



acadience® reading k–6

Oral Reading Fluency

Student Materials

Level 5 | Progress Monitoring

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Ride the ICE

► We waited patiently in line to buy our train tickets. This was the first time we had ever ridden the train to visit my grandparents. Usually, we drive there in our car. However, my dad decided it would be a great adventure to take the train. We live in Germany where there is a very fast train called the ICE, short for the Intercity Express.

The ICE is much faster than an ordinary train. In fact, we expected to reach speeds of one hundred and seventy miles per hour. As we stood on the platform to board the train, I admired its beauty. It was sleek and painted a brilliant white with a red racing stripe down the side.

We took our seats with the other excited passengers, many of whom were German families like ours. However, there were also tourists from all over the world. Before I boarded the train, I imagined it would be like other types of public transportation, where the seats are close together and everyone feels cramped. However, I was delighted to discover that there was plenty of room, and the seats were extremely comfortable.

I watched as the conductor sauntered down the aisle between the rows of seats. I could tell by the grin on his face that he enjoyed his job. He greeted every passenger as he took each person's ticket.

When the train started to move, my dad described its history. He explained that this incredible train was one of the first trains to be built for such high speeds. Indeed, an earlier ICE held the world speed record for trains. Over the years, the design has been improved and it is still one of the faster trains in Germany. He pointed out the special rails designed to handle the stresses associated with such high speeds.

During the trip, I gazed out the window and watched the scenery flash by. It seemed like we were at our destination in the blink of an eye. As we left the station with my grandparents, I told them all about our ride on the ICE.

The Best Present Ever

► The girl stared at the big red circle she had drawn around a date on her calendar. There wasn't much time to think of a gift before Mai's grandmother came for her visit. Mai took out a sheet of paper and started listing some possibilities.

Mai reviewed her list, but she did not see anything that was unique enough for a wonderful person like her grandmother. It would be a long journey from her small village to the city. Mai wanted to celebrate her grandmother's first visit to the city by giving her an extraordinary gift.

Mai stared at the paper. She attempted to think of something more creative. All of a sudden, Mai had a brilliant inspiration. She would make homemade stationery for her. Mai found a book that described how to make paper. She started making a list of all the materials she would need. Next, she ran around the house, collecting all of the items on her list. Once she had everything she needed, she carefully followed each step of the instructions. She wanted her sheets of paper to be perfect. Mai felt excited as she waited for the homemade paper to dry.

The next morning, Father popped his head into Mai's room to see how his daughter's project was progressing. She replied that she would come show him the finished product as soon as she was done. Then Mai began the task of decorating the paper to make stationery. She used a pen and colored ink to draw things that she had seen in Grandmother's village. She drew the dense tropical forest on one sheet and colorful orchids on another. She was careful not to let the pieces of paper touch each other to prevent the ink from smearing. After the ink was dry, Mai showed the stationery to her parents. They were amazed by the beautiful drawings and thanked Mai for making her grandmother this thoughtful gift. Mai gently stacked the sheets of paper and tied a yellow silk ribbon around them. She looked forward to giving her grandmother the best present ever.

Exploring Australia

► Which country is an island and is also the smallest continent in the world? If you said Australia, you are right. Australia is a large mass of land that is found in the southern part of the world. It is located between the Indian and Pacific Oceans. Much of the land is flat and dry, yet the northern parts of the country have rain forests and swamps. The Great Barrier Reef on the coast is filled with thousands of kinds of fish and other sea creatures.

Australia is home to many animals that are not found in other places. The large array of unique animals include reptiles, birds, mammals, and insects. One unusual kind of animal found in Australia is the kangaroo. A kangaroo mother has a pouch on her body. She carries her young in the pouch until they grow big enough to leave.

Australia is known for its diverse people and culture. Native people lived on the continent for thousands of years where they gathered plants and hunted for their food. The native Australians still live there today. The explorers who came to Australia have been, for the most part, from Europe. Although the Dutch were the first to discover Australia, it was mostly the British who stayed.

