4. baked	_____
5. wind	_____	5. old	_____	5. family	_____
6. jump	_____	6. won	_____	6. alone	_____
7. cave	_____	7. things	_____	7. great	_____
8. make	_____	8. yellow	_____	8. white	_____
9. put	_____	9. farm	_____	9. soft	_____
10. bear	_____	10. friend	_____	10. boy	_____
11. over	_____	11. more	_____	11. dinner	_____
12. out	_____	12. thanks	_____	12. does	_____
13. cap	_____	13. snow	_____	13. wife	_____
14. could	_____	14. some	_____	14. horse	_____
15. down	_____	15. cows	_____	15. head	_____
16. sun	_____	16. game	_____	16. sorry	_____
17. have	_____	17. please	_____	17. summer	_____
18. side	_____	18. leaves	_____	18. hungry	_____
19. top	_____	19. draw	_____	19. drank	_____
20. surprise	_____	20. work	_____	20. enough	_____

Word Recognition Inventory (WRI) (*Cont.*)

<i>2</i> ¹	<i>2</i> ²	<i>3</i> ¹
1. brave _____	1. office _____	1. plow _____
2. noon _____	2. perfect _____	2. horn _____
3. park _____	3. patient _____	3. hesitate _____
4. strange _____	4. enemy _____	4. neglect _____
5. November _____	5. donkey _____	5. deaf _____
6. money _____	6. dirt _____	6. language _____
7. library _____	7. clever _____	7. attention _____
8. join _____	8. company _____	8. drawn _____
9. angry _____	9. candle _____	9. complain _____
10. apple _____	10. beard _____	10. fame _____
11. carrots _____	11. bundle _____	11. goal _____
12. class _____	12. address _____	12. familiar _____
13. answer _____	13. snowflake _____	13. elevator _____
14. loud _____	14. sailors _____	14. plunge _____
15. mouth _____	15. score _____	15. nature _____
16. matter _____	16. tune _____	16. poem _____
17. hurry _____	17. thirsty _____	17. stall _____
18. idea _____	18. unload _____	18. talent _____
19. carve _____	19. view _____	19. worthy _____
20. clothes _____	20. trouble _____	20. lung _____
21. delicious _____	21. south _____	21. medal _____
22. below _____	22. shy _____	22. mistake _____
23. boil _____	23. ambulance _____	23. customer _____
24. built _____	24. tiny _____	24. courage _____
25. dragons _____	25. hobby _____	25. announce _____

Word Recognition Inventory (WRI) (Cont.)

3^2	4	5
1. petal _____	1. gracious _____	1. tragedy _____
2. rein _____	2. imitate _____	2. applause _____
3. furious _____	3. defense _____	3. amazement _____
4. popular _____	4. declare _____	4. harvest _____
5. identify _____	5. electronics _____	5. thaw _____
6. forecast _____	6. punishment _____	6. original _____
7. attach _____	7. robot _____	7. balcony _____
8. bought _____	8. uniform _____	8. marvel _____
9. admire _____	9. twilight _____	9. mileage _____
10. noble _____	10. tragedy _____	10. cluster _____
11. migrate _____	11. stranger _____	11. architect _____
12. patient _____	12. tame _____	12. heroine _____
13. novel _____	13. technique _____	13. audition _____
14. ruin _____	14. suspect _____	14. interrupt _____
15. rescue _____	15. ordinary _____	15. landscape _____
16. unusual _____	16. native _____	16. petition _____
17. x-ray _____	17. haughty _____	17. permission _____
18. wisdom _____	18. hostile _____	18. vessel _____
19. rough _____	19. entire _____	19. promotion _____
20. protest _____	20. errand _____	20. violence _____
21. persuade _____	21. average _____	21. voyage _____
22. influence _____	22. appetite _____	22. vast _____
23. prince _____	23. radiant _____	23. nuisance _____
24. bandage _____	24. prowl _____	24. luxury _____
25. bridge _____	25. caution _____	25. lonely _____

Word Recognition Inventory (WRI) (*Cont.*)

6	7	8
1. tenement _____	1. sham _____	1. prospect _____
2. rebel _____	2. scrutiny _____	2. quest _____
3. ease _____	3. refuge _____	3. scoop _____
4. exhibit _____	4. prestigious _____	4. journalism _____
5. appoint _____	5. quarrel _____	5. invincible _____
6. shuttle _____	6. nomad _____	6. listless _____
7. unwilling _____	7. fault _____	7. mirror _____
8. recede _____	8. flattery _____	8. circuit _____
9. wizard _____	9. hindrance _____	9. defy _____
10. wrench _____	10. imperative _____	10. anguish _____
11. revenge _____	11. colleague _____	11. augment _____
12. tiresome _____	12. trifle _____	12. aristocratic _____
13. spout _____	13. souvenir _____	13. formidable _____
14. strategy _____	14. chore _____	14. faculty _____
15. pamphlet _____	15. aggressive _____	15. seizure _____
16. persist _____	16. barometer _____	16. terrace _____
17. heritage _____	17. emigrate _____	17. scrabble _____
18. conquer _____	18. verdict _____	18. undermine _____
19. humble _____	19. zodiac _____	19. sphere _____
20. arrogant _____	20. wrench _____	20. naive _____
21. astronomy _____	21. probe _____	21. plateau _____
22. distinguish _____	22. momentum _____	22. recitation _____
23. gratitude _____	23. mortal _____	23. jaunty _____
24. guarantee _____	24. exile _____	24. frugal _____
25. legacy _____	25. imitation _____	25. hysteria _____

Preprimer

ORAL READING (64)¹

Introduction: Read this story aloud to find out what a little boy can make. Then I will ask you questions about the story.

The sun came out.
 Bob and Mom came out to play.
 Bob said, "Who can play with me?"
 Mom said, "Do you see what I see?"
 Bob said, "All I see is sand.
 I see a lot of sand.
 I can make a mountain
 with all the sand I see."
 Mom said, "Make a sand mountain!
 You will see who will come to play."

Comprehension Questions

		<i>Points</i>
(Literal)	1. Who came out to play? (Bob and Mom)	20
(Inference)	2. What did Mom see? (Sand)	16
(Literal)	3. How much sand was there? (A lot)	16
(Literal)	4. What did Bob say he could make with the sand? (A sand mountain)	16
(Inference)	5. What kind of day is it? (Sunny, warm, nice)	16
(Inference)	6. What did Mom think the sand mountain would do? (Bring other children to play)	16

Scoring Scale

<i>Levels</i>	<i>Word Recognition Errors</i>	<i>Comprehension Errors</i>
Independent	0–1	0–10 points
Instructional	2–3	11–25 points
Frustration	6 or more	50 points or more

¹Level 2, "The Sand Mountain," *Out Came the Sun* (Needham, MA: Silver Burdett & Ginn, 1989), pp. 38–39.

*SILENT READING*²

Introduction: Read this story to find out what Bob and his friends do. Then I will ask you questions about the story. Read it carefully.

Jane said, "Can I help make it a big mountain?"

Bob said, "I can put sand here. You can put sand on the other side."

Fran said, "I came to play. Can I help make the sand mountain?"

Bob said, "Come on, you can play. You can help Jane and me."

Jane said, "Will you get water? The wind is blowing the sand off the mountain."

