



acadience® reading k–6

Oral Reading Fluency

Student Materials

Level 3 | Progress Monitoring

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A New Ball Game

► On the first day of school, Roy’s teacher asked him to write a letter about himself. Roy was glad to have the chance to talk about his life in Africa. Roy had been born in the United States, but his family had lived in a small town in Africa for three years. Now his family had moved back to the United States.

Roy’s stepmom was a doctor. She worked in a clinic, where she treated sick people and gave immunizations. His dad taught music at the school Roy and his brother attended. Roy and his friends played sports together and practiced playing the instruments his dad taught them. Football was his favorite sport and there always seemed to be a game going after school.

In his letter, Roy wrote about his life and that he missed playing football the most. He had seen American football and it was a very different game. It was hard to figure out why they were chasing each other and when to cheer.

He handed the letter to his teacher the next morning. That afternoon as he was leaving, his teacher called him over. Another boy was standing next to her. “Roy, this is Spencer,” his teacher said. “He’s going to introduce you to the soccer team. I think you’ll enjoy it.”

Spencer smiled at Roy and led him outside to the field, where a group of kids were playing. “The teacher said you call this football in Africa, but here it’s called soccer,” said Spencer. Roy looked around. The kids were playing the same game he had played back in Africa! He couldn’t wait to join them.

Swimming the Channel

► In the sport of swimming, people have set many types of records. Some records are for speed or distance. Other records are for swimming across difficult waters. The English Channel swim is one of these. Many people have dreamed about swimming across this stretch of water, but very few have done it. Lynne Cox is one of the few.

The English Channel is between the French and English coasts. At its shortest point, the distance across it is twenty-two miles, but the water is so cold and the currents so strong that only ten percent of those who have tried the swim have made it across. The first swimmer to do so was a man named Matthew Webb. He made the swim in 1875, and it took him more than twenty hours.

Lynne Cox first swam across the Channel in 1972. She had started swimming at the age of three in Maine, but it wasn't until her family moved to California that Lynne discovered her love of swimming in open water. It was then that Lynne knew she wanted to swim the Channel. At age fifteen, Lynne was the youngest person ever to attempt the swim. She made it across in less than ten hours, which at that time was faster than any other man or woman had ever done it. This first swim covered a stretch of twenty-seven miles. The next year, Lynne returned and broke her own record. She swam a thirty-three mile stretch of the Channel in nine hours and thirty-six minutes.

Rooftop Gardens

► What do you think of when you hear the word “garden”? Maybe you have planted a garden at home. Many schools also have gardens that students can work in. Most people think about gardens being planted in the ground, but there are many other places to plant gardens. One good place for a garden is on the roof!

A rooftop garden, or a “green roof,” can be planted on top of a small house or on a giant skyscraper. Almost any type of roof can have some type of garden or green space. Even steep roofs can have a patch of grass for wild flowers.

You might ask, “Why put a garden on the roof?” Roof gardens do more than add spots of beauty to our rooftops. They are a good way to help the environment in areas that are covered with concrete sidewalks and paved streets.

Green roofs also provide insulation. They keep buildings cooler in the summer and warmer in the winter. This saves energy and reduces the amount of fuel we use. Rooftop gardens also help stop pollution. The gardens soak up rainwater that would otherwise run off onto dirty streets and roads. Less dirty water is able to pollute our rivers and streams.

Another great thing about rooftop gardens is that they offer a natural place for birds to nest and live. Birds that normally would not be able to find food or a safe place to nest in cities can live happily in rooftop gardens.

As you can see, rooftop gardens can be a good addition to any building. So, the next time you think about a garden, don’t just look down at the ground. Look up at the rooftops!

Learning to Skateboard

► The last box was finally unpacked at the new house. Zach had been excited about moving to the city and about making new friends. He knew he had several weeks to explore the neighborhood before school started, and he realized that was plenty of time to learn his way around. He asked his mom if he could walk to the nearby park.

From the road, the park looked like a giant green expanse. Now, he saw that it was divided into different sections. The first thing that caught his eye was the skate park. He sprinted to the gate and stood looking in at the ramps and rails. He had a skateboard but had never learned to ride it. The roads near his old house had been too rocky.

