



Grade 2

Fluency Packet | Teacher Guide

Grade 2

Skills

Fluency Packet

Teacher Guide

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Fluency Packet

Research demonstrates that fluency practice produces gains in reading comprehension. The program’s fluency instruction includes modeled reading, assisted reading (such as choral or paired reading), independent reading, along with breadth of text encounters and extended deep reading of selected texts. This multi-faceted approach ensures that students receive low-stakes practice along with engaging, authentic fluency tasks, such as performances.

This fluency packet was created to accompany the program’s Grade 2 materials. It consists of poetry, fiction, and nonfiction, as well as Reader’s Theater selections. These additional text selections provide opportunities for students to practice reading with fluency and prosody (expression). The selections are grouped by unit to relate to the topics of each Grade 2 Skills unit reader. The selections within a given unit can be used in any order, though they are arranged in this packet according to word count, starting with the shortest selections.

The fluency routine outlined below provides a structured approach that equips students to read passages accurately and with expression, including phrasing and intonation. As they gain accuracy and confidence, they will naturally begin to read more quickly. However, it’s important not to pressure students to race through the text or read with undue speed. In addition, it is not a memorization drill—students should read the text as they perform even if they have memorized the words. The goal is to read smoothly, accurately, and with prosody.

At the beginning of the week, you should make sufficient copies of the week’s selection for each student. You should model reading the selection aloud to all students. When time allows, have students spend time practicing reading the passages aloud each day and encourage additional practice at home. During classroom practice, you should circulate around the room and provide students with corrective feedback. The expectation for all students should be that they are prepared to read the selection fluently and with prosody by Friday.

The five-day fluency performance routine below includes the following components:

Day 1: Introduce the text and read it aloud several times, modeling different tones or inflections, phrasing, and expression, and encouraging students to reflect on each one. For example, if you read in a monotone, students should realize that this is not a stellar reading; they may suggest better approaches, such as reading in a happy tone, an excited tone, a nervous tone, or other tone

appropriate to the selected text. Discuss with students that text features, such as punctuation, and sentence structure can help them know when to read text with phrasing, intonation, and expression (prosody). After modeling, invite students to read aloud sample sentences from the text.

Students are encouraged to start reading the target text aloud at home. They may use reading logs to record each session, if desired.

Day 2: Students practice reading the text chorally, with varying inflection or tone, phrasing, intonation, expression, or other elements.

Day 3: Students practice both choral and paired readings, continuing to develop tone, inflection, phrasing, intonation, and expression. Listen to students practice reading and provide corrective feedback where necessary.

Day 4: Students continue practicing paired readings in preparation for the following day’s performance. Circulate around the room and provide paired students with corrective feedback where necessary.

Day 5: Student pairs perform their reading.

Differentiation Options: Students who are ready for a challenge may be prepared to perform the text independently, while students who require additional support may read the text chorally in groups rather than pairs.

If you choose to evaluate students’ performances, you may use the Fluency Passage Performance Rubric to evaluate each performance.

| Fluency Passage Performance Rubric | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| | Advanced | Proficient | Basic |
| Accuracy | Reading contains no errors in pronunciation. | Reading contains minimal errors in pronunciation. | Reading contains numerous errors in pronunciation. |
| Rate | Reading is conversationally paced or paced to show appropriate emphasis and inflection. | Reading is uneven, with interspersed periods of speed and sluggishness. | Reading is labored and slow. |
| Expression (Prosody) | Expression is strong throughout the reading. While the tone and volume may vary, they do so in keeping with the student’s understanding of the piece. | Reading generally sounds like everyday speech, with possible lapses into expressionless speech. | Words are pronounced, but they are not spoken in a manner that indicates an understanding of their meaning. |

These selections may also be used to assess students' performance in fluency and expression (prosody). We recommend asking a student to read a passage aloud for a set amount of time, such as one minute. During that time, the student will read from their copy, while you use an additional copy of the text to mark any words the student misses during the allotted time and to record student's use of expression (prosody), including phrasing and intonation. At the conclusion of the allotted time, calculate the words read correctly to get an estimate of the student's fluency rate. Provide the student with feedback and work together to set achievable goals to support each student in reading smoothly, accurately, and with prosody. This activity may be repeated throughout the year with different texts in order to measure student progress in fluency.