Comprehension Questions

		<i>Points</i>
(Inference)	1. Who came to play first? (Jane)	16
(Literal)	2. What did Jane want to do? (Help Bob make a big mountain)	16
(Literal)	3. What did Bob tell Jane she could do? (Put sand on the other side of the mountain)	16
(Literal)	4. Whom did Bob say Fran could help? (Jane and him)	20
(Literal)	5. Who said, "Will you get water?" (Jane)	16
(Inference)	6. Why did Jane want water? (To make the sand wet so that the wind would not blow it away)	16

Scoring Scale

<i>Levels</i>	<i>Comprehension Errors</i>
Independent	0–10 points
Instructional	11–20 points
Frustration	50 points or more

²Ibid., pp. 40–42.

Primer

ORAL READING (76)³

Introduction: Read this story aloud to find out what Sara wants. Then I will ask you questions about the story.

Sara sat and sat, looking out at the big tree. She looked at her mother and asked, "Mom, do you have some string?"
 "Yes, here is some red string," said Sara's mother. "Is it for your hair?"
 "No," said Sara, "It's not for my hair."
 "I know," said Mother. "You are going to fix something with it."
 "No," said Sara. "You'll see."
 Sara saw that her father had some string, too. She asked him for it.

Comprehension Questions

		<i>Points</i>
(Literal)	1. What was Sara looking at? (The big tree)	12.5
(Literal)	2. What did Sara want from her mother? (String)	12.5
(Literal)	3. What color string did her mother have? (Red)	12.5
(Literal)	4. What did Sara's mother first think the string was for? (Sara's hair)	12.5
(Inference)	5. Who thought something was broken? (Sara's mother)	12.5
(Inference)	6. How do we know Sara's mother thought something was broken? (She thought the string was to fix something.)	12.5
(Literal)	7. Who else had string? (Her father)	12.5
(Literal)	8. What did Sara do when she saw her father had some string? (She asked him for it.)	12.5

Scoring Scale

<i>Levels</i>	<i>Word Recognition Errors</i>	<i>Comprehension Errors</i>
Independent	0–1	0–10 points
Instructional	2–4	11–25 points
Frustration	8 or more	50 points or more

³Jane Mechling, "A Rainbow for Sara," Level 4, *Make a Wish* (Needham, MA: Silver Burdett & Ginn, 1989), pp. 32–34.

*SILENT READING*⁴

Introduction: Read this story to find out more about Sara and her string. Then I will ask you questions about the story. Read it carefully.

Sara ran outside to play with Peter and Anna.

“I am keeping string in a box,” said Sara.

“I have some green string in my pocket. You may have it,” said Peter.

“You are keeping string?” said Anna. “What are you going to do with all that string? Will you and your cat play with it?”

“No,” said Sara. “You’ll see.”

Soon Sara had all the string she needed. She had red string, orange string, green string, and yellow string.

Comprehension Questions

		<i>Points</i>
(Literal)	1. Where did Sara go? (Outside)	12.5
(Literal)	2. Why did Sara go outside? (To play with Peter and Anna)	12.5
(Literal)	3. Where was Sara keeping her string? (In a box)	12.5
(Inference)	4. Who else was saving string? (Peter)	12.5
(Literal)	5. What color string did Peter have? (Green)	12.5
(Literal)	6. Where did Peter keep his string? (In his pocket)	12.5
(Inference)	7. Does Sara have a pet? If she does, what is it? (Yes; a cat)	12.5
(Literal)	8. What were the colors of the string Sara had? (Red, orange, green, and yellow)	12.5

Scoring Scale

<i>Levels</i>	<i>Comprehension Errors</i>
Independent	0–10 points
Instructional	11–25 points
Frustration	50 points or more

⁴Ibid., pp. 35–36.

First Reader

ORAL READING (88)⁵

Introduction: Read this story aloud to find out about Fritz and Anna. Then I will ask you questions about the story.

Fritz and Anna lived on a farm. It was a small farm. It was also very dry, and things did not grow well. So Fritz and his wife, Anna, were poor.

One day there was a tap, tap, tap on the door. A woman had come to the farm. She had been walking most of the day, and she was hungry. She asked Fritz and Anna to give her something to eat. Fritz and Anna had a pot of soup. They let the woman come in to eat.

Comprehension Questions

		<i>Points</i>
(Literal)	1. Where did Fritz and Anna live? (On a farm)	10
(Literal)	2. What kind of farm was it? (Small, dry)	10
(Inference)	3. Why were Fritz and Anna poor? (Things didn't grow well on their farm.)	10
(Inference)	4. Why didn't things grow well? (It was too dry.)	10
(Word meaning)	5. What does "poor" mean? (Not having money; not having much food to eat)	10
(Inference)	6. Who knocked on Fritz and Anna's door? (A woman)	10
(Literal)	7. What had the woman been doing? (Walking all day)	10
(Literal)	8. How did the woman feel? (Hungry)	10
(Literal)	9. What did Fritz and Anna have? (A pot of soup)	10
(Inference)	10. How do we know Fritz and Anna are kind people? (Even though they are poor, they share their soup with the woman.)	10

Scoring Scale

<i>Levels</i>	<i>Word Recognition Errors</i>	<i>Comprehension Errors</i>
Independent	0–1	0–10 points
Instructional	2–4	11–25 points
Frustration	9 or more	50 points or more

⁵Verna Aardema, "The Three Wishes," Level 5, *A New Day* (Needham, MA: Silver Burdett & Ginn, 1989), p. 160.

*SILENT READING*⁶

Introduction: Fritz and Anna are given some wishes by the woman. Read to find out what Fritz and Anna do with one of the wishes. Then I will ask you questions about the story. Read it carefully.

For most of the day, Fritz and Anna talked about the three wishes they would make. They talked long after it was time to eat again, and they forgot to cook. They began to get hungry.

By the time Anna and Fritz made soup, they were both very, very hungry. As they sat down to eat, Fritz said, "I wish we had a sausage to go with this soup." And there on the table was a great big brown sausage!

Comprehension Questions

		<i>Points</i>
(Literal)	1. How many wishes were Fritz and Anna given? (Three)	10
(Literal)	2. How long did they talk about the wishes? (For most of the day)	10
(Literal)	3. What did they forget to do? (Cook)	10
(Inference)	4. Why did they forget to cook? (They were excited about the three wishes; they were busy talking about them.)	10
(Inference)	5. How did they know they hadn't eaten? (They became hungry.)	10
(Literal)	6. What did they make to eat? (Soup)	10
(Literal)	7. How did they feel when the soup was ready? (Very, very hungry)	10
(Literal)	8. Who wished for something? (Fritz)	10
(Literal)	9. What did Fritz wish for? (A sausage to go with the soup)	10
(Literal)	10. What did the wish bring? (A great big brown sausage)	10

Scoring Scale

<i>Levels</i>	<i>Comprehension Errors</i>
Independent	0–10 points
Instructional	11–25 points
Frustration	50 points or more

⁶Ibid., p. 163.

Level 2¹

ORAL READING (112)⁷

Introduction: Read this story aloud to find out why a farmer needs help. Then I will ask you questions about the story.

Once there was a farmer who went to the town wise man because he had a problem, and he did not know what to do. “How can I help you?” the wise man asked.

“I have a house with one small room,” sighed the farmer.

“That is not a problem,” the wise man said.

“It is a problem,” the farmer sighed. “I live in this one small room with my wife and my seven children. We are always in one another’s way, and we are always talking at the same time. It is so loud that I can hardly hear myself think. I cannot stand it any longer. Can you help me?”