Just then, two boys zoomed up on skateboards and said hello. They asked him if he skateboarded. He told them that he had a board but had never had a place to learn. “Well, now you do,” they said, and they offered to teach him. Their names were Matt and Pablo, and they went to the same school he was going to attend. Zach happily agreed to meet them for a lesson.

The following afternoon, Zach went to find the boys. After putting on helmets and pads, Matt showed him how to stand on the board above the axle. Pablo helped him practice pushing off, which is the movement needed to get the board rolling. They also explained carving and stopping. Zach practiced and also watched the other guys perform some advanced moves they had mastered. After thanking his new friends, he promised to come back every day. By the time school started, he had learned to skateboard and had made two good friends.

Glassmaking

► The morning sun came in the window, sending a rainbow of color dancing around the room. Jayden sat in Gran’s kitchen gazing at the glass vases that sat on shelves in front of the window. Her grandmother had collected them from all over the world. Jayden loved that each piece was different. Each time she visited, she saw some new detail that she had missed before.

Jayden asked her grandmother how the glass was made. Gran started explaining, but then she stopped. “I know,” she said. “Let’s visit my friend Mary’s studio and you can see for yourself.”

At the glass studio, Mary showed them how glass was blown. She explained that sand and other ingredients are mixed together and put into a very hot furnace to form molten glass. They watched as Mary dipped the tip of her blowpipe into the furnace and scooped some glass onto the end. Carefully, she rolled the hot glass back and forth on a steel table, forming a neat ball. Then she blew into the pipe to form an air bubble inside the glass. She said that as the glass cooled, it had to be reheated to keep it soft enough to work with. Jayden watched closely as Mary placed the pipe back into the furnace.

While the glass heated, Mary sprinkled some blue and green colored bits across the table. Then, she rolled the reheated piece across the bits. Once again, she returned it to the furnace. This time, when she removed it, the melted color swirled inside. Jayden thought it was very beautiful. Finally, Mary shaped the form with wooden blocks and other tools before placing it in a cooling oven.

Jayden had learned so much. She thought about Gran’s collection. It was now more special than ever.

Space Camp

► It was the summer after third grade, and Kelsey was excited. Ever since she was little, Kelsey wanted to be an astronaut. This summer, she was old enough to go to space camp. For six days she would get to experience the life of an astronaut.

Kelsey would be staying at the space center with the other campers, so her father dropped her off the evening before camp began. She was so excited for the next day that she had a hard time sleeping. The next morning would begin her space adventure.

The first thing the campers did that morning was put on spacesuits. Then they went into a machine that was like a pretend rocket launch. The machine was called a simulator. The campers spent the morning practicing rocket launches and landings in the simulator. It felt like they were on a real rocket.

After lunch, it was time to divide into groups. Kelsey chose the space and aviation group because she wanted to be a pilot. She joined other campers who were interested in learning how to fly. The campers learned about the principles of flight, and they even spent time in a jet simulator.

Kelsey spent the rest of the days at camp visiting the space museum and climbing the rock wall that resembled Mars' surface. All of the campers had a chance to build their own rockets. At the end of the six days, the campers launched their model rockets outdoors. Kelsey felt proud as her rocket soared high in the sky. As she watched her rocket, she thought about her week at camp. Space camp was so much fun, she couldn't wait to see how much fun she would have as a real astronaut.

A Woodland Path

► The sun was up, and it was going to be another pretty day. Carrie was ready for the day's hike. She and her family had recently moved to a small ranch. Their land was right next to a nature preserve. Every day, Carrie and her teenage brother Jackson explored a new part of the preserve.

During the summer, Carrie and Jackson had the whole day to explore. Mom made them a lunch. Then they headed out with their cell phones, which they used to keep in touch with their parents. They carried backpacks that held their lunches and notebooks. Carrie and Jackson liked to make drawings and write about things they saw.

Carrie and her brother had already hiked many of the trails in the preserve and were hoping to find a new, special place. After walking a little way up the main path, they stopped to discuss which way to go. It was then that Carrie saw a small, overgrown path leading off to the right. She wondered how they had missed it on their earlier hikes. They were both excited at the chance to find a new part of the preserve. The path was very narrow and bushy, but they were determined to follow it to its end. Finally, after hiking for over an hour, they came upon a clearing. In the clearing was the most beautiful waterfall they had ever seen. Carrie and Jackson knew that they had found a special place.