Dear Family Member,

Throughout Grade 2, your student will be bringing home short text selections on a weekly basis to practice reading. Your student should read the selection aloud each night to help them become increasingly fluent and able to read without hesitation. We encourage you or another family member to read the selection aloud first to model reading with fluency and expression.

At the end of each week, your student may be called upon to practice reading the selection aloud in class.

Repeated readings of text help build reading fluency, which includes automatic word recognition, expression, accuracy, and speed. The goal of using these short text selections is to help your student continue to strengthen their reading skills.

1. **“Did You Know?”**

| | |
|---|----|
| Big cats, little cats, lions or kittens, they are a lot alike! | 12 |
| Cats are expert hunters! They are able to leap, run, crouch, | 23 |
| or stay perfectly still. Cats will stalk and then spring on their | 35 |
| prey. Sharp claws and sharp teeth help them, too. Cats also | 46 |
| see very well at night and they have keen hearing which helps | 58 |
| them when they hunt. Cats make wonderful pets, too. You will | 69 |
| see them use some of their hunting skills when they play with | 81 |
| you! | 82 |

Word Count: 82 words

2. **“Your Sense of Smell”**

| | |
|---|----|
| Sniff! Sniff! Your sense of smell tells your brain many | 10 |
| different things! When you smell something, your brain lets you | 20 |
| know if you smell something sweet, like candy, or stinky like a | 32 |
| skunk. Did you know that your sense of smell helps you taste | 44 |
| your food? It does! While your sense of taste tells you if your | 57 |
| food is sweet, sour, bitter or salty, your sense of smell is very | 70 |
| busy, too. It adds to the flavor in your mouth by helping you | 83 |
| smell food at the same time you taste it! | 92 |

Word Count: 92 words

3. "Zippytoes"

| | |
|---|----|
| Whish! Whiz! A flash of fur just zipped by! | 9 |
| Was it a red fox, speedy and sly? | 17 |
| A rabbit, hip-hopping to and fro? | 24 |
| A bobcat or lion? Friend or foe? | 31 |
| Click, zip, pop! Click, zip, thwack! Click, swish, smack! | 40 |
| Maybe a panther, hunting a snack? | 46 |
| It made so much noise while on the chase, | 55 |
| And now it is gone, without a trace! | 63 |
| Whish! Whiz! A flash of fur just zipped past! | 72 |
| It was big and soft, and so, so fast... | 81 |
| Oh, that was easy! It was a snap! | 89 |
| Just my cat chasing a bottle cap! | 95 |

Word Count: 95 words

4. **“Paw Prints”**

Jens asked for a pet for his birthday but there was no pet 13
when his big day came. His sister gave him a box tied with a 27
ribbon. Jens opened the box and found a note. It said, “I will 40
take you to the animal shelter to select a pet. Happy Birthday!” 52

They drove to the shelter. Jens looked at all of the cats and 65
kittens and held two of them. As he put the tan and white cat 79
back in its bed, Jens saw paw prints on his shirt. “This is the 93
pet for me!” he said. 98

Word Count: 98 words

5. “The Bandit”

Three characters: Grandpa, Granny, and Tim

Tim: Quick! Quick! A bandit has been in the hen house! 10

Grandpa: Where? When? Why? Which hen house? What did the bandit take? How do you know? 18
25

(Clucking noises made by all readers)

Let me take a close look. Bad news. Three chickens are gone and all of the eggs are gone! We’ve been robbed. 37
47

Tim: Could it be a fox bandit? Could it be an owl bandit? 59

Granny: What’s going on out here? You two are making more noise than the chickens. 69
73

Tim: Oh, Granny! Three chickens are gone and all of the eggs are gone! 84
86

Granny: Well, well, well. I think I got up before you did! So I know the answer! 99
102

Tim: Please tell us, we are very curious! 109

Granny: I gathered all of the eggs and gave three chickens to my brother this morning. 120
124

(Everyone laughs)

Granny: Just call me The Granny Bandit! 130

(Everyone smiles and laughs)

Word Count: 130 words

6. “What Are Fables?”

| | |
|---|-----|
| The fables lots of people know were said to be told by a | 13 |
| man named Aesop (“ee-sop”). He lived in Greece long, long | 22 |
| ago. Aesop wanted people to treat each other nicely. He knew | 33 |
| that people do not like to be told when they are not nice. | 46 |
| So, he wrote many of his stories about animals. His animal | 57 |
| characters did all of the things people do that can make | 68 |
| trouble! They told fibs and cheated, and they were lazy. At the | 80 |
| end of each story, Aesop gave a moral, or lesson, for the story | 93 |
| so people might think of ways to be nicer. | 102 |