People come to Australia from all over the world to enjoy its many outdoor activities. Some come to sail, surf, or dive in the ocean. Others come to tour the country on horseback or bicycle. Still others come to hike and climb in places like Ayers Rock, a huge rock that is considered to be one of the world's greatest natural wonders. In the middle of a flat plain, Ayers Rock rises over a thousand feet into the air and measures over five miles around.

Australia's large cities have many things to see including museums and concert halls. There are lovely buildings and many good places to eat, too. There is no question that there is something fun to see or do for every person who visits Australia.

Dinner Is Served

► The day was beginning to turn to dusk when Kaleb’s mother announced that dinner was served. Kaleb and his family lived in Ethiopia. Kaleb quickly washed his hands and joined the rest of his family at the wicker table. His mother placed the meal onto the table and removed the domed cover. The meal looked delectable. On the plate was a large piece of soft, flat bread covered by portions of different stews. Each family member had a personal supply of the bread, and Kaleb eagerly ripped off a piece from his supply. The bread melted in his mouth as he chewed slowly.

Kaleb tried to decide which of the stews he wanted to eat first. His mouth watered as he smelled the spicy chicken stew. He decided to sample that stew first, so he carefully tore off another section from his bread. Then, using the piece as a scoop, he picked up a glob of the stew and placed it into his mouth. This is absolutely delicious, thought Kaleb, with the sour bread complementing the tangy stew perfectly. Kaleb tore off some more pieces of his bread and sampled more of the stews. Kaleb thought the flavors of the various vegetables and spices couldn’t be better. Kaleb helped his family finish the rest of the stews until finally, the piece of bread on the bottom of the plate was uncovered.

Kaleb grinned because this was his favorite part of the meal. He and his family started ripping off portions of the large flat bread that had been on the bottom of the stew. The stews had soaked in, so the bread now tasted like all the various flavors of their meal. Kaleb smiled as he chewed on a piece that had the same spicy tang as the chicken stew. It was even more delicious, if that was at all possible.

How Water Moves Through Plants

► One of the things a plant must have to survive is water. Different kinds of plants need different amounts of water. A plant requires water to make its own food and to mature.

The process by which a plant produces its own food is called photosynthesis. During this process, the plant obtains water through its roots and it absorbs a gas called carbon dioxide through its leaves. Then, the plant uses energy from the sun to combine the gas and the water into the sugars the plant utilizes as food.

Water is essential to the plant for other reasons. It transports the nutrients from the soil throughout the various parts of the plant. In addition, it fills up the plant cells so the plant is able to stand straight.

A plant can obtain water from natural sources, such as precipitation, or from the individual who is growing the plant. The water soaks into the ground, where the roots absorb the water into the plant. From there, the water journeys into the plant's stem and is transported to the leaves through long, thin tubes.

Plants must be able to move water up from the ground. Water moves from the soil to the top of the plant using capillary action. In this process, the water is attracted to the sides of the tiny tubes that run through the plant. The tiny tubes respond like a sponge and absorb the water into the plant.

Sometimes the plant has an overabundance of water. When this occurs, it must dispose of the excess water through a process called transpiration. The surface of each leaf has tiny holes in it. The water evaporates through these holes into the atmosphere. As the water in the leaves converts into a gas, more water is pulled up from the bottom of the plant.

How Pulleys Work

► Have you ever attempted to lift something heavy and discovered that you could not manage it? Pulleys are simple machines that make lifting heavy objects easier to do. If you were a construction worker, you might use a special pulley called a crane. This machine could help you pick up a huge cement block. If you were a sailor on a sailboat, you would use a pulley to lift the heavy sails into place.

A pulley is basically a rope or a cable that is wrapped around a wheel. A pulley is used to trade distance for work. “Distance” is how far you have to pull the rope to relocate the object. “Work” is how much effort your body has to expend to get the job done.

There are two varieties of pulleys: a fixed pulley and a moveable pulley. A fixed pulley is attached to something stationary, such as a wall or a ceiling. This sort of pulley is helpful because it allows you to maneuver the object without pushing or pulling the pulley up or down. The drawback is that it takes increased effort to move the object. With a moveable pulley, the pulley actually moves when you pull the rope through the wheel. The main benefit of using this type of pulley is that you utilize much less effort to move the object. The main drawback is that you do have to pull the rope further to operate the pulley.

