



acadience® reading 7–8

Oral Reading

Student Materials

Grade 7 | Progress Monitoring 3

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Alaska Surprise

▶ Although I grew up in Alaska, I'd never been much farther away from home than to Anchorage with Grandpa for an occasional movie. However, last summer my Alaskan adventures took a decisive turn when a local radio station announced that, for the next month, they would offer daily roundtrip railroad tickets to promote a new cross-state tour. My Grandpa decided that every day he would strive to be the ninth caller and win us two tickets. Imagine my surprise when one day he was the ninth caller. I did not even try to hide my excitement when Grandpa produced those two train tickets and listed the parks and sights we would see.

The day of our trip arrived, and we settled into our seats on the train. Our journey began in Anchorage and would finish about 350 miles later, in Fairbanks. As the train pulled away from the station, I opened the travel brochure that the train company provided.

It wasn't long, however, before the brochure lay forgotten beside me. The buildings and streets of Anchorage disappeared and were replaced by thick forests and fields of waving grasses and wildflowers. I gazed dreamily out the window as farms and villages, rivers and lakes glided past us in a blur of blue, gold, and green. As we neared Talkeetna, Grandpa excitedly pointed out the spectacular peaks of Denali, North America's highest mountain. It was truly a breathtaking and gorgeous view.

The route wound northward as we began following a ribbon of river unspooling across the landscape. Grandpa told me to be on the lookout for beaver lodges, and although I didn't spot any, I did see a startled bear scurry away from the riverbank and disappear into the forest!

We began climbing higher into the towering mountains, the train hugging the rocky slopes. It made me feel a little dizzy to look down into the valley yawning underneath us. Even more exciting was crossing Hurricane Gulch, where a 914 foot bridge carried us across the deep green valley. My stomach lurched as I looked straight down to Hurricane Creek, 296 feet below us. Late that night, the train pulled into Fairbanks. I could hardly sleep in anticipation of the return trip the next day. The trip back to Anchorage was just as exciting. It was a summer I will never forget as long as I live.

Monarch Marathon

▶ Like some types of birds, Monarch butterflies migrate, or travel, south for the winter. Monarchs, fragile creatures that weigh less than half an ounce, travel up to 2,800 miles between the beginning and end of their migration. What is even more amazing is that the Monarchs that finish the journey may be the great-great-great-grandchildren of the ones that began it.

Monarchs begin their long flight in Canada and northern parts of the United States, where the winter months are too harsh for them to survive. As autumn nears, a special generation of Monarchs hatches. These insects may live seven months or more instead of the few weeks that Monarchs usually live. It is this long-lived generation that makes the trip south to warmer climates. The butterflies travel up to 50 miles each day, stopping only to feed on nectar from flowers to restore their energy. Scientists believe the insects are guided by the movement of the sun, using a kind of internal compass in their antennae to navigate even on cloudy days. By October or November, the Monarchs arrive at their wintering sites along the California coast and the mountains of Mexico.

When they reach their destination, the Monarchs go into hibernation, a period of low activity when animals rest and store energy for the coming spring. The butterflies stay warm by grouping together, often by the millions, on pine, eucalyptus, and fir trees. In late February when temperatures rise, the butterflies that have survived mate and begin their return trip. The long-lived generation of Monarchs flies part of the way back north before stopping to lay eggs and finally dying.

In March and April, a new generation of Monarchs is born and continues the journey north. However, this first generation lives only a few weeks; they stop to lay eggs before dying. The second generation of Monarchs is born in May and June and continues the migration north. A third generation is born in July and August, and these butterflies finally reach their northern home. As fall returns, a new long-lived generation is born that will fly south beginning the next cycle of migration.

Monarchs fly thousands of miles on their journey. Other animals cover long distances, too, but Monarchs migrate over four generations. The sun and inherited patterns, not parents, guide each new generation along its part of the path.

British Colonization of India

► The British East India Company was set up in 1600 to encourage and manage trade in, and with, India. Around the same time, the ruling empire in India had lost strength and the East India Company saw a chance to grab more power in India. Over many decades, the Company, and then the British government, became involved in ruling India's people and trade.

The British were not the only ones with an interest in India. The French also wanted to control trade in the region. Battles between the French and British took place during the early 1700s. That ended in 1757 when a British soldier named Robert Clive led his troops to victory over France. This permitted the East India Company to become a great power in India. The land under the Company's control grew and grew so that by the middle of the 1800s, the Company ruled the majority of India.

The Company ruled in India with little dependence on, or help from, the British government. The Company had its own army, with British officers leading Indian soldiers known as sepoy, who in 1857, revolted against the British. The widespread revolt was not well organized and ended in 1858. But, it was enough to weaken the control of the Company in India. The British Crown took control of India and put a British viceroy, or ruler, in control. In 1876, Queen Victoria of England was named Empress of India.

British rule in India brought prosperity, or wealth, but most of the wealth flowed to the British. India had many kinds of raw materials that England needed for its factories. India also had a large number of people who could buy the goods made by these factories. But the British set limits on trade and how much factories in India could make, which kept owners from making profits. Also, Indian companies were not allowed to sell products like the goods brought in by the British. As a result, many local companies went out of business.

India did benefit in some ways from British rule in that new railroads, roads, dams, bridges, and schools were built and telephone lines were installed. Yet, the level of poverty stayed high, and Indians began to resent British rule more and more. By the end of the 1800s, talk of Indian independence was spreading and the age of British rule was coming to a close.