Word Count: 102 words

7. “Mr. Finney’s Turnip”

by Henry Wadsworth Longfellow

| | |
|-----------------------------------|-----|
| Mr. Finney had a turnip | 5 |
| And it grew, and it grew, | 11 |
| And it grew behind the barn, | 17 |
| And the turnip did no harm. | 23 |
| And it grew, and it grew, | 29 |
| Till it could grow no taller; | 35 |
| Then Mr. Finney took it up | 41 |
| And put it in the cellar. | 47 |
| There it lay, there it lay, | 53 |
| Till it began to rot; | 58 |
| When his daughter Susie washed it | 64 |
| And put it in the pot. | 70 |
| Then she boiled it and boiled it, | 77 |
| As long as she was able; | 83 |
| Then his daughter Susie took it | 89 |
| And put it on the table. | 95 |
| Mr. Finney and his wife | 100 |
| Both sat down to sup; | 105 |
| And they ate, and they ate, | 111 |
| Until they ate the turnip up. | 117 |

Word Count: 117 words

8. “Rabbits and Hares”

| | |
|---|-----|
| You may have heard the story about the tortoise and the hare. Your first question may have been, “What is a hare?” | 11 |
| Well, a hare is like a rabbit and it is not like a rabbit! | 22 |
| Let’s compare. | 36 |
| Hares are bigger, faster, and stronger than rabbits. They have longer ears, feet, and legs. When a hare feels that danger is near, it will run a long, long way to escape. Hares like to live alone in an underground burrow. | 38 |
| Rabbits are a bit smaller from head to toe than hares. When a rabbit feels that danger is near it will quickly hop to a hiding place. Rabbits like to live together in nests above ground. | 47 |
| Rabbits and hares do look very much alike. But they are different, too! | 59 |
| | 74 |
| | 79 |
| | 90 |
| | 103 |
| | 114 |
| | 115 |
| | 126 |
| | 128 |

Word Count: 128 words

9. “Kate, the Author!”

Two characters: Nan and Gran

Eight year old Kate and her grandmother Nan are leaving a book store, after just having met an author. They are walking to the car.

Kate: Nan, I’d like to write a book! 7

Nan: That is a fantastic idea! I will help you, if you need help. 20

May I do the art for your book? 28

Kate: Oh, yes! Thank you. 32

Kate and Nan arrive at home. Kate gets her writing supplies and sits down at the table. She has been working for 20 minutes.

Nan: How is your book coming along? 38

Kate: I wrote down all of the cool things I did at your house 51

this summer. Once I got started, it went fast! 60

Nan: Sometimes when you write, you have to write things two 70

or three times to get the best words and the best word order. 83

Kate: Yes, at school it is called Plan-Draft-Edit-Write. It is a big 94

help! 95

Nan: What sort of book are you writing? 102

Kate: This is a book about my adventures out west while I was 114

visiting you! 116

Nan: I am very happy that you want to tell other children about 128

your summer with me here in the West. 136

Three weeks later, back at her own home, Kate's dad takes her to the printer's office.

Printer: This book is very well written. Children out there will like this book! 146
149

Kate: Thank you. 151

Printer: I would like to print your book, if that is alright with you. 163
164

Kate: YIPPEE!! 165

Word Count: 165 words

10. **“The Blind Men and the Elephant”**

Once there were six blind men who wanted to know what an elephant was. 11
14

The first blind man stretched his hands and felt the elephant’s side. “I can feel it, “the man said. “The elephant is like a big sturdy wall.” 24
36
41

The second man was standing near the elephant’s head. He put his hand on the long, sharp tusk. “A wall?” he said. “No, the elephant is not like a wall, it’s like a spear.” 50
63
75

The third man reached around the elephant’s leg with both arms. He said, “I am sure both of you are wrong. The elephant is more like a tree.” 85
98
103

The fourth man reached up and touched the elephant’s ear. “All of you are wrong! An elephant is like a fan,” he said. 112
126

Now, the fifth man was standing by himself at the elephant’s other end. He happened to grab the animal’s tail. “Really, I don’t know where you people get these ideas,” he said. “I can tell you an elephant is like a rope.” 136
146
157
168