Several pulleys can be used simultaneously to create a machine called a block and tackle. Both fixed and moveable pulleys are used in this kind of system. The primary benefit to using a block and tackle system is that it takes much less work to lift the object. The biggest drawback is that you have to pull the rope a much longer distance.

All About Shoes

► No matter what the activity, it is often helpful to have a good pair of shoes. Shoes can come in many different styles and types. Some help athletes run faster or jump higher. Others let travelers wander for miles without getting tired. Shoes help dancers twirl on the stage and workers slog through mud. Depending on the task, the right pair of shoes can make a big difference in helping to get it done.

Shoes for athletes are often lightweight, so as not to slow down the athletes. They need to give the athletes support, traction, and protection from injuries. One running shoe designer thought a shoe with a “waffle” pattern on the bottom would give runners a lot of traction. To make this shoe, he poured rubber into a waffle iron! Shoes for some outdoor sports, such as soccer and baseball, often have rubber or metal cleats that dig into the grass to keep the players from slipping. Shoes can often make a big difference in athletes’ performance, and shoe companies are always looking for new ways to give their customers an edge when competing.

Dancers also use specialized shoes. Pointe shoes have a box in the toe that allows ballet dancers to balance on the tips of their toes. Tap dancers wear shoes with metal “taps” attached that make a loud, sharp sound when hit against a hard surface. Ballroom dancers wear shoes that are lightweight enough to move around easily, but also durable enough to take heavy pounding against the floor. They also must be made so dancers do not slip on the hardwood dance floor.

Hikers and people who work outdoors look for shoes that can withstand water and mud. These shoes can vary from simple plastic rain boots to hard, tough, work boots. Other outdoor activities call for other types of shoes. Climbing shoes help get a good grip on the rock, and wading shoes can get wet without slipping.

Inside or out, for fun or for work, the right pair of shoes can really help you out.

The Outback Adventure

► The family stared in awe at the huge reddish brown rock that rose out of the dry land. Victoria thought it looked like an island in a calm, flat sea. Instead of water, this island was surrounded by the dry land of the Australian outback. This huge rock was called Ayers Rock, and it was a famous Australian landmark.

This was the first time Victoria and her family had been camping in the outback, which was far from the Australian city where they lived. The outback is a remote part of Australia. Victoria, who was used to seeing lots of tall skyscrapers crowded together, thought the wide empty desert looked like another planet. The landscape was different from anything she had ever seen.

As Victoria walked with her family, she saw a variety of plants that she could not identify. To her delight, she also saw some unusual animals. The first creature she observed was a wild camel. She remembered reading that thousands of camels had been imported long ago. Now, they ran wild in the desert. Looking at this bizarre animal, Victoria could not imagine people riding it or using it to carry supplies. She thought it would be fascinating to see someone actually riding a camel. Better yet, she wanted to ride one herself.

In the distance, Victoria noticed some dingoes, which are a type of wild dog. When she looked down, she saw a lizard scurry in front of her. She was surprised to see that so many different things could survive in this harsh environment.

It was getting late, so Dad suggested that the family return to the camp for the night. When they got to the camp, they built a fire, and Victoria's parents cooked dinner. As the stars glittered above, the family talked about all of the amazing things they had seen. They were looking forward to another great day in the morning. As Victoria drifted off to sleep in the tent, she knew she was going to have a lot to tell her friends when she returned to the city.

Watching a Soccer Game

► The crowd at the soccer game cheered as a player on the home team kicked the ball into the goal, just out of reach of the goalie's desperate dive. Watching in the stands, Isabel and Ricardo couldn't believe how close this league championship game had become. With this last point, the home team had tied the game at two goals each. There wasn't very much time left before the whole season would be over.

Isabel and Ricardo loved soccer, but this was their first time attending a championship game at the stadium. Their family lived in Madrid, and the stadium was located nearby. They were excited that their home team was in the finals this year, and they felt lucky that their father had agreed to take them to see the game.