Carrie and her brother sat down by the edge of the water and took off their shoes. As they ate their lunch, they dangled their feet in the water. They were already making plans to show this special place to their parents.

How Ryan Made a Difference

► One day a boy named Ryan asked his parents for seventy dollars. His teacher had explained that seventy dollars was sufficient to build a well in a poor African country. Many children in Africa were getting sick because they lacked clean water to drink. Although Ryan was only in first grade, he was determined to help them.

Ryan's parents agreed to let him do extra chores to earn the money. They would pay him one dollar per hour. He washed windows, picked up yard debris, and did other chores. In three months, Ryan had earned the seventy dollars.

When Ryan gave the money to the people who build the wells, they were grateful. They explained that the money would buy a pump to pull water from under the ground. However, it would take a lot more money to drill the well before the pump could be used. Drilling the well would cost two thousand dollars! Ryan decided to do chores until he could pay for drilling the well, too.

When the people in Ryan's town heard what he was doing, they helped him raise more money. In a few months, Ryan had enough money to pay for the well.

The well was built near a village school in Uganda. After the well was built, the villagers sent Ryan letters and a picture of the well. They had erected a sign that said "Ryan's Well." They would always remember the young person who had helped them. Ryan corresponded with the children who went to the school. Soon they became friends. Ryan was happy to think that his friends would have clean water to drink.

How Ryan Made a Difference, continued

Ryan has continued his work. He has helped to construct wells in many African countries. He believes each individual really can make a difference.

Rachel's Box

► The cat was making a mad dash to get away from the new puppy. She was trying to get to her spot on the window ledge out of the puppy's reach. It was then that the cat knocked over the beautiful wooden box that Grandmother had given to Rachel on her most recent visit. Steven and Rachel could see what was going to happen, but neither one was able to get across the room quickly enough to prevent it from happening.

Steven put the puppy outside while Rachel looked to see how badly the box was damaged. When he returned, his sister was still staring at the box. "Don't worry," Steven said, "It's not that serious. I think I can fix it for you." Rachel smiled happily. Her big brother was always there for her when she needed help.

They took the box to the kitchen for a closer look. The hinge needed to be screwed back on and several of the inlaid stones would have to be glued back in place. All in all, Steven thought they had been very lucky. The box was more than two hundred years old, and it had fallen on the hard floor. It had been a wedding present to their grandmother's great grandmother. For many years it had been passed down through the family to the oldest granddaughter.

The brother and sister worked together, and soon the box was as good as new. Rachel put the box in her glass cabinet. She didn't want the cat to get anywhere near it again. Because of Steven's help, she knew she would now be able to keep the box safe to give to her own granddaughter some day. Rachel felt thankful to have such a wonderful brother.

The Pinecone Feast

► Snow had covered the ground for a full month now. Somehow, it seemed colder than in years past. Oscar hadn't seen many birds at all. He looked out of the window and wondered how all the birds stayed warm and what they ate during these cold frosty months. His grandfather looked up from the book he was reading and asked what Oscar was so concerned about.

Oscar told him he was worried about the birds in the cold. Grandfather told him that many birds flew south for the winter but that the birds that stayed probably did need food. Then, Grandfather smiled and said, "I used to make pinecone feasts for the birds during the winter. Would you like me to show you how?" Oscar nodded an excited yes.

Oscar followed Grandfather out to the shed to retrieve some pinecones they had gathered in the fall. At the kitchen table, they carefully tied string around the top of each one. Next, Grandfather got out a jar of peanut butter and two spoons. He told Oscar to cover each pinecone with peanut butter. Then, Grandfather poured some birdseed onto a plate. He added sunflower seeds and dried fruit to the mix to give the birds extra energy. Finally, the two rolled the coated pinecones through the birdseed until they were completely covered with seeds.

Oscar and Grandfather dressed warmly and went out to set up the bird feast. They carefully tied each pinecone onto the bare branches of the big tree outside the kitchen window. After a quick snowball fight, they went inside to get warm and wait for the birds to find the feast. By lunchtime, Oscar and Grandfather had their reward. They looked out the window. There was a group of birds happily munching on the seeds.