The elephant tickled the sixth man with his trunk. Then he said with a shudder, “All of you are wrong. It is clear to me that the elephant is a very large snake.” 179
194
201

“Nonsense!” said the others as they quietly began to leave. 211

The men never bothered to put their heads together to understand what the elephant was really like. 221
228

Word Count: 228 words

11. “Pop-Corn”

by Evaleen Stein

| | |
|--|----|
| Pop! Pop!—Poppetty-pop! | 3 |
| Shake and rattle and rattle and shake | 10 |
| The golden grains as they bounce and break | 18 |
| To fluffy puffiness—Poppetty-pop! | 22 |
| Bursting and banging the popper’s top! | 28 |
| Poppetty-pop! | 29 |
| Pop! Pop! | 31 |
| | |
| The yellow kernels, oh, see them grow | 38 |
| White as cotton or flakes of snow! | 45 |
| Pop! Pop! | 47 |
| O-ho, how they frolic and fly about | 54 |
| And turn themselves suddenly inside out! | 60 |
| Pop-pop-poppetty! Pop-pop-pop! | 62 |
| The popper’s full and we’ll have to stop; | 70 |
| Pile the bowl with the tempting treat, | 77 |
| Children, come, it is time to eat! | 84 |

Word Count: 84 words

12. “Fern Looks at the Stars”

Two characters: Fern and Dad

Fern: Dad, Dad! The stars are beginning to shine! 8

Dad: Grab your sweater. I’ll get the folding lawn chairs. 17

(Dad and Fern go to the backyard, set up the chairs, and gaze at the sky.)

Dad: Do you see how round the moon looks tonight? 26

Fern: The stars are sparkling! 30

Dad: Stars are made of gas and fire. Our sun is a star, made of gas and fire, too. The stars are far, far away...past the houses, trees, and clouds. 44
57
60

Fern: My teacher says groups of stars look like shapes of things and they have special names. 70
76

Dad: That’s right. This group looks like a dog. *(He points to a group of stars.)* That set looks like a dipper or cup. *(He points to another group of stars.)* There is the North Star!! *(He points to the North Star.)* 84
92
97

(It is late. Fern and her dad fold the chairs and walk to the house.)

Fern: Thank you for sharing the stars with me. Dad, I want to be a scientist and study the stars when I grow up! 109
120

Word Count: 120 words

13. "Twins!"

| | |
|--|-----|
| Brittany and Brianna Winner are identical twins. Brittany | 8 |
| started selling her artwork to local stores when she was | 18 |
| six years old! At age seven, Brianna sang in front of many | 30 |
| audiences. One audience was over 30,000 people! Then, at | 39 |
| the end of fourth grade, they decided to write a book together. | 51 |
| It took nine months to finish the story. Can you guess what | 63 |
| happened? Their first book won many awards, it was a <i>best</i> | 74 |
| <i>seller!</i> The twins wrote more books and today over 65,000 | 84 |
| schools use Brittany's and Brianna's books. Their books are | 93 |
| sold at book stores all over America. The first book they wrote | 105 |
| will be made into a movie. | 111 |
| Brittany and Brianna are great examples of children | 119 |
| excelling! | 120 |

Word Count: 120 words

14. "Spelling Bees"

| | |
|--|-----|
| Spelling Bees have been held for about 200 years. Some | 10 |
| experts believe spelling bees started in America! These | 18 |
| contests were started to give students a way to practice their | 29 |
| spelling words. People who write about history think that the | 39 |
| contests may have first been called a spelling match. The word | 50 |
| match is used here as you would use it to name a contest like | 64 |
| a tennis or golf match. Historians are not sure how use of the | 77 |
| word <i>bee</i> came about. There are some good guesses, but | 87 |
| no one seems one hundred percent certain. Today, the most | 97 |
| famous spelling bee is the National Spelling Bee held every | 107 |
| May. This contest is so popular it can be seen on television. | 119 |
| Start practicing! | 121 |

Word Count: 121 words

15. "How Many Seconds In A Minute?"

by Christina Georgina Rossetti

| | |
|----------------------------------|----|
| How many seconds in a minute? | 6 |
| Sixty, and no more in it. | 12 |
| How many minutes in an hour? | 18 |
| Sixty for sun and shower. | 23 |
| How many hours in a day? | 29 |
| Twenty-four for work and play. | 34 |
| How many days in a week? | 40 |
| Seven both to hear and speak. | 46 |
| How many weeks in a month? | 52 |
| Four, as the swift moon runneth. | 58 |
| How many months in a year? | 64 |
| Twelve the almanack makes clear. | 69 |
| How many years in an age? | 75 |
| One hundred says the sage. | 80 |
| How many ages in time? | 85 |
| No one knows the rhyme. | 90 |

