



acadience® reading 7–8

Oral Reading

Student Materials

Grade 8 | Progress Monitoring 5

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Shelter from a Storm

► Clouds scudded in as if someone had stretched a metallic gray comforter across the sky, and flakes of snow drifted down like feathers from the comforter. Snowflakes settled on Ryan's eyelashes, blurring his vision every time he blinked. Within minutes of the storm starting, he began experiencing full-fledged blizzard conditions. Reversing course and attempting not to panic, Ryan started back down the trail toward his parked truck. He estimated that he was approximately 4 miles from the trailhead and his truck, but was he traveling in the right direction?

The blizzard had created whiteout conditions; the horizon had vanished, and the sun had disappeared, too, making it difficult to see anything. Just slide one foot in front of the other, he coached himself; keep progressing. Why hadn't he checked the weather forecast before driving out to Turquoise Valley Lake on a sudden whim? Summer or winter, autumn or spring, you always check the weather forecast before going hiking.

As he trudged along, Ryan reviewed everything he could remember about getting caught in a blizzard. Don't eat snow because it will decrease your body temperature; melt snow and then drink it. Move your hands and feet to keep hypothermia from setting in; hypothermia, potentially fatal, occurs when body temperature falls below 95 degrees Fahrenheit. Ryan knew what he shouldn't do, but what actions should he take? He racked his brain for positive actions, but he felt groggy and slow, as though his brain were freezing.

An idea seeped into Ryan's head to look for shelter to avoid the cutting winds, but whiteout conditions prevented him from seeing anything. Turquoise Lake was in a valley; birches and pines surrounded him and Ryan tripped and fell to his knees. He told himself to get up, but his limbs refused to cooperate; the wind-driven snow swirling around made him feel peaceful.

An idea suddenly punched Ryan alert, and he began to dig frantically to excavate a snow cave to crawl into. That would shelter him from the cold and the wind until the blizzard wore itself out.

The blizzard raged on for what seemed like an eternity, but gradually, the weather cleared, and peering out of his cave, Ryan began to distinguish the colors and shapes of landmarks. He was chilled to the bone, but he was safe; he knew exactly where he was.

Foehn Winds

► Weather in mountainous regions can be unpredictable because mountains restrict the ready movement of air, thus creating wind. Wind occurs when air travels from areas of high pressure to areas of low pressure in the atmosphere. Particularly tall mountains create differences in air pressure and, therefore, wind. When a strong, high-pressure system forms on one side of a mountain range and a corresponding low-pressure system forms on the other side, a foehn wind develops. A foehn wind is any warm, dry, strong wind that blows on the leeward, or downwind, side of a mountain. Because these pressure patterns are common in cooler months, foehn winds often occur from September through April in the Northern Hemisphere. The German term “foehn” was originally applied to winds that were first studied and observed in the European Alps. However, similar winds occur in mountainous regions all around the world.

A foehn wind develops when warm, moist air encounters the windward slope of a mountain. The windward slope of a mountain is the side facing the direction from which the warm, moist wind is blowing. As the air ascends the slope, the air expands and cools. Eventually, the water vapor, or moisture in the air, condenses and turns into rain or snow precipitation. As it reaches the mountaintop, the air has lost most of its water vapor, so it is cold and dry. The low pressure on the downwind side that was shielded from the initial winds draws the air downward. As the air descends, it compresses and becomes warmer. The speed of the air increases, resulting in a hot and dry wind, sometimes at gale-force velocity. The air temperature can rise by several degrees in a matter of minutes.

While warmer temperatures in the winter might seem desirable, there can be negative effects. Foehn winds are called “snow eaters” because the hot, dry winds can sublimate snow, causing it to go from a solid to a gas, or from snow to water vapor, without passing through the liquid water phase. Sometimes the warmer temperatures cause flooding from rapidly melting snow, and when temperatures cool again the water can refreeze. In communities where foehn winds are common, drought conditions combined with high wind speeds can create wildfire hazards.

While foehn winds may bring warm, pleasant weather, they need to be monitored and predicted so people can plan for the possible adverse effects.

Breaking Free

► India gained its independence in 1947, after almost 200 years of British control. Yet, the country's road toward decolonization, or the process of breaking free from the rule of another country, began well before 1947. Years before, led by Mohandas Gandhi, the people of India had come together for peaceful protests and strikes against British rule. By 1942, the British agreed to help prepare India to govern itself.

In the years after World War II, India inched closer to becoming a free nation. The war had sapped England's economy, and it could no longer afford to manage its colonies well. Also hastening the break from Britain was the fact that more and more Indians were in favor of self-rule.

Becoming a free nation was no easy task, but two things made the process go more smoothly than it might have otherwise gone. The Indian people were allowed to participate in the government during the years under British control. Also, a few privileged Indians had attended some of England's best schools and had come back home to help shape the new nation.

Jawaharlal Nehru became India's prime minister during the country's break from Britain. Under his leadership, the Indians wrote a constitution that, among other things, gave more equal rights to its people. He helped set up a democratic government that is still in effect. Nehru hoped that the nation would use science and technology to solve its problems, especially the problem of poverty.

These were very high hopes for a place with so many religions, political groups, languages, nationalities, and identities. In such a place, there are sure to be clashes; in India there were many. In the middle of India's change to a free nation, fighting between Hindus and Muslims grew more heated and there seemed to be no point of consensus. The problem was solved by splitting India into two states: Pakistan and India. Hard feelings remained, though, and many died in the conflict.

Since breaking ties with Britain, India still struggles with a couple of key issues: how it sees itself in the world and the persistent problem of poverty. Its struggles have offered key lessons to the rest of the world. India is not yet the nation that its early leaders dreamed of, but it continues to evolve and improve after hundreds of years of colonialism.
