



acadience™ reading

Student Materials

Grade 3 | Benchmark Assessment

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with

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Finding a Nest

▶ As Patrick walked along the path to his neighbor's house, he tripped over a tree root covered by some spiky leaves. He bent down to see if the leaves had scratched him. It was then that he saw the nest. It was tucked into the leaves with two tiny eggs inside. He remembered from his school trip to the nature center that he shouldn't touch it. He looked around for the mother bird. Not seeing her, he quietly backed away and continued down the path.

Each day, Patrick walked down the path and carefully checked the nest. Patrick made sure not to disturb anything that was near it. He knew that the brush protected the nest from predators. By the end of the week, there were a total of five eggs in the nest. Just one week later, there were nine eggs. He wondered what kind of bird would hatch out of them. The eggs were smaller than chicken eggs and they were cream-colored with brown speckles. One day, Patrick got his answer. As he crept over to look at the nest, he saw a mother quail sitting on the eggs.

Patrick continued to check on the nest every day. He was determined to keep it safe. After about three weeks, the eggs finally hatched. Patrick was thrilled to see all the little quails scurrying around their mother. After that, every time he passed the spot where the nest had been, he remembered the little baby birds and smiled.

A Famous Food: The History of Pizza

► Many people love eating pizza. Pizza is made using a thin crust which is covered with tomato sauce and cheese and then baked. Often, other toppings are added. You might think that pizza is a new type of food, but people have been eating it for hundreds of years.

Most people think pizza comes from Italy. This is partly true. The type of pizza that is most common today was first made in the city of Naples. Some of the earliest pizzas, though, were made in Greece more than two thousand years ago. This early pizza was made by traveling armies. After marching all day, the soldiers baked a flat bread on their shields and then covered it with cheese and fruit.

When tomatoes were first brought to Italy, they were put on a crust. Not long after, pizza began to be sold on the streets at market stands. People would order their favorite toppings while the crust was being made. Even kings and queens started to enjoy this new food.

People from Italy who traveled to other parts of the world took the idea of pizza with them. Travelers who had tried pizza in Italy returned home wanting more, and the demand for the food grew. Today, almost every country has some kind of pizza. You can choose thick crust or thin crust. The number of toppings you can have is numerous. There are breakfast pizzas and even dessert pizzas. No matter how you slice it, pizza is a delicious and adaptable food.

Living in Singapore

► The whole family moved when Nell’s mother was asked to transfer to an office in a foreign country for a year. Everyone was excited because they thought it would be a splendid adventure. They would be living in Singapore.

Nell loved her new home, which was in the middle of a lively city full of people. Honking buses and cars filled the streets, yet beautiful flowers grew everywhere. It seemed a lot noisier than Nell’s small town had been.

One thing Nell and her family had to get used to was the rain. It seemed like it poured every day. But today, the sun shone brightly. Nell and her dad decided to take advantage of the good weather to go to a bookstore. They wanted to purchase the latest book in the series they were reading.

On the way to the store, Nell and her dad looked at the sidewalk filled with people selling various foods from small carts. One man sold juice from fresh fruit, and a woman sold rice with chicken on top. Nell stopped and stared when she saw a big snow cone in a bowl with pink and green juice on top. A man was adding yellow juice. Nell’s dad told her it was an iced kachang, and then bought one for her.

Nell wanted to eat the ice before it melted. When she got to the bottom of the bowl, she saw some seeds and beans. Nell was surprised since the snow cones at home were different. Nell took a bite and smiled. It was very good.

Horseback Treasure Hunt

► It was Denny’s birthday, and his three best friends were coming to his grandfather’s ranch to ride horses and look for treasure. When his friends got there, Denny explained, “We’ve got to watch for clues in blue envelopes along the trail. The clues lead to a treasure that Grandpa hid this morning.”

Joe, Ray, and Hector couldn’t wait to get on their horses and ride down the trail. Denny and his grandfather led the way until Joe called out, “There’s something blue on that tree.” He rode over and grabbed the envelope off the low branch.

“Your next note is near a goat,” he read.

In a flash, the boys turned and rode down to the goat pen where Ray found the next envelope on a fence post. It read, “Find high ground, then look down.”

“I think we’re supposed to ride to the top of that hill,” said Denny. “It’s the highest place around.”

They rode to the top of the hill and searched for clues until Hector hollered, “The clue is sticking out from under this rock.” He jumped down and pulled the envelope free. “Take ten steps south and make them big, then grab a shovel and start to dig,” he read.

The boys joined arms and took ten steps south. They discovered three shovels and an orange circle painted on the ground. They all dug as dirt flew everywhere.

Suddenly Denny called, “Here’s a wooden chest!” Everyone watched while he lifted the lid. “There are four cowboy ropes here,” he said. “They’re ropes like a real cowboy would use!” The boys were happy and proud that they had found the hidden treasure.

Raising a Calf

► Some of your friends probably have pet dogs or cats. Others might have gerbils or goldfish. But do you know anyone who has a baby cow? It might astonish you to know that many children do! Every year, thousands of young people raise baby cows, or calves, to compete in livestock shows.

Imagine that you are going to raise a calf for a livestock competition. Get ready to work hard! First, you must prepare a place for your calf. It needs a clean, dry pen that is roomy enough to run around. The enclosure should have a good fence so the calf can't escape and get injured or lost. Before you put the calf in its new home, check to make sure there is nothing sharp or dangerous. Calves like to explore and put everything in their mouth. It is your responsibility to watch out for them and protect them.