Their father was no stranger to soccer. When he was younger, he had been a midfielder on a professional team. He often told the children all kinds of exciting stories about the games he played. He enjoyed playing soccer with them and watching the sport on television. The whole family was excited to see a championship game in person.

The stadium was packed with people. Some of the fans were visitors from other countries. Everyone was caught up in the excitement of the game and cheered their team as loudly as they could. They watched the players battle each other furiously to move the ball up the field. Just when it looked like one team would score, the goalie blocked the ball. The teams seemed perfectly matched, and Ricardo and Isabel were on the edge of their seats, wondering who would win. It would not be much longer before one team was victorious. Isabel caught Ricardo's eye and they both grinned. No matter what happened in the end, they knew they would not forget this championship game.

Exploring Europe

► Europe is a land that is rich with history and home to people from many different cultures and countries. While it is one of the smallest continents, Europe has had a huge influence on many parts of the world.

Europe is bordered by oceans to the west and mountains to the south. In the north, the land is covered with plains and to the east lies Asia. Most of the continent is located in the temperate climate zone. This means that there are four seasons, but the winters tend to be mild and the summers seldom get too hot.

Many years ago, Europe was covered with forests. Since that time, many trees have been cut down to make room for buildings and farms. Today, there are many large cities, leaving forests to cover only a small part of the land area. People in many countries are worried about conservation, so more trees are being planted.

Today, Europe is a popular place for tourists to visit. People come from all over the world. Many Europeans also travel to different countries in the region. Many visitors travel by train, which is an easy way to get around. Some people come to view the lovely scenery. They may hike and ski in the mountains, or swim in the oceans and lakes. Other people come to see the historic buildings, which include the ruins of ancient Greece and Rome. Visitors crowd into castles and churches as well as into museums and farmers' markets. No matter why they come, visitors all enjoy their eating during their stay. The wide variety of foods available will delight any diner.

Whether you are on a guided tour or exploring on your own, Europe has something for everyone to enjoy. It is an intriguing place where the old world and the modern world are uniquely blended together.

Chinese Kites

▶ Flying kites can be a fun activity for children and adults. Even people who don't fly kites often enjoy being spectators at kite festivals. The first kites were made of wood in China over two thousand years ago. Some records indicate that early kites were big enough to carry a person aloft, like a hang glider. Other kites were used to send messages, but today most kites are decorative and made just for the fun of watching them fly.

Chinese kites come in four main categories. The first category is the centipede kite. These kites are long and narrow and have many sections, like a centipede's body. The first section is shaped to resemble the head of a dragon, and the kite's body is made of flat disks. Each segment is connected to the disk preceding it with lines of string and a segment of bamboo. These kites can reach lengths of over nine hundred feet. They curl and wave in sinewy designs when in flight.

The second category of kite has hard wings. In these kites, the frame is stiff and rigid, and the tail is loose to catch the wind and stabilize the kite. These rigid kites are often decorated to look like tigers or people.

The third category of kite has soft wings and is also often shaped like an animal. These kites are likely to be made in the form of animals with wings or fins. When you see a kite resembling a real animal soaring in the sky, it is probably one of these kites.

The last variety of kite is the flat kite. These kites have a single, flat, rigid frame covered with fabric or paper. They can be constructed in many different shapes and are often painted with beautiful designs.

Kites come in a variety of shapes and sizes, with the smallest fitting in the palm of your hand. No matter what they look like, kites have one important thing in common. They provide wonderful entertainment as they soar through the air.

The Talent Show

▶ As they waited for the bus, Nathan and Ariel decided they wanted to be in the talent show the next month. The whole way home, they discussed what talents they would like to perform. Before the friends said goodbye, they agreed to meet on Saturday to decide what their talent would be.

When Nathan arrived at Ariel's house early the next morning, the two started by brainstorming a list of their talents. They reviewed the list and tried to figure out ways that they could perform together. Ariel was an excellent musician, but Nathan was good at gymnastics. The children realized it was going to be much harder than they thought to pick a talent that they shared and enjoyed.