Comprehension Questions

		<i>Points</i>
(Literal)	1. To whom did the farmer go? (To the town wise man)	10
(Word meaning)	2. What is a town wise man? (A person who can help others; a man who knows lots of things; he can answer many questions.)	10
(Literal)	3. Why did the farmer go to the town wise man? (He had a problem.)	10
(Literal)	4. Where does the farmer live? (In a house with one small room)	10
(Inference)	5. How many people live in the house? (Nine: seven children, the farmer, and his wife)	10
(Inference)	6. Explain whether you think the farmer is rich or poor. (Poor, because he lives in one room with such a large family)	10
(Inference)	7. What is the farmer’s problem? (It is too noisy in his house.)	10
(Literal)	8. What does everyone in the house do at the same time? (Talk)	10
(Literal)	9. What is the noise stopping the farmer from doing? (Thinking)	10
(Inference)	10. What does the farmer want the town wise man to do? (Help the farmer solve his problem)	10

Scoring Scale

<i>Levels</i>	<i>Word Recognition Errors</i>	<i>Comprehension Errors</i>
Independent	0–1	0–10 points
Instructional	2–6	11–25 points
Frustration	11 or more	50 points or more

⁷Michael Patrick Hearn, “Not So Wise as You Suppose,” Level 6, *Garden Gates* (Needham, MA: Silver Burdett & Ginn, 1989), pp. 94–95.

*SILENT READING*⁸

Introduction: Read this story to find out what the farmer does to solve his problem. Then I will ask you questions about the story. Read it carefully.

The wise man stroked his chin and thought.

“Do you have a horse?” the wise man asked.

“Yes, I have a horse,” the farmer said.

“Then the answer is simple,” the wise man said, “but you must do as I tell you. Tonight you must bring the horse into your house to stay with you, your wife, and your seven children.” The farmer was surprised to hear such a plan, but he did as he was told.

The next morning he returned to the wise man. He was quite upset.

“You are not so wise as you suppose!” the farmer said, “Now my house is even louder. The horse just kicks and neighs morning, noon, and night! I cannot stand it any longer.”

Comprehension Questions

		<i>Points</i>
(Literal)	1. What did the wise man stroke? (His chin)	10
(Literal)	2. What was the wise man doing when he stroked his chin? (Thinking)	10
(Literal)	3. What did the wise man ask the farmer? (If he had a horse)	10
(Word meaning)	4. What does “simple” mean? (Easy)	10
(Literal)	5. What did the wise man say was simple? (The answer to the farmer’s problem)	10
(Literal)	6. What did the wise man want the farmer to do? (To bring the horse into the house to stay with the farmer and his family)	10
(Literal)	7. When was the farmer supposed to bring the horse into the house? (That night)	10
(Inference)	8. Explain how you know whether the wise man’s plan worked. (It didn’t work because the farmer came in very upset.)	10
(Literal)	9. What did the horse do in the house? (Kicked and neighed)	10
(Literal)	10. What did the farmer think about the wise man now? (That the wise man was not as wise as he thought he was)	10

Scoring Scale

<i>Levels</i>	<i>Comprehension Errors</i>
Independent	0–10 points
Instructional	11–25 points
Frustration	50 points or more

⁸Ibid., p. 96.

Level 2²ORAL READING (131)⁹

Introduction: Read this story aloud to find out what the children’s surprise is. Then I will ask you questions about the story.

The children sat down in a big circle on the ground. Everyone was excited. Mr. Ortero (or-te'-rō) had promised them a surprise.

Mr. Ortero walked into the middle of the circle. He ran the after-school program in the park.

“I have a mystery today,” Mr. Ortero said. “A treasure is hidden somewhere in the park. Your job is to solve the mystery and find the treasure.”

Marita (mä-rē'-ta) raised her hand. “What is the treasure?” she asked.

“That’s part of the mystery,” Mr. Ortero answered.

Marita laughed with everyone else. Mr. Ortero liked to tease them.

“Each of you gets one clue,” Mr. Ortero said.

He started around the circle, handing out the clues. Marita was sitting between Jenny and Mike.

“I’m really a good detective,” Mike said. “I bet I’ll find the treasure.”

Comprehension Questions

		<i>Points</i>
(Literal)	1. How were the children sitting? (In a big circle on the ground)	10
(Literal)	2. Why were they excited? (Mr. Ortero had promised them a surprise.)	10
(Literal)	3. Who was Mr. Ortero? (The person who ran the after-school program in the park)	10
(Literal)	4. What did Mr. Ortero have for the children? (A mystery)	10
(Word meaning)	5. What is a mystery? (Something that is not known; a secret; a puzzle that has to be solved or figured out)	10

⁹Judith Stamper, “The Treasure Hunt,” Level 7, *Going Places* (Needham, MA: Silver Burdett & Ginn, 1989), p. 197.

(Literal)	6. What is the mystery Mr. Ortero has for the children? (He has hidden a treasure in the park and wants the children to find it.)	10
(Literal)	7. What did Marita want to know? (What the treasure is)	10
(Inference)	8. Why didn't Mr. Ortero tell the children what the treasure is? (The treasure is part of the mystery and therefore might give the mystery away; it might make it too easy to solve the mystery.)	10
(Literal)	9. What did Mr. Ortero do to help the children find the treasure? (He gave each child a clue.)	10
(Inference)	10. Why does Mike think he will find the treasure? (Because he thinks he's a good detective)	10

Scoring Scale

<i>Levels</i>	<i>Word Recognition Errors</i>	<i>Comprehension Errors</i>
Independent	0–1	0–10 points
Instructional	2–7	11–25 points
Frustration	13 or more	50 points or more

SILENT READING¹⁰

Introduction: Read this story to find out more about the treasure hunt. Then I will ask you questions about the story. Read it carefully.

Jenny looked at Marita and smiled. They both liked Mike, but he bragged a lot.

Mr. Ortero gave Jenny her clue. Marita was next, and then Mike. Soon, each child had a clue to open and read. Mr. Ortero stepped back into the middle of the circle.

“Listen to the rules,” he said. “First, stay inside the park. The treasure is hidden here. Second, don’t harm any plants or trees. Third, you must find the treasure in twenty minutes. Meet me back here in twenty minutes. Good luck!”

The children jumped to their feet and ran in different directions. Marita read her clue over and over. It said:

*Thirsty, tired, and very hot?
I’m near what’s cool and hits the spot.*

“Near something to drink,” Marita thought. She ran to find the nearest water fountain. She looked all around the fountain, but there was no treasure.

Comprehension Questions

		<i>Points</i>
(Literal)	1. How did Jenny and Marita feel toward Mike? (They liked him.)	10
(Word meaning)	2. What does “brag” mean? (To boast)	10
(Inference)	3. Why did Jenny smile at Marita? (Because Mike is probably always bragging; they were used to his bragging.)	10
(Literal)	4. What did Mr. Ortero do after he gave each child a clue? (He gave them rules.)	10
(Word meaning)	5. What is a rule? (Something you have to follow)	10
(Literal)	6. What were the three rules he gave the children? (Stay inside the park; don’t harm any plants or trees; they must find the treasure in twenty minutes.)	10
(Inference)	7. How do we know Mr. Ortero is concerned about the park? (He tells children not to harm the plants or trees.)	10

¹⁰Ibid., p. 198.

(Literal)	8. What did Marita run to find? (The water fountain)	10
(Inference)	9. Why did Marita run to the water fountain? (Because of her clue)	10
(Inference)	10. What did Marita expect to find at the water fountain? (The treasure)	10

Scoring Scale

<i>Levels</i>	<i>Comprehension Errors</i>
Independent	0–10 points
Instructional	11–25 points
Frustration	50 points or more

Level 3¹ORAL READING (151)¹¹

Introduction: Read this story aloud to find out what Jason wants. Then I will ask you questions about the story.