Word Count: 90

16. **“What Do You Know About U.S. Money?”**

| | |
|--|-----|
| The money we use in the United States is a mix of paper | 13 |
| money called notes and metal discs called coins. These are | 23 |
| made in printing places called United States Mints. Paper | 32 |
| money is not really made of paper! It is made of two kinds of | 46 |
| cloth combined; linen and cotton. Coins are made of different | 56 |
| metals. For example, the penny is made of copper and zinc. | 67 |
| The dime is made of copper and a metal called nickel. If you | 80 |
| have the chance, visit a United States Mint. You can visit in | 92 |
| person or online. | 95 |
| Working at a U.S. Mint would be fun! You might be an | 107 |
| artist, a counter, or maybe a member of the Mint Police Force! | 119 |
| There are many jobs to choose from at a mint. | 129 |

Word Count: 129 words

17. “All in a Day’s Work”

Two characters: Kurt and Kim, brother and sister

Kim: Come on, Kurt! Let’s go. I’ll be late for work if you don’t hurry. 13
14

Kurt: But Kim, I need to finish my breakfast. 22

Kim: Kurt, you eat more than any person I know. 31

Kurt: Ok, Kim, I will bring my toast with me. Are you going to drop me off at the YMCA? 44
50

Kim: Yes, Kurt, I will leave you there and then come back and get you when my shift is over. 62
69

Kurt: How long is your shift today, Kim? 76

Kim: Today I work a four-hour shift. 82

Kurt: Kim, do you like your job? 88

Kim: Yes, Kurt, I like my job. It’s not my dream job but the people I work with are nice. I also really like some of the customers. 101
114
115

Kurt: Who is your favorite customer? 120

Kim: I think my favorite customer is Mr. Jim. He comes in every day for a newspaper and a can of cat food. 131
142

Kurt: Why doesn’t he just get a bunch of cat food at once? 154

Kim: Well, I think that’s because he has to walk up three flights of steps to get to his apartment. 166
173

Kurt: Yes, a lot of cans of cat food would be heavy. 184

| | |
|---|-------------------|
| Kim: Hey, maybe you can come with me to work one day and volunteer to carry packages for the customers. Would you like to do that? | 196 206 209 |
| Kurt: Oh, I don't know Kim. That sounds pretty hard. | 218 |
| Kim: It wouldn't be hard, it would be fun. | 226 |
| Kurt: How would carrying a lot of heavy bags be fun? | 236 |
| Kim: You would get to meet lots of new people. | 245 |
| Kurt: Kim, if it is okay with you, I think I will just stick with the friends I have. | 260 263 |
| Kim: Okay, Kurt, have it your way! | 269 |
| Kurt: Thanks for understanding, Kim. | 273 |
| Kim: You bet, Kurt! | 276 |

Word Count: 276 Words

18. "Foreign Lands"

by Robert Louis Stevenson

| | |
|--------------------------------------|-----|
| Up into the cherry tree | 5 |
| Who should climb but little me? | 11 |
| I held the trunk with both my hands | 19 |
| And looked abroad in foreign lands. | 25 |
| | |
| I saw the next door garden lie, | 32 |
| Adorned with flowers, before my eye, | 38 |
| And many pleasant places more | 43 |
| That I had never seen before. | 49 |
| | |
| I saw the dimpling river pass | 55 |
| And be the sky's blue looking-glass; | 61 |
| The dusty roads go up and down | 68 |
| With people tramping in to town. | 74 |
| | |
| If I could find a higher tree | 81 |
| Farther and farther I should see, | 87 |
| To where the grown-up river slips | 93 |
| Into the sea among the ships, | 99 |
| | |
| To where the roads on either hand | 106 |
| Lead onward into fairy land, | 111 |
| Where all the children dine at five, | 118 |
| And all the playthings come alive. | 124 |

Word Count: 124 words

19. “Castles in the Middle Ages”

Did you ever wonder where kings, queens, and knights of long ago lived? Most of them lived in castles which were forts!

A castle was made to protect people from enemies. The walls were very high. Most castles also had watch towers. These towers were taller than the walls so knights could see far across the land.