The friends were both good at basketball and math, but they weren't sure they could work those into the show. Eventually, Nathan suggested that they write a comedy routine and perform it. Because they were both skilled writers, and they loved acting, they agreed it was the perfect blend of their skills and talents.

The two worked eagerly on the script for their routine. Once it was perfected, they were ready to start practicing. They met at Ariel's house every day after school. Finally, they were ready to perform in front of a small audience, which would help prepare them for the big day at school. They invited both their families to watch the practice session. The performance went very smoothly, and the audience laughed frequently.

The evening of the talent show, Nathan and Ariel took a deep breath and stepped onto the stage. The friends could feel the heat from the bright lights as the curtains opened. Nathan turned to Ariel and uttered the first line, and the audience members laughed loudly. Ariel gave Nathan a wink. They both knew it was going to be a great show.

Fish Farms

► When you eat a fish dinner, you probably do not think about where the fish came from. While wild fish are still caught in oceans and rivers, some fish, such as rainbow trout, are raised on farms.

The idea of having farms for fish became popular about fifty years ago. Some fish farms are located far offshore. Fish farms that are built far from shore can be much larger than those near shore. The larger farms give the fish additional space. This reduces their level of stress and helps them to thrive.

A variety of fish can be raised for consumption. However, only certain fish can be farmed far from the coast. These farms are exposed to frequent waves and stronger currents, so the fish must be strong enough to live in these conditions. Salmon and cod are two popular types of fish grown in offshore farms.

Some of the first ocean farms were developed in Hawaii and used walls created from coral and lava rocks. Modern fish farms use special cages. These cages have a mooring system to anchor them in place, even during terrible storms.

Fish must be fed on a regular basis. The food is stored at the farm, and special machines feed the fish at specified times. Other machines are used to ensure that the fish are doing well. Automatic technology is used so that the farms can function even if no people are there.

As demand rises for fish as a source of protein, the role of fish farms will become increasingly important. Fish farmers continue to look for ways to make their fish even healthier while trying to avoid polluting the water around the farms or causing harm to the wild fish. Properly managed, fish farms can be a great way to get seafood to the people who enjoy it.

How Technology Shrinks the World

► Many years ago, communication with anyone who lived far away was time consuming and challenging. Letters and newspapers were the only way to communicate, and they had to be transported by horse, train, or boat. It might take weeks or even months for news to travel from place to place. The world was a very large place indeed. But computers and information technology caused the world to shrink, seemingly overnight.

Today, people have many ways to communicate and to learn about events around the world. People can call each other on the phone or send text messages. They can use their computer to send electronic mail. To find out about local and world news, people can go to their computer or their cell phone.

People use technology to converse with people they know and to meet new people. You could have a pen pal who lives on the other side of the world. Thanks to technology, it is almost as easy to talk with that person as it is to talk with your neighbor next door.

Many businesses rely on technology to connect their employees. They can use technology, such as computers or telephones, to hold meetings. In addition, some offices provide online learning opportunities. People in different places can attend the same training session using their computer. They are able to see and hear the same information at the same time, without having to leave their office.

Computers also give people a chance to learn new things. With a few keystrokes you can access a wealth of information on any topic. You can even take college classes and earn a degree. People can access their class whenever they have time. That way going to school is convenient, and it does not interfere with their job or family commitments.

Today, there are more ways for people to communicate with each other than ever before. Using technology is quick and easy, and it is fairly inexpensive.

Protein

► You have probably heard about protein, but you may not understand exactly what protein is. Proteins are the basic elements that your body uses to build muscles and to keep all of the parts of your body strong and healthy. The word protein comes from the Greek word meaning primary. That's because protein is everywhere. It exists in the cells of humans, animals, and plants. In fact, there is protein in every cell of your body; even your skin and muscles contain protein. The cells of your brain and lungs also contain protein, and there is even protein in your red blood cells. Your body uses protein to repair and build body tissues.