Every time ten-year-old Jason Hardman wanted a book from a library, he borrowed his sister's bike and pedaled six miles to the next town, Monroe. Since Jason's favorite thing to do was to read books, he spent hours pedaling.

Jason's town of Elsinore, Utah, had only 650 people, too tiny for a library of its own. Elsinore was so small that the children even went to school in Monroe.

One night, Jason said to his parents, "I want to start a library in Elsinore." They were pleased but told him that he would have to talk with the town council.

"What is a town council?" Jason asked.

"It's a group of about eight elected members and the mayor. They run all the town's business," his mom said. "Elsinore, like all towns, collects taxes from its citizens and uses the money for public services, such as fire and police protection," she explained.

Comprehension Questions

		<i>Points</i>
(Literal)	1. How old is Jason Hardman? (Ten years old)	10
(Word meaning)	2. What does "borrow" mean? (To use something that belongs to someone else after agreeing to return it)	10
(Literal)	3. What did Jason borrow? (His sister's bike)	10
(Inference)	4. Where did Jason spend a lot of time? (In the Monroe library)	10
(Literal)	5. What was Jason's favorite thing? (Reading)	10
(Literal)	6. Why didn't Jason's town have a library? (It was too small.)	10
(Literal)	7. What did Jason want to do? (Start a library)	10
(Inference)	8. Why did Jason want to start a library? (Because he loved to read and didn't want to keep pedaling to Monroe to get library books)	10
(Literal)	9. What is a town council? (A group of about eight elected members and a mayor, who run the town's business)	10
(Main idea)	10. What is the main idea of the story? (Jason Hardman wants to start a library.)	10

¹¹Margaret Tuley Patton, "Jason Wants a Library," Level 8, *Castles of Sand* (Needham, MA: Silver Burdett & Ginn, 1989), pp. 184–185.

	Scoring Scale	
<i>Levels</i>	<i>Word Recognition Errors</i>	<i>Comprehension Errors</i>
Independent	0–2	0–10 points
Instructional	3–8	11–25 points
Frustration	15 or more	50 points or more

SILENT READING¹²

Introduction: Jason meets with the town council and tells them he wants to start a library. Read the story to find out more about Jason and his library. Then I will ask you questions about the story. Read it carefully.

Another week passed. Every day when Jason came off the school bus, he'd ask his mother: "Did the mayor phone?" Each day, the answer was, "No." Jason phoned the mayor every night for two weeks. Each night, the same answer was given: "The council is still thinking about it." Jason grew tired of waiting. Why can't I use the town hall basement for my library? he thought to himself.

During those weeks, Jason pedaled often to Monroe for library books. "I wonder if I will be biking these six miles forever for a book?" he asked himself sadly. He began to doubt that he would ever get a library for Elsinore.

At last it happened. When he phoned the mayor, Jason was invited to the council's next meeting. The mayor told him they might find space in the town hall basement. It was just too good to be true.

Comprehension Questions

		<i>Points</i>
(Literal)	1. What did Jason ask his mother when he came home from school? (Did the mayor phone?)	10
(Inference)	2. Explain how you know whether Jason lived close to or far from his school. (He didn't live close because he rode a bus to school.)	10
(Literal)	3. What did Jason do every night? (He phoned the mayor every night.)	10
(Literal)	4. What answer was he always given? (The council is still thinking about it.)	10
(Literal)	5. Where did Jason want to have his library? (In the town hall basement)	10
(Literal)	6. What did Jason do while he was waiting? (Pedaled often to the library in Monroe)	10
(Word meaning)	7. What does "forever" mean? (Always)	10
(Literal)	8. What finally happened? (Jason was invited to the council's next meeting. They told him they might find space in the town hall basement for his library.)	10
(Inference)	9. How do we know Jason could hardly believe his ears. (In the story it says, "It was just too good to be true.")	10
(Main idea)	10. What is the main idea of the story? (After Jason waits a few weeks, the mayor finally tells Jason that he might be able to use the town hall basement for his library.)	10

¹²Ibid., p. 187.

Scoring Scale	
<i>Levels</i>	<i>Comprehension Errors</i>
Independent	0–10 points
Instructional	11–25 points
Frustration	50 points or more

Level 3²ORAL READING (171)¹³

Introduction: Read this story aloud to find out what King Midas loves. Then I will ask you questions about the story.

Once upon a time there was a very rich king named Midas. He lived in a fine castle with his daughter, Marygold.

The two things he loved best in life were gold and Marygold.

He loved to go into his treasure room and count his coins.

No one, not even Marygold, was allowed into the king's treasure room.

One day Midas was sitting in the treasure room dreaming about his gold. In his dream, he saw a shadow fall across the piles of valuable gold coins. He looked up and saw a stranger standing near him. Since no one was allowed into his treasure room, Midas was surprised. The stranger looked kind, however, so Midas wasn't afraid. He greeted the man, and they began to talk of gold.

"You certainly have a lot of gold," said the stranger.

"It's not so much," said Midas.

The stranger smiled. "Do you want even more gold than this?" he asked.

"If I had my way, everything I touched would turn into gold," Midas replied.

Comprehension Questions

		<i>Points</i>
(Literal)	1. What were the two things that Midas loved best in the world? (Gold and his daughter, Marygold)	10
(Word meaning)	2. What is the meaning of "valuable"? (Worth a lot such as gold, money, or jewelry)	10
(Literal)	3. Where was no one allowed to go? (In the king's treasure room)	10
(Literal)	4. What did King Midas love to do in his treasure room? (Count his coins)	10
(Inference)	5. How do we know Midas loves gold very much? (He spends a lot of time sitting in the treasure room counting the coins. He also dreams about the gold.)	10
(Word meaning)	6. What is a stranger? (A person who is unknown to you; someone you don't know)	10
(Literal)	7. Where did Midas see a stranger? (In his dream while sitting in the treasure room)	10

¹³"King Midas and the Golden Touch," retold by Judy Rosenbaum, Level 9, *On the Horizon* (Needham, MA: Silver Burdett & Ginn, 1989), pp. 130–131.

(Literal)	8. Why was Midas surprised when he saw a stranger in his treasure room? (Because no one was allowed in the room)	10
(Inference)	9. How do we know Midas is not satisfied with what he has? (Even though he is very rich and has so much gold, he says that it's not so much. He also says he'd like everything he touches to turn into gold.)	10
(Main idea)	10. What is the main idea of the story? (Even though King Midas is very rich and has lots of gold, he thinks it's not so much.)	10

Scoring Scale

<i>Levels</i>	<i>Word Recognition Errors</i>	<i>Comprehension Errors</i>
Independent	0–2	0–10 points
Instructional	3–9	11–25 points
Frustration	17 or more	50 points or more

SILENT READING¹⁴

Introduction: The stranger tells King Midas that he will give him the Golden Touch. Everything he touches will turn to gold. Read the story to find out what happens. Then I will ask you questions about the story. Read it carefully.

Midas was so excited that he could hardly wait until morning. At last the sun rose. Still dreaming, Midas sat up and reached for the water jug by his bed. At once it became gold. Midas was so overjoyed, he got up and danced around the room, touching everything within his reach. Soon he had a room full of gleaming gold objects. When he reached for his clothes, they turned into heavy golden cloth. “Now I shall really look like a king,” he said. He got dressed and admired himself in the mirror. Midas was impressed by his golden clothes, though they were so heavy he could hardly move.