Many castles also had a moat. The moat was a very wide, deep ditch filled with water. The entrance into the castle was often a drawbridge over the moat. It could be moved up to become a door that could seal off the entrance to the castle.

These three parts of the castle helped protect the knights, the king and queen, and the people who lived near the castle. If an enemy was near, people from the villages came inside to be safe. This helped everyone inside stay safe and kept the enemies outside!

Word Count: 151 words

20. "Jousting"

Long ago, when kings and queens lived in castles, they 10
were protected by knights. Knights would defend the land, the 20
castle, and the people from enemies. 26

In order to stay strong and keep their skills sharp, knights 37
would drill with spears, shields, and lances. The people of the 48
land liked to come and watch these drills. These practices 58
became big events in the same way people enjoy going to a 70
baseball game today. 73

Over time, practices became huge tournaments. Jousting 80
was the most popular event. Crowds of onlookers cheered 89
for their favorite knight as he charged toward another knight, 99
both riding fast horses. Each man held a lance tight in his hand 112
pointing it straight ahead. The knight that knocked the other 122
knight off of his horse was the winner! 130

These events were games and contests, but they were also 140
excellent practice in case the knights had to fight a war with 152
knights from another land. 156

Word Count: 156 words

21. "An Outing"

| | |
|---|-----|
| King William and his son, Edward, went out on a journey | 11 |
| one fine morning riding their favorite horses. They were | 20 |
| accompanied by Sir Arthur and the wizard Merlin. The four | 30 |
| made their way across the castle drawbridge, through the | 39 |
| meadow and up the hill to the green forest. As they rode | 51 |
| through the dense trees of the forest, they talked about the | 62 |
| happenings of the kingdom. All of the men were looking | 72 |
| forward to the upcoming jousting tournament. Many knights | 80 |
| from other kingdoms had begun to arrive at King William's | 90 |
| castle. The knights spent their time practicing their jousting in | 100 |
| the courtyard of the castle. When they weren't practicing, the | 110 |
| knights repaired their armor or groomed their horses. Often the | 120 |
| knights rode their horses out into the countryside to give the | 131 |
| animals a chance to exercise. | 136 |
| As King William's foursome rounded a turn in the forest | 146 |
| path, they met just such a group of knights. Greeting each | 157 |
| other jovially, the knights joined the King's group and they | 167 |
| made their way back to the castle. | 174 |

Word Count: 174 words

22. "A Knight in Training"

Two Characters: Arthur, a young boy about 8 or 9, and Merlin, an old wizened wizard

Setting: A sunny summer day in a meadow in the shadow of a hill with a cave

Arthur: Merlin, we have been training together for almost a month. I still don't know much about you. 9
17

Merlin: Hmm, let's see, you know the King wants me to train you to be a knight. You also know I am here to protect you during the day. What else do you need to know? 28
42
52

Arthur: Where do you live? Do you live in the castle? 62

Merlin: No, I live in the cave you see up on the hill above this meadow. 76
77

Arthur: A cave? Isn't it wet? 82

Merlin: Wherever did you get that notion? Not all caves are wet. In fact, mine is quite dry and comfortable. Would you like to see it? 92
104
107

Arthur: Sure, can we ride our horses to it or do we have to walk? 120
121

Merlin: I have a better idea, let's race. 1-2-3-go! 129

Both riders race across the meadow and up the hill.

Arthur: Merlin, you win! Your horse knew the way. 137

Merlin: I think it is a tie. Let the horses graze while we visit. 150

| | |
|--|--------------------------|
| Arthur: (approaching the cave opening) Merlin, this is much different than I imagined! Look, you have little seats made out of logs. I see the fire with the pan where you must do your cooking. You even have mugs here for tea. | 154 165 179 187 |
| Merlin: Speaking of tea, would you like some? | 194 |
| Arthur: Yes, that would be nice. Merlin, may I ask something? | 204 |
| Merlin: Yes, Arthur, you may ask me anything but that doesn't mean I will answer! | 214 218 |
| Arthur: The other pages at the castle say you are a wizard. Is that true? | 230 232 |
| Merlin: Do YOU think it is true? | 238 |
| Arthur: I'm not sure. They tell me lots of things that I find out later aren't true. | 251 254 |
| Merlin: Ah, the truth always reveals itself with time. While we wait, let's get back to work. Your sword skills need some more practice! | 264 276 277 |