Save the Turtles!

► For millions of years, sea turtles have lived in our oceans. It is amazing, when you think about it. They were here when the dinosaurs walked the Earth! Now, their future is at risk. The good news is that efforts are being made to keep all sea turtles safe.

Of the seven species of sea turtles, the largest is the leatherback. This turtle can grow to over six feet long. They are called leatherbacks because they have a softer, more flexible shell than other turtles. They live mainly in the open ocean, where they feed on jellyfish. Because they can keep their body temperature warmer than that of the water, they are able to swim in colder parts of the ocean. Other types of sea turtles are not able to do this. Leatherbacks swim thousands of miles a year looking for food. Every two or three years, the females walk onto the beach to make a nest and lay their eggs.

Each year, there are fewer nesting leatherbacks to be seen. This is because of the growing dangers they face. At sea, this giant turtle often gets caught in fishing nets. On land, animals and people disturb their nests. The turtles also mistake plastic bags and other kinds of trash for jellyfish. These bags can be very harmful to the turtles if they try to eat them.

Laws are being passed to protect the turtles, and people are becoming better aware of the risks. Many countries now have beach patrols to guard the nests, and there are new ways to track where the turtles go. Also, more people recycle now. This means that people throw away fewer plastic bags. If we all work together, we can save the turtles!

Planting a Butterfly Garden

► One of the most beautiful insects on earth is the butterfly. There are thousands of different kinds of butterflies and they live in all parts of the world. In some places, though, butterflies have trouble finding the plants they need to survive. Planting a butterfly garden is a great way to help. You can both protect and enjoy the butterflies in your area.

Many parks and public gardens have whole fields planted to attract butterflies, but a butterfly garden does not have to be large. It can be a small bed in your yard or even a window box. To plan this type of garden, first find out what type of butterflies are native to where you live. Then, find out what type of plants they like. Try looking at the library or at your local garden center.

After researching local butterflies, pick a spot for your garden. Next, decide how large it will be. It can also be helpful to map out a plan for the garden. Butterflies like sunshine, so pick a sunny spot. The garden should also have some protection from the wind.

If you are planting your garden in the ground or in a raised bed, you will need to prepare the soil before putting in plants. Turn the soil to loosen it up, making sure to break up any large clumps. You can add in some gardening dirt while you do this. Now it is time to plant. Butterfly gardens need host plants for butterflies to lay eggs on and for caterpillars to eat. They also need plants that provide nectar to feed the butterflies.

With a little time and care, you can enjoy both colorful flowers and butterflies!

Lan's First Day

► It was Lan's first day in her new school in the United States. She had left China just one week earlier, so the English words her classmates spoke sounded strange to her.

The teacher explained something and then passed out papers. Lan didn't understand what was on the papers and felt confused. She could tell that her classmates were excited about what they were reading. From their expressions, she guessed it was a story.

Some of Lan's classmates gathered at the front of the room. They talked in funny voices and made interesting expressions with their faces. Slowly, Lan realized that the students were acting out a play. Lan watched closely as a girl in a red cape skipped along and then stopped to have a conversation with a tall boy. The boy smiled in a sneaky way and growled like a wolf. "That villain is up to no good," thought Lan.

In the end, the tall boy pretended to be an old woman in bed. When the girl in the cape approached him, the boy sprang out of bed and chased her. The girl outsmarted the wolf and escaped. Right then, Lan recognized the story. It was similar to a tale her mother told her about a wolf who tricked children by pretending to be a grandmother. Lan raised her hand. "Lon Po Po!" she said excitedly.

Everyone looked at Lan in surprise. "That's right, Lan," said the teacher. "This tale is similar to the Chinese story of Lon Po Po. It's called Little Red Riding Hood."

Lan repeated the words slowly, "Little Red Riding Hood." Everyone smiled when they heard how well she spoke. Lan smiled shyly back and thought, "This school is going to be fun!"

Kayla's Special Owl

► The wildlife center was only a few blocks away. Kayla and her family walked there almost every day. She had been visiting the center since she was two years old. Kayla loved looking at the animals and hiking the surrounding trails. What Kayla liked the very best of all, though, were the birds. This summer, she was finally old enough to volunteer in the center's bird rescue area. She couldn't wait to start.