His looking glass was more of a problem. He tried to use it to see his new treasures better. To his surprise, he could not see anything through it. He put it on the table and found that it was now gold, but Midas was too excited to worry. He said, “I can see well enough without it. Besides, it is much more valuable now.”

Comprehension Questions

		<i>Points</i>
(Literal)	1. What did Midas first do after the sun rose? (He reached for the water jug.)	10
(Literal)	2. What happened to the water jug after he touched it? (It turned to gold.)	10
(Literal)	3. What did Midas do after the water jug turned to gold? (He got up and danced around the room, touching everything within his reach.)	10
(Literal)	4. What happened to everything he touched? (It turned to gold.)	10
(Inference)	5. Why were his clothes so heavy? (They too had turned to gold because he had to touch them to put them on.)	10
(Inference)	6. Why had his looking glass become gold? (He had touched it.)	10
(Inference)	7. Were all these things really happening to Midas? Explain. (No, Midas was dreaming it all.)	10
(Word meaning)	8. What does “admire” mean? (To think of someone with approval and respect)	10
(Literal)	9. What did Midas say when his looking glass turned to gold? (I can see well enough without it. Besides, it is much more valuable now.)	10
(Main idea)	10. What is the main idea of the story? (In his dream, King Midas is very excited because everything he touches turns to gold.)	10

¹⁴Ibid., p. 132.

	Scoring Scale
<i>Levels</i>	<i>Comprehension Errors</i>
Independent	0–10 points
Instructional	11–25 points
Frustration	50 points or more

Level 4

ORAL READING (187)¹⁵

Introduction: Read this story aloud to find out how a writer begins a book for young people. Then I will ask you questions about the story.

How does a writer such as Mr. Pinkwater begin a novel for young readers? How does he work? “When I’m beginning a new book,” he states, “I am almost like an actor getting into character. I listen to music. I watch television. I talk to people. I turn up at a K-Mart store and go through all the motions of being an ordinary citizen.

“When I start a novel, all I’m really doing is waiting for the characters to show up. It’s like the movie *Close Encounters of the Third Kind*. The people who have been ‘selected’ to be in this story show up. It is a very interesting experience.”

He does not sit down and write every day. “It would be terrible if I had to work that way. I show up at my office every day in the event that something may want to happen, but if nothing happens, I don’t feel that I have failed to perform. If something gets started, fair enough. If it doesn’t, and I feel I’ve given it enough time, I go to K-Mart. I showed up, the story didn’t!”

Comprehension Questions

		<i>Points</i>
(Literal)	1. To whom does Mr. Pinkwater compare himself when he first begins to write? (An actor)	10
(Literal)	2. State three things Mr. Pinkwater does when he begins to write. (Listen to music, watch television, talk to people)	10
(Inference)	3. What does listening to music, watching television, and talking to people help him do? (Get into character for his book)	10
(Literal)	4. When he first starts writing, what is he waiting for? (For his characters to show up)	10
(Literal)	5. What place does Mr. Pinkwater visit? (K-Mart)	10
(Word meaning)	6. What does “ordinary” mean? (not special; usual; normal)	10
(Inference)	7. What does Mr. Pinkwater mean when he says he goes through the motions of being an ordinary person? (He is acting; he is trying to act like the people who go shopping at K-Mart, so he can learn what it feels like.)	10
(Literal)	8. What movie does Mr. Pinkwater refer to? (<i>Close Encounters of the Third Kind</i>)	10
(Inference)	9. What are Mr. Pinkwater’s feelings about writing every day? (He doesn’t feel he has to. He doesn’t feel he is a failure if he doesn’t perform every day.)	10
(Main idea)	10. What is the main idea of the story? (Mr. Pinkwater describes what he does in beginning to write a book.)	10

¹⁵Lee Bennett Hopkins, “Daniel Manus Pinkwater,” Level 10, *Silver Secrets* (Needham, MA: Silver Burdett & Ginn, 1989), p. 56.

	Scoring Scale	
<i>Levels</i>	<i>Word Recognition Errors</i>	<i>Comprehension Errors</i>
Independent	0–2	0–10 points
Instructional	3–9	11–25 points
Frustration	19 or more	50 points or more

SILENT READING¹⁶

Introduction: Read this story to find out how Daniel Pinkwater feels while he is writing his books. Then I will ask you questions about the story. Read it carefully.

“I love the story as it is being written. Sometimes it’s as though it were happening without my doing it. I’ll go to bed, excited about what’s going to happen tomorrow. I know something’s got to happen because I’ve only got 175 pages done and I’ve got to do more.

“To me, the beauty in writing is making the words come out as clear as a pane of glass. That I can do, and I’m rather pleased because it took me years to learn how.

“Writing for girls and boys has helped me to remember my own childhood. And since I’m writing books for a specific reader, namely myself at different ages, I’ve gotten more and more expert at revisiting that person within me at different ages.”

He sometimes uses a computer. “The computer allows me to think in a different way. It helps me to be a better, more daring writer. Using a computer was a breakthrough for me.”

Comprehension Questions

		<i>Points</i>
(Literal)	1. What does Mr. Pinkwater love? (The story as it is being written)	10
(Literal)	2. How does Mr. Pinkwater feel when he goes to bed after working on a story? (Excited)	10
(Inference)	3. Why is Mr. Pinkwater excited when he goes to bed after working on his story? (He can’t wait to see what will happen or how his story will turn out.)	10
(Literal)	4. How does Mr. Pinkwater know something has to happen? (Because he only has 175 pages done and he has to do more.)	10
(Inference)	5. What is the beauty in writing for Mr. Pinkwater? (His being able to make words come out as clear as a pane of glass)	10
(Inference)	6. What does it mean when he says that his words are as clear as a pane of glass? (That it is easy to understand what he is saying; he gets his ideas across; his words help bring pictures to your mind.)	10
(Inference)	7. How do we know it wasn’t always easy for him to make his words as clear as a pane of glass? (He said it took him years to learn how.)	10
(Literal)	8. What has writing for children helped him to do? (Remember his own childhood)	10

¹⁶Ibid., pp. 56–57.

(Literal)	9. How does the computer help Mr. Pinkwater? (It allows him to think in a different way; it helps him to be a better, more daring writer.)	10
(Main idea)	10. What is the main idea of the story? (Mr. Pinkwater describes what he does and how he feels while writing a story.)	10

Scoring Scale

<i>Levels</i>	<i>Comprehension Errors</i>
Independent	0–10 points
Instructional	11–25 points
Frustration	50 points or more

Level 5

ORAL READING (208)¹⁷

Introduction: Read this story aloud to find out about how the Davidsons lived years ago. Then I will ask you questions about the story.

Early in April of 1872, the Davidsons' covered wagon rolled onto their 160-acre land claim in eastern Nebraska. There was no shelter waiting for them. Like most settlers on the Great Plains, the Davidsons had to build their own shelter. At first, the family lived in the covered wagon. That was all right for a while. But by fall, they needed more protection from Nebraska's cold and windy climate.

Back east, the Davidsons had lived in a wooden farmhouse. They would have liked to build a wooden house on the Plains, too. But there wasn't a tree in sight. Lumber for building wasn't available in Nebraska, even if the family had been able to afford it.

There wasn't time for building, anyway. As farmers, the Davidsons knew they had to get on with the all-important work of plowing and planting. Only then would their new land provide enough harvest to see them through the winter.