Word Count: 277 words

23. "The Star-Spangled Banner"

by Francis Scott Key

| | |
|---|----------|
| O say can you see, by the dawn's early light, | 10 |
| What so proudly we hailed at the twilight's last gleaming, | 20 |
| Whose broad stripes and bright stars through the perilous fight, | 29 30 |
| O'er the ramparts we watched were so gallantly streaming? | 39 |
| And the rocket's red glare, the bombs bursting in air, | 49 |
| Gave proof through the night that our flag was still there, | 60 |
| O say does that star-spangled banner yet wave, | 68 |
| O'er the land of the free and the home of the brave? | 80 |

Word Count: 80 words

24. **“Protecting the Star Spangled Banner”**

Air, light, and water are very good for plants. But when those things are on or near a piece of cloth that is 200 years old, it can be very bad! The flag that Francis Scott Key wrote about at Fort McHenry is safe today. At the Smithsonian Museum in Washington, D.C., that very flag is on display for all to see.

Air, light, and water won't damage it because the flag is kept in a special chamber. The chamber is water proof, fire proof, and the lights are kept very low in order to keep the flag from rotting, burning, or fading. Only trained workers wearing gloves are allowed to touch it. Many scientists worked together to conserve, or protect, this very, very special flag.

Word Count: 127 words

25. “The Flag at Fort McHenry”

In 1813, a lady named Mary Pickersgill was hired to make two flags for Fort McHenry in Baltimore, Maryland. One of those flags became very famous! Mary made the flag that inspired Francis Scott Key to write the Star-Spangled Banner.

The flag was stitched by hand using a needle and thread. Mary was asked to make a huge flag 30 x 42 feet in size. (It would be fun to measure the size of that flag!) The flag was so big it did not fit in Mary’s house. She used a large building across the street from her house to work on the flag.

Mary had some help with the sewing. Her daughter, two nieces, and an indentured servant worked side by side with Mary. It took the women about seven weeks to make the two flags. Little did they know one of those flags would become very famous!

Word Count: 149 words

26. “Preserving the Star-Spangled Banner”

Two girls: Alyssa and Gretchen

Alyssa: Hey Gretchen, take a look at this! 7

Gretchen: What is it now, Alyssa? I am trying to read. 17

Alyssa: Look at this program on TV. It’s all about how the folks at the Smithsonian are trying to preserve the flag that flew over Fort McHenry. 29
41
43

Gretchen: What’s so special about that flag? 49

Alyssa: It is the flag that was flying when Francis Scott Key wrote our national anthem. 60
64

Gretchen: I still don’t get it; what’s so special about that flag and Francis Scott Key? 75
79

Alyssa: In the War of 1812, there was a battle in the harbor at Fort McHenry. 92
94

Gretchen: OK, so? 96

Alyssa: Francis Scott Key was a passenger on a boat and saw the battle from the deck. 107
112

Gretchen: How come he didn’t get shot? 118

Alyssa: Well, I guess he was far enough away that he could see but still be safe. 129
134

Gretchen: So why did he write a song about it? 143

Alyssa: It didn’t start out as a song. He wrote a poem about trying to see if the Americans won the battle by watching throughout the night to see if the flag was still on the flagpole. 155
166
179

Gretchen: Was it? 181

| | |
|--|------------|
| Alyssa: Of course it was! | 185 |
| Gretchen: So that's when he wrote our national anthem? | 193 |
| Alyssa: Yes, but it didn't become our national anthem until much later. | 202 204 |
| Gretchen: It's pretty hard to sing. | 209 |
| Alyssa: Yes, it is but we should all try to learn the words and sing it in a respectful way. | 222 228 |
| Gretchen: Will you teach me the words? | 234 |
| Alyssa: I thought you didn't want me to bother you? | 243 |
| Gretchen: I changed my mind! | 247 |

Word Count: 247 words

27. “Beauty and the Beast”

Once upon a time, there was a merchant who lived with his three daughters. He loved all three of his daughters. But there was a special place in his heart for the youngest, Beauty.

One day a letter came. The letter said that one of the merchant’s ships had landed and was full of fine things. The man packed to make the trip to claim his goods. Before he left, he asked his girls what he might bring them as a gift.

The two older girls asked for fancy clothing.

But Beauty said, “Dear father, just bring me a rose.”