Once you bring your calf home, provide food and water each day and make sure its pen is always clean. Your calf will need fresh water twice a day. The calf won't drink dirty water, so dispose of the previous water first. The calf's food should be fresh, too. Damp or dirty food is bad for the calf, so clean out any old grain or hay before you put out fresh food. Be careful to give your calf the proper amount of food. Eating extra food can make a calf sick. Never skip these chores because the calf depends on you for everything it needs.

If you take good care of your calf, it will grow quickly. Before you know it, it will be time to show your calf at a livestock show. You can be proud of all your hard work.

Skimboarding

► As the waves rolled onto the shore, a group of teens ran into the surf with funny round boards under their arms. Allie looked up from reading her book and watched them. When they reached the wet sand, they tossed their boards toward the incoming waves. Then, they quickly jumped onto them. Some of them fell flat into the water. Others were able to glide out into the surf or over the shallow water. One boy was even able to flip his board around and change direction, like a skateboarder. It looked like great fun and good exercise. Allie’s friend Morgan told her the group was skimboarding.

That night, after dinner, Allie asked her Dad if he had ever skimboarded. He hadn’t, but he said he would be willing to learn. They read about it together in a magazine. They decided they would rent boards and try it that weekend. Over the next few days, Allie studied the motions of the skimboarders carefully. From her reading, she knew that timing was very important.

When Saturday came, Allie was ready to head for the beach early. First, she and her dad practiced running to the shore and tossing their boards into the surf. Next, they repeated their first step and added the jump onto the board. On their first try, they both fell backwards into the surf and sat laughing at each other. This was not as easy as it looked!

After several attempts, they were each able to glide a little way on the water. Allie was proud of herself and her dad. They realized that it would take a lot of practice to become good at skimboarding. In the end, they decided that the fun they had together was well worth the effort!

A Surprising Discovery

► I was so excited to be going to the winter Olympic Games. Some of my earliest memories were of watching Olympic skaters glide beautifully over the ice. Finally, I would have the chance to watch them in person.

I was packing my bags when Mom came into my room.

“I have some bad news,” she said. “There are no tickets available for any ice skating events. In fact, tickets for most events are gone. I did get tickets for one event, though. It’s a new event called curling.”

I was very disappointed, but I was also curious. Curling? What was that? It sounded like something I might do to my hair!

Soon, we left for the airport, but I was still a little sad. I couldn’t believe I was finally going to the Olympics, but wouldn’t get to see the skaters. Dad assured me I would enjoy curling, but I didn’t quite believe him.

We checked into our hotel and then set out for the stadium. It was chilly, and had an icy floor with a large target in the center. As the games started, teams of four people worked together to guide a large granite stone toward the target. Before long, I was caught up in the excitement of the games. I had found a favorite team and was thrilled when they did well.

I was in much better spirits as we left the curling match. We were in a beautiful place, a soft snow was falling, and there were going to be plenty of fun things to keep us busy. I might not be able to see the Olympic skaters in person, but I could put on my own ice skates and try out the frozen pond nearby. It was turning into a great trip after all.

A Day for a Shadow Dance

► All night long, the wind howled and the rain poured down. Gopher woke to the sound of thunder rumbling. She looked out of her burrow at the big raindrops splashing on the ground. “It’s another rainy day,” she groaned. “When will I ever be able to run and play with my friends again?”

Gopher crawled deeper into her burrow and began digging a new tunnel to pass the time. After a while Gopher could no longer hear the thunder and rain of the storm and she went to sleep.

When she poked her head out of her burrow the next morning, Gopher felt the warm sun on her face. “Yippee!” she shouted as she scurried out into the sunshine. All of the animals were gathered in the meadow.

“Come on, Gopher,” called Rabbit. “The sunshine is back and we can play our sunny day games. I can even see my shadow,” he exclaimed.

Rabbit twitched his ears and watched his shadow. The ears of his shadow twitched in exactly the same way. Gopher was pleased to see that her own plump little shadow was back, too. All of the animals wiggled and waved and watched their shadows move.

“Let’s dance with our shadows to celebrate the sunshine,” suggested Rabbit. He immediately began to dance with his shadow. Gopher joined him, and then all the animals were dancing with their shadows. As they swayed and twirled, their shadows danced along with them. The animal friends danced around the sunny meadow until the sun began to set and

A Day for a Shadow Dance, continued

the shadows faded.

Finally, tired and happy, Gopher said good-bye to her friends and promised to meet them again on the next sunny day. As she headed home, she hoped that tomorrow would be another perfect day for shadow dancing.

A Triple Challenge

► Do you know people who like to do several different sports? If so, a race with three stages or parts might be just the type of athletic event they would enjoy. The race usually begins with a swim and is followed by a bike ride. Finally, it ends with a run. Since there are three parts to the race, an athlete needs to train for all three sports to be successful.

Some people train specifically to compete in this type of race. The best competitors have a plan to help them do well in each part of the event. They know that they must have enough energy to finish each part of the race. That is why training for endurance is so important. Having the strength to go from one sport to the next during the race is the key to getting a good overall time. Moving quickly between the different parts of the race is also important. Races are timed from the moment swimmers jump into the water until they run across the finish line. The clock does not stop when they get out of the water and dry off to get on their bike or when they change their shoes to start running.

The first of these races was held in France more than eighty years ago. The sport didn't really take off, though, until recently. It has grown in popularity and is now an Olympic event. There are many types of races with three stages. The shortest is called a sprint and covers about sixteen miles. The longest type is called an Ironman and is over one hundred miles long. Today, similar races are held all over the world. They even have some for kids. Why not try one?