Rabbits and foxes dig their burrows and dens in hillsides, and that's what the Davidsons did too. The settlers chose the streambank location because it was conveniently close to water. There were no building materials to buy or skilled workers to hire. After two days of digging, the Davidsons' new home was ready.

Comprehension Questions

		<i>Points</i>
(Literal)	1. When did the Davidsons arrive at their destination? (In April of 1872)	10
(Literal)	2. What was their destination? (A 160-acre land claim in eastern Nebraska)	10
(Literal)	3. Where did they live when they first arrived? (In their covered wagon)	10
(Literal)	4. Why did they live in a covered wagon? (There was no shelter waiting for them.)	10
(Inference)	5. How do we know that the Davidsons weren't wealthy? (The story said that lumber wasn't available, even if the Davidsons could afford it. Also, they needed the harvest to see them through the winter.)	10
(Inference)	6. During what season or seasons of the year did the Davidsons live in their covered wagon? (During the spring and summer; a student may include the beginning of fall as part of the answer. Accept this also.)	10

¹⁷Duncan Searl, "A Sea of Grass," Level 11, *Dream Chasers* (Needham, MA: Silver Burdett & Ginn, 1989), pp. 423–424.

(Inference)	7. What was the Davidsons' highest priority? (Plowing and planting)	10
(Inference)	8. The Davidsons' home was compared to homes built by what two animals? (Rabbits and foxes)	10
(Word meaning)	9. What is a burrow? (A hole that an animal digs in the ground)	10
(Main idea)	10. What is the main idea of the story? (The Davidsons' only choice to survive the cold and windy climate was for them, themselves, to dig a home in the hillside like the rabbits and foxes.)	10

Scoring Scale

<i>Levels</i>	<i>Word Recognition Errors</i>	<i>Comprehension Errors</i>
Independent	0–2	0–10 points
Instructional	3–10	11–25 points
Frustration	21 or more	50 points or more

SILENT READING¹⁸

Introduction: Read this story to find out more about how the Davidsons lived years ago. Then I will ask you questions about the story. Read it carefully.

Most people believe in the old saying, “There’s no place like home.” The Davidsons, however, might not have felt that way about their dugout. The cramped dwelling was damp and dark, even on sunny days. Dirt from the roof sifted down into bedding and food. Insects and snakes were constant house guests.

Hoping their new shelter would be a temporary one, the Davidsons began to plow and plant. But this wasn’t as easy as they had expected. In the early 1870s, more than a foot of thick sod covered almost every inch of the territory. Held together by a mass of tangled roots, this sod was almost impossible to cut through. It could take weeks to plow a single acre. Settlers like the Davidsons became known as “sodbusters.”

The sod’s toughness gave the settlers an idea. Why not build with it? The new fields were covered with long ribbons of sod that had been plowed up. It would be a simple matter to cut these into smaller pieces and use them as building blocks. The settlers even had a nickname for this unusual building material—“Nebraska marble.”

Comprehension Questions

		<i>Points</i>
(Literal)	1. What is the saying that most people believe in? (There’s no place like home.)	10
(Inference)	2. How would the Davidsons feel about the saying “There’s no place like home”? (They would not agree because they lived in a dugout that was not very comfortable.)	10
(Literal)	3. State three problems with their dugout. (It was cramped, damp, and dark; dirt from the roof sifted down into bedding and food; and so on.)	10
(Literal)	4. Who were the Davidsons’ constant guests? (Insects and snakes)	10
(Inference)	5. How long had the Davidsons planned on staying in their dugout? (Not long; they hoped their new shelter would be a temporary one.)	10
(Word meaning)	6. What is the meaning of “temporary”? (Lasting for a short time; not permanent)	10
(Literal)	7. What covered almost every inch of the Davidsons’ territory? (More than a foot of thick sod)	10
(Inference)	8. Why were the settlers known as “sodbusters”? (Because it was very hard to cut through the sod; however, they did, even though it could take weeks to plow one acre.)	10
(Literal)	9. What idea did the sod’s toughness give the settlers? (To build with it)	10
(Main idea)	10. What is the main idea of the story? (The Davidsons, unhappy with their dugout, come up with the idea to use the tough sod for building material.)	10

¹⁸Ibid., p. 425.

<i>Levels</i>	<i>Scoring Scale</i>
Independent	0–10 points
Instructional	11–25 points
Frustration	50 points or more

Level 6

ORAL READING (252)¹⁹

Introduction: Read this story aloud to find out what is special about the Monterey Bay Aquarium. Then I will ask you questions about the story.

You walk through the door—and immediately freeze. Overhead, to your left, a thresher shark whips its tail. To your right are three huge killer whales. Have you wandered into a nightmare? Hardly. You’ve just entered the Monterey Bay Aquarium.

The shark and whales, lifesize and hanging from the ceiling, are fiberglass. The other 6,000 creatures you’ll meet are not. On a visit to the aquarium, on the shores of California’s Monterey Bay, you’ll have a chance not only to see them swim, scurry, hunt, and court, but to pick up and handle a few as well.

One of the aquarium’s most spectacular exhibits is the three-story-high kelp forest—the world’s only kelp forest growing indoors. Clinging to the bottom with a rootlike “holdfast,” the yellow-brown kelp reaches up through 28 feet of water, spreading out on the tank’s sunlit surface. With “stipes” instead of trunks, and “blades” in place of leaves, the kelp forest resembles an underwater redwood grove. Sunbeams slant down from above, while the kelp sways gently back and forth. With a patient eye, you will begin to spot some of the many creatures that call the kelp forest home.

Long-legged brittle stars and crabs can be seen within the tangled holdfast. Watch for turban snails higher up. The fish of the kelp forest aren’t as fast as those of the open ocean, but they’re better at playing hide-and-seek. Special air sacs allow some of them to hover in hiding within the maze of blades. Many are completely camouflaged.

Comprehension Questions

		<i>Points</i>
(Literal)	1. What do you first see when you walk through the door of the Monterey Bay Aquarium? (Overhead to your left a thresher shark and to your right three huge killer whales)	10
(Inference)	2. Why would you immediately freeze when you first walk through the door? (Because the thresher shark and three killer whales must look very real, but they aren’t.)	10
(Literal)	3. How many real creatures are there in the aquarium? (6,000)	10
(Word meaning)	4. What does “spectacular” mean? (Of or like a remarkable sight; showy; striking)	10
(Literal)	5. What is one of the aquarium’s most remarkable exhibits? (The three-story-high kelp forest)	10
(Inference)	6. Why is the kelp forest so remarkable? (It’s the world’s only indoor kelp forest.)	10
(Literal)	7. What does the kelp forest resemble? (An underwater redwood grove)	10
(Inference)	8. Why are the fish in the kelp forest better at playing hide-and-seek? (They can hover in hiding within the maze of blades so that they blend in with the blades; they are completely camouflaged.)	10
(Literal)	9. What allows some of the fish to hover in hiding? (Special air sacs)	10
(Main idea)	10. What is the main idea of the story? (The Monterey Sea Aquarium is a very unusual aquarium that houses the world’s only kelp forest growing indoors.)	10

¹⁹Paul Fleischman, “The Monterey Bay Aquarium,” Level 12, *Wind by the Sea* (Needham, MA: Silver Burdett & Ginn, 1989), pp. 395–396.

	Scoring Scale	
<i>Levels</i>	<i>Word Recognition Errors</i>	<i>Comprehension Errors</i>
Independent	0–3	0–10 points
Instructional	4–13	11–25 points
Frustration	25 or more	50 points or more

SILENT READING²⁰

Introduction: Read this story to find out about one of the Monterey Bay Aquarium’s residents. Then I will ask you questions about the story. Read it carefully.