In the human body, there are twenty different kinds of protein units. These units are called the building blocks of our cells. Your body produces eleven kinds of the units, but the other nine kinds of units must come from the food you eat. Health experts stress that it is important to eat enough different protein every day. If you don't, your body will begin to use up its own supply of protein, causing your muscles and organs to become weak.

Certain foods have all the protein units needed by the body and are called complete proteins. Examples of these types of food are meats, fish, chicken, soy, dairy, and eggs. Other foods provide only some of the protein units needed by the body and are called incomplete proteins. Examples of these foods are peas, beans, and peanuts. You can combine certain incomplete proteins to form complete proteins. For example, beans and rice eaten together form a complete protein.

Eating the right amounts and types of proteins will help your body build and repair itself. The next time you enjoy a chicken sandwich or a tofu stir-fry, you can be satisfied knowing that you are doing something to help yourself stay healthy and strong.

Early Bikes

► Bicycles are so popular around the world that it may seem like they have been around forever. In fact, the bicycle is only two centuries old. The first bicycle was made of wood and was fairly clumsy. The first machine had no pedals. Instead, riders moved by using their feet to push along the ground.

It took twenty years for the first type of pedal to be added to the early bicycle. These pedals were directly attached to the front wheel, and every rotation of the pedal turned the front wheel around once. At first, these new types of bicycles were not very popular. They were still made out of wood, and only later had metal tires. When driven on rough roads, they could be very uncomfortable. These bicycles were often called “boneshakers,” but became a fad despite their problems.

You’ve probably seen pictures of the next type of bicycle. They had a very large front wheel and a much smaller rear wheel. The front wheel was made bigger because larger wheels let the bike go farther for every rotation of the pedals. It was hard for people to balance on these tall bicycles, and riders would often tip over.

Finally, bicycles were invented that could be driven by a chain and gears. Now, they could again have wheels that were the same size. This type of bicycle was more stable and easier to stop than previous ones. A few years later, rubber tires filled with air replaced the solid tires made of iron or rubber.

The basic design of the bicycle has stayed the same for the last hundred years. However, the bicycle frames have become stronger and lighter. Components such as brakes, gears, seats, and handlebars have been refined. Bicycles can go much faster than they previously could because of all of the new advancements. The most important development of all took place only recently. Today, more riders than ever are wearing safety helmets.

Owl Houses

► An owl soared gracefully far over Sierra’s head. It headed toward the cluster of tall trees in the local neighborhood park. The owl had a small, thick body, and its feathers were a grayish brown sprinkled with white spots. It had tufts of feathers sticking up on each side of its head that looked like ears. Its beak looked sharp and was shaped like a hook. As it swooped down to land on a tree limb, its powerful feet grabbed tightly to the branch.

Sierra pointed out the owl to her friend, Antonio. They admired the bird from afar without approaching it, because they didn’t want to frighten it. Sierra’s Aunt Caroline told them that this type of owl was called a screech owl. Antonio asked if the owl screeched when it talked. Aunt Caroline said, “No, it usually sounds more like hooting.” Then she explained to the children that the owl was nocturnal, which meant that it usually hunted at night and slept during the day. She described how the owl would search for holes in which to nest rather than building its own nest.

Sierra guessed that there were probably additional owls in the park and asked her aunt if they could build birdhouses to encourage the birds to stay. Antonio chimed in that he wanted to build birdhouses, too, and especially wanted to hear an owl hooting.

The children went to Aunt Caroline’s house, and she helped them construct the owl houses out of scraps of wood left over from the woodshed she had built last autumn. By the evening they had built three small birdhouses. They took a break and packed a picnic basket for dinner. Then they returned to the park and hung the wooden houses in the trees.

It was a warm spring night, and the three sat quietly eating their dinner and watching an owl tentatively enter one of the birdhouses they had built. Their faces lit up when they heard the little feathered animal start to hoot.

A Trip to an Aquarium

► Yesterday, my class took a field trip to the local aquarium. When we arrived, a volunteer met us and explained that he would take our class on a tour. Our first stop was a display of different ocean habitats. I learned that some of the habitats in our bay are kelp forests, deep reefs, and sandy seafloors.