Every week people brought wounded or abandoned birds to the center. They were cared for and then released back into the wild. After training, Kayla was ready for work. She helped clean cages and mixed up special food. Soon, she was able to work with the "babies." She fed these tiny birds by hand using a small paintbrush. She would dip the brush into water or the food mix and then gently put her hand over the bird and drop a small amount into its gaping mouth. Baby birds need to be fed every twenty minutes, so this was something the volunteers took turns doing all day long.

Of all the birds Kayla helped, her favorite was a small screech owl. She had been the first one to feed the tiny creature, and the two had formed a special bond. It needed constant attention. Kayla watched the owl get stronger every day as she cared for it. Soon, it could eat on its own and was moved from the inside care room to an outside cage for birds that would soon be released. The time came to let the little owl go. Kayla wasn't sad, though, because she somehow knew she would see her owl again. That night, she heard a hooting sound in the tree just outside her window. Her special owl was safe and near.

Amazing Dolphins

► Can you jump as high as a house? Could you win a race with a shark? Could you find a quarter on the playground with your eyes closed? You could do all these things if you were a dolphin!

A dolphin has a very strong tail that helps it jump high in the air. A dolphin's tail muscles are much stronger than the muscles of other mammals. A dolphin pumps its tail up and down to propel itself through the water. A dolphin can swim so fast that one flick of its tail sends the dolphin sailing into the air. Jumping out of the water is one way the dolphin gets air while swimming.

Dolphins do not always swim at top speed, but they are always ready to go fast if an enemy comes near. Dolphins often swim together in a group. They warn each other if they see a shark. When escaping a shark, dolphins can swim as fast as some speedboats!

One of the most interesting things about a dolphin's body is the way it finds things. A dolphin makes clicking sounds that bounce off objects in the sea. When the clicking sounds bounce, they make echoes that the dolphin can hear. The sound of the echoes tells the dolphin where things are. Using clicks and echoes, a dolphin could find a quarter that was a half a block away! The clicks and echoes are important because they help the dolphin find food. The sounds also help dolphins stay away from enemies.

When you see a dolphin jumping, swimming, and making noises you'll know it is not just playing. It is also using its amazing body to stay safe and healthy!

Strawberry Festival Day

► At the strawberry festival, Tessa stood between her stepmom and her dad. The parade was starting. Looking down the street, Tessa was startled by one of the floats. “That’s the biggest cake I’ve ever seen!” she exclaimed.

“I know,” her stepmom answered. “I’ve been coming to this strawberry festival since I was your age. Every year, people use the berries they grow here. They work together to make a huge strawberry shortcake. It’s always the first thing in the parade. The best part comes after the parade. That’s when everyone at the festival gets to eat it!”

When the parade was over, Tessa and her parents made their way to the line for a piece of the giant strawberry shortcake. Tessa’s mouth watered as she wondered what the cake would taste like. Tessa’s stepmom stood in line and got them each a helping of the cake. “This is delicious,” Tessa said as she ate it.

After they finished the cake, they walked around for a long time. They stopped and listened to a band in the park, and then rode a few rides. As the sun began to set, Tessa got her face painted. She smiled as she looked in the mirror at the bright red strawberry on her cheek.

Tessa took her dad’s hand, and with her other hand, she reached for her stepmom. They both held Tessa’s hands tightly and smiled at her. They looked up at the fireworks that lit the dark sky. It was a beautiful ending to a great day.

A Poetry Contest

► The class listened politely as the visiting author read some of her poems. After the poet left, their teacher, Mrs. North, told them to get out their writing notebooks. Mrs. North wanted each of them to try writing a poem. Everyone started scribbling away. Everyone, that is, but Brenden. He just stared at the blank page before him, wondering what to write. Then, the bell rang. Mrs. North told them to finish their poems for homework.

As Brenden walked home from school, an idea hit him. He would write a poem about baseball! He loved baseball. At home, he sat down at his desk and started writing. Brenden's pen could barely keep up with the words tumbling out of his head. He was even able to make his words rhyme, which the guest poet had said could be difficult. The next day, Brenden turned in his poem. He hoped his teacher would like it.

