



acadience® reading 7–8

Oral Reading

Student Materials

Grade 7 | Progress Monitoring 5

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Be the Change

► Staring into the mirror, Jack rehearsed his International Day of Peace speech. He had been asked by Principal McMillan to give the speech at the student assembly on Friday. His speech included information about when and how the United Nations established the day, how various countries and cultures celebrated the day, and what Wilcock Middle School would do in celebration this year.

Jack was in the middle of his speech when his younger sister, Amelia, barged into the room, riffled through his stuff and located her dictionary. “You’re welcome,” Amelia sneered sarcastically. Jack grunted and scowled, losing his place in the speech.

Jack felt anger rise in him as if he were a thermometer on a broiling hot day. He wanted to rush after Amelia to provoke an argument. He stopped himself, realizing that if he had honored his promise to return the dictionary after he had finished with it, she wouldn’t be so hostile. Amelia could have been more diplomatic, it’s true, but he didn’t have to engage. Peace begins at home, Jack reminded himself as he scanned back over his speech. That was the emphasis of his speech anyway.

Jack read through the entire speech again. Not only did it include the history of International Day of Peace and how various countries celebrated, it also included a challenge to the students. Jack, at one time or another, had witnessed war at most of his friends’ homes: wars between children and parents, between siblings, and even between parents. The anger could be exhausting, and he just didn’t understand why everyone couldn’t try to be nicer. So when Principal McMillan encouraged him to make the day relevant to students, he decided to challenge students to be the change they wanted in their own life.

Jack knocked at his sister’s door and she grunted that he could enter. He sucked in his pride and apologized for not returning the dictionary and then asked if she would listen to his speech and let him know what she thought.

Amelia hugged Jack as he finished his speech, whispering that she would try harder as well and thanked him. Jack was still nervous about standing up in front of everyone, but he hoped it would go as well as it just had in practice.

Measuring Hurricanes

► In the warm waters of the Atlantic Ocean, the Caribbean Sea, and the Gulf of Mexico, large storms can group together to form a large, spinning super-storm. When winds in such a storm reach more than 74 miles per hour (mph), the storm is called a hurricane. Hurricanes produce very high winds and heavy rain. When they make landfall, they can produce land-based spinning storms called tornadoes, as well as extensive flooding which can destroy property and endanger lives. While hurricanes cannot be controlled, preparing for them before they make landfall can help to save lives and protect property.

When the strength of an approaching hurricane is known, people can prepare for the worst. In 1971, Herbert Saffir and Bob Simpson, wind engineers from the National Hurricane Center, created the Saffir-Simpson Hurricane Wind Scale. This scale rates five different categories of hurricane according to sustainable wind speeds. Sustainable wind speeds are winds that remain at a similar speed over a length of time. The higher the sustainable wind speed, the more destructive the hurricane can be. In Category 1, the wind speeds range from 74 to 95 mph and cause the least amount of damage. Even this lowest category of storm can cause large tree branches to snap and buildings to be damaged. As the winds increase, more severe damage from heavy rain and flying objects results. The winds from a Category 2 storm range from 96 to 110 mph, while in a Category 3 storm, winds range from 111 to 130 mph. In a Category 4 storm, winds range from 131 to 155 mph.

The most dangerous storm is a Category 5, with winds greater than 155 miles per hour. Even if they are inside buildings, many people and animals can get injured or killed. Homes can be totally ruined by wind and flooding. The Saffir-Simpson Hurricane Wind Scale is used to measure the storms as they develop and reach landfall and finally weaken and lose sustainable wind speeds. As the number on the wind scale rises, so do the dangers. Using the scale, along with models that predict the direction of the storm, meteorologists forecast the storm's path and intensity. This gives people and towns in the storm's path time to prepare and stay safe.

A Nation's Fate

► Manifest Destiny was a belief that came about in the 1840s that said the United States was fated to push its boundaries west across North America. This idea drove the nation to acquire Oregon, Texas, New Mexico, and California, as well as other territories. It also started a war with Mexico and a dispute with Great Britain over Oregon.

During this time, Manifest Destiny resulted in bold and rapid growth of the United States that not all Americans liked. Some people were against any growth at all, while others wanted the country to expand slowly. Many believed that the territories would sooner or later become states. Some Americans feared that rapid growth would weaken the cohesiveness of the country.

Several different reasons were behind the desire for growth. Many people were of the viewpoint that the United States must grow in order to survive. This thinking was partly based on Thomas Jefferson's opinion that a nation needed a wealth of land in order to secure its economic future. Some people in the South agreed with this. They saw this idea as a chance to increase land holdings and make money using slaves to work the land. This point of view caused heated debates and disagreements about the morality of slavery that would eventually lead to civil war.

For those who wanted growth, another reason to expand was to provide land for the many people coming to the United States from other countries. Expanding the United States meant that more land would be available to support these new groups. In addition, new ways to travel like the steamboat and railway systems, as well as new ways to communicate long distance, became available. Some believed that new advances such as these made it possible for the country to become vast but united.

Another important argument for gaining land in the West was to open opportunities for trade with Asia and other parts of the world. Related to this was the desire to keep Great Britain from controlling Pacific ports.

Not everyone could agree on the best direction for the United States. The people who disagreed with Manifest Destiny were not able to slow the growth. The country grew by more than 60 percent in just a few years, and by the 1850s, the United States stretched from "sea to shining sea."