Next, we visited the otter tank. Our view into the tank allowed us to watch the otters under and above the water. With their big eyes and tiny paws, the otters looked like cute stuffed animals. We watched them play and dive for food. While we were there, one of the workers served the otters a big treat. It was shrimp served on floating platters. The otters rolled on their backs and balanced the platters on their stomachs while they swam. The whole class laughed at this.

The next stop was the jellyfish display. The display was located in a large, dark room that looked like a strange world from a science fiction novel. Each tank had a light that shone down on the jellyfish. I watched tiny jellyfish drift like lighted clouds in one tank, and larger jellyfish circling gracefully in another.

Our last stop was the exhibit of shoreline birds. The aquarium birds came from wildlife rescue centers in the area. Visitors could stand very close to the birds. The birds didn't mind being close to people, but they didn't like to be touched. I stood carefully with my hands behind my back, watching them. Large and small birds waded in shallow pools and hid under marsh plants. I especially liked one bird that had a white head, a black chest, and stood on one leg.

Finally, it was time to return to school, and the guide told us goodbye. As we were leaving, I saw several additional rooms that we hadn't had time to explore. I hope I can visit again so I can see more animals and ocean habitats.

Welcome to Giza

► A round of clicking noises could be heard as the crowd of visitors took pictures of the formations that stood in front of them. Layla and her family were part of the throng of people. They were on summer vacation and they had traveled for hours across the dry, hot desert to arrive at this location. Today they were excited because they were taking a tour to learn about their country's early history.

The visitors followed the tour guide as he described the cluster of three pyramids. These were some of the ruins on the Giza Plateau. It is a mystery as to how these structures were constructed. Modern scientists believe that the enormous stone came from a quarry. The ancient people had to somehow drag the massive stone blocks to the place where the pyramids were to be erected. Finally, they had to get the huge blocks into place, making sure that they were lined up perfectly.

The next thing the tour group learned about was the Sphinx. The visitors thought this enormous statue looked very odd because it had the body of a lion and the head of a human. The guide explained how some people believe that the head resembled one of the ancient rulers.

Layla and her family had lived in Egypt their whole lives, but this was the first time they had been to this extraordinary place. They used their minds to picture what life was like long ago. Layla pondered the amount of labor and time it would take to build these structures. They all wondered why people would work so hard to create them. It was amazing that the structures were still standing after thousands of years.

Layla and her family felt proud that this was a part of their heritage. When they arrived home, they would create a journal with pictures of their trip. Layla could not wait to go back to school and share her family's journal with her classmates and teachers.

Being a Bird Keeper

► Are you considering having a pet bird? If so, there is some information you should know. As with other pets, pet birds need consistent care and attention. You'll need to make sure your bird has the right food, water, and exercise. In addition to providing your bird with nourishment, you are also responsible for entertaining your new family member.

The first things you'll need to obtain for your bird are a cage and a cage cover. You will also need feeding equipment and material such as newspaper clippings and wood shavings to use as cage liners. Put the cage in a room that has no drafts or loud noises and is away from bright sunlight.

As soon as possible, have your bird examined by a veterinarian to determine if it's healthy. For the first couple of days, allow your bird to become accustomed to its new home. Observe your bird but don't disturb it. By the third day, you can begin to feed your bird a piece of fresh food, such as an apple slice, through the cage bars. Starting the fourth or fifth day, gently and tenderly handle the bird several times a day, holding it in your cupped hands firmly, but without squeezing it.

After two weeks, the bird may feel comfortable enough to perch on your finger. You can now allow the bird to fly freely around the room for at least twenty minutes each day. Ensure that there are no other pets nearby. Also make certain that all doors and windows in the room are closed.

Every day, tidy your bird's cage and replenish its water supply. Once a week, place your bird in a small plastic cage with a mesh lid so that you can thoroughly clean out its regular cage.

Examine your bird daily. Make sure its eyes are bright and shiny and its wings are undamaged. Check its tail feathers and chest feathers to make sure they look healthy. You'll soon find that your newest pet has become a significant member of your family.