A few weeks later, Mrs. North called Brenden to her desk. She told him that a local bookstore had asked teachers to enter poems, written by their students, in the store's yearly poetry contest. Brenden's poem had been selected. Mrs. North told him what a great honor this was. His poem would be published in a book along with the other selected entries. Also, each poet was to read his or her poem that Saturday at the bookstore.

When Saturday came, Brenden went with his family to the bookstore. Finally, it was his turn to read. Everyone clapped after he read. When all the poems were recited, the store's manager gave out prizes. Brenden had won a gift card for having the best poem in his age group. He thought that now he might like poetry as much as he liked baseball!

Keeping the Planet Clean

► No matter where you are in the world, you can always do your best to keep the planet clean. Throwing away trash properly is one way to do this. Recycling is another way.

People can litter without even knowing they are doing it. Sometimes, drivers put trash in roadside bins that are overly full. Before the bin gets emptied, the trash can spill out. It is then carried all over by the wind to another place. Who knows where it might end up? Almost twenty percent of our litter ends up in rivers and oceans. This affects our drinking water as well as fish and other wildlife. If you are someplace and you are not sure that the trash will be picked up, wait to throw it away in a place where you know it will not become litter.

Even when it is thrown away properly, trash is bad for the Earth. Another way to deal with trash is to make less of it. This is where recycling can help. You can ask family and friends to buy things with packaging that can be recycled or reused. You can also try to avoid paper plates and cups and instead use washable dishes that you can use again. Using reusable grocery sacks cuts down on the number of plastic bags we use and throw away.

Sometimes you will need to use things you can't recycle or reuse. The most important thing is to try to use less of this type of item. Doing your part to help keep our planet clean helps us all.

How Worms Help Gardens

► If you want to have a beautiful garden, you should start with good dirt. Garden soil needs to be cared for just like your plants do. Worms can help you do this! Worms have been tending the soil since before the last Ice Age and can live in most places that are not too hot or cold. Most worms are only several inches long, but there are some types that can grow to be longer than a car.

There are many different worms that can help your garden. The most common is the earthworm. Earthworms eat their way through the soil, making meals out of decaying plant matter and bacteria. Their waste, called castings, helps enrich the soil. As they move through the ground, they create burrows or tunnels. This helps get more air and water into the dirt and keeps it from compacting. Plant roots can grow more easily, and water is able to stay in the soil for longer periods of time.

Another worm that can help your garden is the red wiggler. These worms don't burrow into the soil. They feed on the surface, which makes them perfect for composting. Compost is a mixture of decaying organic matter that is used to fertilize the land. It is made up of things like leaves or grass clippings. It can also include things like carrot peels and other kitchen scraps. The wigglers are added to the mix, and they eat and digest the food, leaving behind their castings. Castings are then mixed into soil before it is used for planting. These worms can devour a lot of waste. One pound of wigglers can eat eight ounces of food in a day!

All in all, worms are really amazing and are truly a gardener's friend.

A Chess Tournament

► The principal walked into the school library. She had just received a letter inviting several members of the school’s chess team to play in the state championship. Rachel could hardly believe her ears when she heard her name read as one of the people who had been chosen.

The chess club met twice a week after school in the library. Rachel’s teacher had suggested that she try it last year, because she knew that Rachel loved problem solving. What started out as just an interesting school activity was now something that she loved doing. Rachel had become one of the club’s best players. Still, she wondered if she was good enough for this tournament.

Rachel talked it over with her parents and her teacher. They all told her that she was chosen because she was a very good player. They reminded her that no matter what the outcome was, she would enjoy the challenge of each match and would learn from every game she played. When Rachel thought about it, she realized they were right. The tournament games would just be new puzzles to solve. Rachel felt more confident.

When the tournament day arrived, Rachel was ready. After a good night’s rest and a healthy breakfast, she arrived early to check in. Then, she played some practice games with her friends. Soon, it was time for her first match to begin. Over the next two days, she played six games. She won four, lost one, and had one tie. When the final points were tallied, she had won third place. She was thrilled, and in her heart, she knew she had won much more than a trophy.
