



acadience® reading 7–8

Oral Reading

Student Materials

Grade 7 | Benchmark 1

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A Roaring Surprise

► My family is an energetic group that doesn't like to waste time, especially while on vacation. Upon arriving at Yellowstone National Park, Dad learned that our first guided hike was not until the following morning. We decided to spend the afternoon exploring on our own.

My older sister looked at her guidebook, and she discovered a number of easy hikes that began near our lodge. We stuffed snacks, water, and a trail map in a small backpack. Then, after changing into hiking boots, we set off for an afternoon's adventure.

The well-marked trails pointed toward different places of interest and we decided to hike toward Lone Star Geyser. The map indicated that the trail was an easy 5-mile roundtrip hike. Fortunately, the trail was level because the scenery was so spectacular we had a hard time keeping our eyes on the path.

Even better was the discovery that the trail wound alongside the breathtaking Firehole River. This gorgeous river varied from still, turquoise pools to churning, white rapids. Picturesque scenery, the sounds of the flowing water, and the pungent aroma of pine trees engaged our senses.

As we neared the middle of our hike, a quiet rumbling turned into a startling roar. I watched, transfixed, as a plume of steam shot 50 feet into the air. We had found the Lone Star Geyser. The mouth of the geyser was a 12-foot cone that looked like a white-streaked chimney growing out of the rock and it was a sight to behold. At the site, the parks service had provided a logbook for visitors to record the eruptions. We logged in what we had seen so that others arriving that day would be able to estimate when the geyser would erupt again.

We knew that we had a long hike ahead of us and we also knew that it would be 3 hours before the geyser erupted again. So we didn't regret turning away and heading back to the lodge. Of course, we had many similar adventures to look forward to during the next week as we continued exploring the majestic beauty of Yellowstone National Park.

Ocean Motion

► Many individuals enjoy building sandcastles while visiting the beach. Unfortunately, when the ocean water or tide comes rushing onto shore, the sandcastles are eventually eroded, or washed away. The tide that rushes in to wash away sandcastles is called high tide, and the smooth, wet beach that provides a location for excellent sandcastle building is low tide. This system of high and low tides occurs twice a day and is caused by gravitational pull. Gravitational pull is the force that attracts objects toward each other. The sun and moon's gravitational pull and the earth's rotational force perpetuate, or keep in motion, this cycle of tides. Interestingly enough, although the sun is much larger than the moon, tides are more influenced by the moon's cycle because it is closer.

While the earth's gravity keeps the moon orbiting the earth, the moon's gravity tugs on the surface of the earth and causes the areas closest to the moon to gravitate in that direction. This gravitational pull is most noticeable in the movement of ocean water and is strongest at the point where the earth is closest. As the moon exerts its gravitational force, the ocean's water is pulled towards the moon. This causes the water to bulge outward from the earth. On the opposite side of the earth, the moon's pull is the weakest, but the rotational, or spinning force, of the earth acts like a centrifuge, or fast-spinning machine. This powerful spin causes a bulge of ocean water on the other side of the earth. These bulges on both sides of the earth are called high tides. On the sides of the earth in between these water bulges there is a reduced amount of water, or low tides.

The interval between high tide and low tide is approximately 6 hours. Therefore, most days have two changes of high tide and two changes of low tide to complete a tidal cycle. Specifically, the whole cycle takes 24 hours and 50 minutes to complete. The next time you want to build a sandcastle, investigate the timetable for the tidal cycle nearest you. This way you can construct your castle when the tide begins to recede. If you time it correctly, your masterpiece will remain intact for nearly 12 hours.

The Crusades and Their Impact

► During the Middle Ages, a series of holy wars known as the Crusades took place in the Middle East. Armies of Christians from Europe and armies of Muslims from the Turkish Empire fought over control of the Holy Land. Two hundred years later, the dispute ended. The political, social, and economic impact it had lasted long past the middle ages, and its effects, felt through the world, were immense.

In 1095, the Pope called on able men and soldiers from Christian countries to go to war. The Pope expected noblemen and knights to answer his call, and thousands did, and over the centuries, thousands more went. Going to war was costly and the Church could not pay for it. Those who heeded the call raised armies and bought equipment, all of which had to be moved across thousands of miles. Many high-ranking officers sold land and property in order to pay their soldiers and purchase equipment. Some officers did not have money and borrowed from merchants. If a debt could not be paid back, the merchant took the officer's property. Some men were gone for years, some stayed in the Holy Land, and many more died. Untold merchants became rich and powerful because of the property they gained.

Peasants joined the fight, too, including men, women, and even children. Like the knights and noblemen, some fought out of piety, or their devotion to God. Others joined the ranks in order to escape the misery of their living situations. No matter their rank, the fighting men were exposed to new ideas and new ways of seeing the world. They saw different lands, great cities, and highly developed cultures. They brought back many ideas from the East, such as stone construction, which they used to build castles and churches.

Some soldiers began trading with the Middle Eastern countries and were introduced to new products like spices, citrus fruits, and cane sugar. Raw and finished goods were brought into Europe through the port cities of Italy, which became important economic trade centers. Western Europe was no longer culturally isolated as its people wanted to gain more knowledge about the world, which led to exploration and the eventual travels of well-known early explorers. Millions of soldiers lost their lives, yet the Crusades were not a success. The Christians held the holy city of Jerusalem for fewer than 100 years.