Among the animals who depend on the kelp are the aquarium’s most playful residents, the sea otters. Floating on their backs, doing somersaults in the water, taking part in high-speed games of tag, these smallest of the marine mammals charm every audience.

Their two-story tank lets you view them from above as well as from below the water’s surface. In the wild, though, their home is the kelp beds. They live on creatures who live on the kelp. They depend on it for shelter during storms. Before sleeping, they wrap themselves in it to keep from drifting out to sea.

Why are otters so playful? No one knows, though part of the answer might lie in the fact that their constant motion helps to keep them warm. Unlike the whales and other marine mammals, otters have no layer of blubber between their warm-blooded insides and the cold water outside. So they move around a lot, which requires a lot of energy, which in turn requires a lot of eating. Could you eat 25 hamburgers a day? That’s the equivalent of what an otter swallows, eating up to one-quarter of its body weight daily. If you’re present at feeding time, you’ll be amazed at how much fish, squid, and abalone an otter can eat. Wild otters eat so many purple sea urchins that their bones eventually turn purplish as well.

Otters have another defense against the cold—their coats. When you touch the soft sample of fur on the wall by their tank, you’ll understand why they were hunted until they were nearly extinct.

Comprehension Questions

		<i>Points</i>
(Literal)	1. What animals are the aquarium’s most playful residents? (The sea otters)	10
(Literal)	2. How do the sea otters charm audiences? (They float on their backs, do somersaults, and play high-speed games of tag.)	10
(Literal)	3. Where do the otters live in the aquarium? (In a two-story tank)	10
(Literal)	4. Where do the otters live in the wild? (In the kelp beds)	10
(Literal)	5. What is the reason given for the otter’s playfulness? (Their constant motion keeps them warm.)	10
(Inference)	6. Why do the otters have to move around a lot to keep warm? (The otters have no layer of blubber between their warm-blooded insides and the cold water outside.)	10
(Inference)	7. What is the effect of the great amount of movement? (The otters have to eat a lot because they use up a lot of energy; they eat one-quarter of their body weight daily.)	10
(Word meaning)	8. What does “extinct” mean? (No longer existing; no longer living; having died out)	10
(Inference)	9. Why were otters hunted until they almost didn’t exist anymore? (For their fur; it is very soft.)	10
(Main idea)	10. What is the main idea of the story? (The sea otters are the most playful aquarium residents because they need to move around a lot to keep warm.)	10

Scoring Scale

<i>Levels</i>	<i>Comprehension Errors</i>
Independent	0–10 points
Instructional	11–25 points
Frustration	50 points or more

²⁰Ibid., p. 397.

Level 7

ORAL READING (263)²¹

Introduction: Read this story aloud to find out what some courageous children do. (Etienne is pronounced ā-tyen'.) Then I will ask you questions about the story.

The voice came from out of the sky, "Hey fellows, quick, grab those ropes and pull me into the wind as if I were a kite. Hurry!"

Looking up, the young people were startled to see a man waving wildly at them from a strange banana-shaped flying balloon—a balloon that was about to crash!

Sara reacted quickly and grabbed one of the ropes that dangled near her. But Sara could not even stop the flying contraption, let alone pull it in the other direction. As she attempted to dig her heels into the ground, the balloon nearly toppled her.

"Boys, don't just stand there. Help her," the man in the balloon shouted at Etienne and Louis.

Rushing to help their sister, the boys grabbed other ropes trailing from the balloon and frantically tugged at the runaway flying machine. Finally, the three of them were able to change the direction of the balloon, carrying it into the wind as the aeronaut had requested. The flying machine bobbed up like a kite.

As the young people pulled the balloon down, following the aeronaut's instructions, a crowd began to gather. The moment the flier was safe on the ground, he was surrounded by a large crowd of curious people, all talking at once.

Sara realized that the man she had rescued was the famous Monsieur Santos-Dumont, the wealthy Brazilian inventor and daredevil who predicted people would someday fly like birds.

"Where are the young people? They are the real heroes of this escape from the jaws of death," she heard him shout over the crowd.

Comprehension Questions

		<i>Points</i>
(Literal)	1. Describe what the children saw when they looked up in the sky. (A strange banana-shaped balloon that was about to crash)	10
(Inference)	2. How do we know the person in the balloon didn't expect the girl to help him? (He called out to the fellows.)	10
(Literal)	3. What did he want the fellows to do? (To grab the ropes and pull him into the wind as if he were a kite)	10
(Literal)	4. What happened when Sara tried to help? (She couldn't stop the balloon, let alone pull it in the other direction.)	10
(Word meaning)	5. What is an aeronaut? (Someone who navigates in the air, especially a balloon)	10
(Inference)	6. What was needed to keep the balloon afloat? (The force of the wind)	10
(Inference)	7. What did the young people have to be able to do to pull down the balloon? (Follow the aeronaut's directions)	10
(Inference)	8. What kind of person was Monsieur Santo-Dumont? State four characteristics. Give proof for your answer. (Creative—the story said he was an inventor; reckless, adventurous—it said he was a daredevil; well-known—it said he was famous; rich—it said he was wealthy.)	10
(Literal)	9. What did Monsieur Santos-Dumont predict people would someday be able to do? (Fly like birds)	10

²¹David Fulton, "Through Skies Never Sailed," Level 13, *Star Walk* (Needham, MA: Silver Burdett & Ginn, 1989), pp. 353–354.

(Main idea) 10. What is the main idea of the story? (A courageous girl and her brothers rescue an aeronaut by helping to bring his flying balloon safely to the ground.) 10

Scoring Scale

<i>Levels</i>	<i>Word Recognition Errors</i>	<i>Comprehension Errors</i>
Independent	0–3	0–10 points
Instructional	4–13	11–25 points
Frustration	26 or more	50 points or more

SILENT READING²²

Introduction: Monsieur Santos-Dumont is very grateful to the children for saving his life. Read the story to see why he comes to the children's home. Then I will ask you questions about the story. Read it carefully.

"The purpose of my visit in fact is related to the events of this afternoon. I came to invite your family for an excursion in one of my balloons."

Silence filled the Cote parlor as all eyes turned to Sara's father, awaiting his reply. "I don't wish to seem overly conservative or closed minded, Monsieur Santos-Dumont, but I wouldn't consider air travel sufficiently safe to risk my whole family. This afternoon's events are evidence of that."

"I certainly wouldn't ask you to endanger your family, but flying in a balloon, which is merely a big bag filled with hydrogen, has long been demonstrated to be a safe sport.

"I wouldn't suggest taking you in a craft such as the one I was flying this afternoon. That was a 'dirigible.' Its design is the latest breakthrough in the attempt to control the direction of flight. It's a balloon that has a gasoline engine suspended beneath it to direct its movement. Unfortunately, my colleagues and I have yet to work out all the problems. But we will. In any case, the dirigible may soon be obsolete. I recently heard a report at a meeting of the Aero Club, and I understand that some Americans have actually built a glider of some sort that is heavier than the air, and it is said they use a gasoline engine to power it. Now, that is really incredible."

Comprehension Questions

		<i>Points</i>
(Literal)	1. What was the purpose of Monsieur Santos-Dumont's visit to the children's family? (To invite them on an excursion in one of his balloons)	10
(Word meaning)	2. What is an excursion? (A short pleasure trip)	10
(Literal)	3. How does the children's father feel about air travel? (He feels it is not safe.)	10
(Inference)	4. What evidence does the children's father give to back up his feelings? (The afternoon's events)	10
(Literal)	5. What does Monsieur Santos-Dumont claim is safe? (Flying in a balloon filled with hydrogen)	10
(Literal)	6. What kind of machine was Monsieur Santos-Dumont flying in the afternoon? (A dirigible, which has a gasoline engine suspended beneath it to direct its movement)	10
(Inference)	7. How do we know Monsieur Santos-Dumont is not working alone on developing the dirigible? (The story says that he and his colleagues have yet to work out the details.)	10
(Literal)	8. What does Monsieur Santos-Dumont feel is incredible? (The glider that the Americans have built, which is heavier than air and uses a gasoline engine to power it)	10
(Inference)	9. What does Monsieur Santos-Dumont feel the Americans' flying machine will do to the dirigible? (Make the dirigible obsolete, that is, no longer useful or in use)	10
(Main idea)	10. What is the main idea of the story? (Monsieur Santos-Dumont tries to persuade the children's father to allow his family to go on a short trip in a balloon Monsieur Santos-Dumont insists is safe.)	10

Scoring Scale

<i>Levels</i>	<i>Comprehension Errors</i>
Independent	0–10 points
Instructional	11–25 points
Frustration	50 points or more

²²Ibid., p. 356.

Level 8

ORAL READING (275)²³

Introduction: Read this story aloud to find out why Lo Tung came to America. Then I will ask you questions about the story.

Lo Tung leaned against the rattling wall of the freight car. Beneath him the floor moved as the wheels cracked over the rails. It was a long time since he'd sat or walked on anything steady. First there had been the long days and nights on the Pacific Mail Steamship that had brought him from China, then the riverboat from San Francisco to Sacramento, then the train, waiting on the levee.

He hadn't had time for more than a glimpse of the strange, iron monster belching smoke before the boss man had hustled them aboard. It was hard to believe that he was here now, in this freight car along with other Chinese workers, rolling eastward across America.

Lo Tung looked sideways at his friend, Wei. Wei was fifteen years old, too, and as small and thin as Lo Tung.

"Not more than a hundred pounds, either of you," the agent had said in disgust. "You two will not be able to do the heavy railroad work."

"Don't worry. We are strong," Lo Tung had said. He had not added, "Ho Sen was strong, the strongest man in our village. And he was killed building the American railway." Now Ho Sen's bones lay somewhere in this strange country. And Chen Chi Yuen. He had gone and never been heard from again.

Sitting now in the freight car, thinking about the work, Lo Tung flexed his muscles. Strong for the work. Of course, strong and fearless.

It was growing dark. They had been closed in here together for hours, so many of them from the ship. The air was used up and the smells were bad.

Comprehension Questions

		<i>Points</i>
(Literal)	1. What kind of car was Lo Tung in? (A freight car)	10
(Inference)	2. How do we know Lo Tung has never seen a train before? (Lo Tung thought the locomotive was a strange, iron monster. It wouldn't have been strange if he had seen it before.)	10
(Inference)	3. How do we know it has been a long time since Lo Tung was on land? (The story states that it was a long time since he was on anything steady.)	10
(Literal)	4. What means of transportation was used to get Lo Tung to his destination? (Steamship, riverboat, and train)	10
(Inference)	5. How long did Lo Tung have between getting off the riverboat and boarding the train? (Not long; he only had time to catch a glimpse of the train before he was hustled aboard.)	10
(Literal)	6. What was the agent concerned about? (That Lo Tung and his friend were too thin to work on the railroad)	10
(Literal)	7. What had happened to Ho Sen? (He had been killed working on the American railroad.)	10
(Inference)	8. Why were the smells on the freight train bad? (There was not much air, and there were many people crowded together.)	10
(Literal)	9. In what direction was the train rolling across America? (Eastward)	10
(Main idea)	10. What is the main idea of the story? (Lo Tung's journey from China to America to work on the American railroad has been long and hard.)	10

²³Eve Bunting, "It's Not the Great Wall, But It Will Last Forever," Level 14, *Worlds Beyond* (Needham, MA: Silver Burdett & Ginn, 1989), pp. 238–239.

	Scoring Scale	
<i>Levels</i>	<i>Word Recognition Errors</i>	<i>Comprehension Errors</i>
Independent	0–3	0–10 points
Instructional	4–14	11–20 points
Frustration	28 or more	50 points or more

SILENT READING²⁴

Introduction: Agents had advertised in Lo Tung's village for laborers to help build the railroad in California. They offered houses to live in, plenty of food, and thirty dollars a month. The passage to go was fifty-four dollars. Read the story to find out why Lo Tung signed on. Then I will ask you questions about the story. Read it carefully.

Fifty-four dollars was a fortune, and impossible for his mother! The agent had allowed them to borrow from him. That was when he'd complained of Lo Tung's size.

"Not a penny of your wages will be yours till you pay me back," he had warned.

Lo Tung had agreed. He would have agreed to almost anything. Not that he wanted to go to America. The thought of leaving his home brought tears to his eyes. But it was clearly his duty. He was, after all, the eldest son. Since his father's death the family responsibility had been his. If he went, his debt to the agent would be cleared in two months. Then he could begin sending money home for his mother and his sisters, and his little brother. He had to believe that he could save enough to go home himself some day.

Thinking of home here in the heat of the freight car made loneliness rise in him like water in a swamp. Fear was bad, but loneliness was worse. He would not allow himself to remember.

"We are slowing," Wei said. "I can see through a crack."

Someone else announced, "We are here."

Tired men and boys staggered up, swaying, hoisting their bedrolls. As the train chugged to a stop they waited quietly for what was to come.

When the doors opened Lo Tung saw that it was night outside, the sky filled with a million crystal stars.

"American stars," he whispered to Wei, pointing upward.

"Are they the same that shine over China or ..."

"Out! Everyone out!" Men waited beside the train, big, bulky men who cast massive shadows.

"Hurry! Get a move on!"

The words were not in Lo Tung's language but he understood the tone.

Comprehension Questions

		<i>Points</i>
(Literal)	1. How were Lo Tung and his mother able to get enough money for Lo Tung to go to America? (The agent had allowed them to borrow from him.)	10
(Inference)	2. Why was Lo Tung going to America? (Because his family needed the money; he couldn't earn the money they needed in his village.)	10
(Inference)	3. Why did he feel he had to support his family? (Because his father was dead and he was the eldest son)	10
(Literal)	4. How long would it take to clear his debt to the agent? (Two months)	10
(Inference)	5. Does Lo Tung expect to stay in America? Explain. (No, the story states that he had to believe that he could save enough to go home himself some day.)	10
(Literal)	6. What does Lo Tung feel is worse than fear? (Loneliness)	10
(Inference)	7. What simile is used to describe Lo Tung's loneliness? Explain the simile. (Loneliness rose in him like water in a swamp; when it rains, water in a swamp rises very quickly, and that's how fast his loneliness rose.)	10
(Inference)	8. How do we know it was a clear night when they arrived at their destination? (The sky was filled with a million crystal stars.)	10

²⁴Ibid., p. 240.

(Literal)	9. What kind of men were waiting beside the train? (Big, bulky men who cast massive shadows)	10
(Main idea)	10. What is the main idea of the story? (Even though Lo Tung does not want to leave his family, he goes to America so he can earn money for his family in China.)	10

Scoring Scale

<i>Levels</i>	<i>Comprehension Errors</i>
Independent	0–10 points
Instructional	11–20 points
Frustration	50 points or more