On his way home, a snow storm blew in. He came upon a large house. The front door was unlocked, so he went into the house. There was a warm fire in the fireplace. Next to the fireplace was a table with a tasty meal perfect for one person. He sat down and ate the food.

After eating, the merchant explored the house. He found a lush garden with a lovely rosebush. He plucked a single rose. Just as the stem broke, he heard a loud roar behind him. The startled merchant turned and saw a terrible monster.

“How dare you!” snarled the Beast, grabbing the rose.

The merchant was scared. “I only wanted a rose for one of my daughters.”

“I will have mercy on you,” said the Beast, “on one condition. One of your daughters must come live with me.” The sad father returned home and told his daughters what had happened.

Beauty did not hesitate. “I will go,” she said quietly.

| | |
|--|---------------------------------|
| Beauty and her father returned to the palace. The Beast filled a trunk with gold and sent Beauty’s father away. As Beauty watched her father ride away, she tried to be brave. | 274 285 296 |
| “Beauty,” said the Beast, “do not be afraid. Take this advice: Trust your heart, not your eyes.” | 306 313 |
| At first the Beast’s looks scared Beauty, but soon his kindness caused her to lose her fear. She became fond of him. The Beast would talk to her during dinner and make her laugh. After each meal, the Beast always asked, “Beauty, will you marry me?” Every time, Beauty answered “no.” | 323 335 347 357 364 |
| One night, the Beast saw a sad look on Beauty’s face. She told him that she missed her family, and she longed to see her father. | 376 389 390 |
| “Dear Beast,” said Beauty, “I long to see my father. Please let me go for four weeks. Then I will come back and stay with you forever.” | 401 415 417 |
| “Very well,” sighed the Beast. “Take this magic ring. When you want to come back, turn the ring round upon your finger and say, ‘I wish to go back to my Beast.’” | 427 439 449 |
| When Beauty awoke early the next morning, she found herself in her father’s home. Day after day, Beauty enjoyed being with her father. | 458 468 472 |
| When the time came for her to return to the Beast, every day she told herself, “Today I will go back.” But every night she put it off again. | 484 497 501 |

| | |
|--|-----|
| One night, she had a dream. She dreamed she was | 511 |
| wandering in the garden; she saw the Beast lying on the | 522 |
| ground. “Oh, he is dead!” she cried. “He is dead, and it is my | 536 |
| fault!” She took him in her arms. The Beast slowly opened his | 548 |
| eyes. | 549 |
| Beauty cried, “Oh, Beast, I never knew how much I loved | 560 |
| you until now.” | 563 |
| In a faint voice, the Beast said, “Beauty, I was dying | 574 |
| because you had forgotten your promise. Can you really love | 584 |
| such an ugly monster as me?” Then, once again, the Beast | 595 |
| asked, “Beauty, will you marry me?” | 601 |
| She replied, “Yes, dear Beast! I will!” | 608 |
| As she spoke, a blaze of light flashed around her. Beauty | 619 |
| covered her eyes. When she opened them again, she saw a | 630 |
| handsome prince. | 632 |
| “I was the Beast,” said the prince. “I was cursed to live as | 645 |
| a monster until someone could see past my looks to the real | 657 |
| me.” | 658 |
| The next day, with Beauty’s father looking on, they got | 668 |
| married. And they lived happily ever after. | 675 |

Word Count: 675 words

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Laia Cortes, Bilingual Content Designer

Ana Mercedes Falcón, Copy Editor and Translator

Ana Killackey, Copy Editor and Translator

Jorge Limón, Copy Editor and Translator

Sofía Pereson, Copy Editor and Translator

Brycé Pesce, Bilingual Content Designer

Melissa Saldaña, Bilingual Content Designer

Lyna Ward, Bilingual Content Designer

Mabel Zardus, Senior Bilingual Content Designer

Product and Project Management

Reyna Hensley, Project Manager

Carolina Paz-Giraldo, Project Manager

Art, Design, and Production

Raghav Arumugam, Illustrator

Derick Brooks, Illustrator

Olioli Buika, Illustrator

Ami Cai, Illustrator

Alanna Conway, Illustrator

Stuart Dalgo, Production Designer

Lucas De Oliveira, Production Designer

Rodrigo Garcia, Senior Visual Designer

Isabel Hetrick, Illustrator

Ana Hinojosa, Illustrator

Ian Horst, Production Design Manager

Jagriti Khirwar, Illustrator

Janelly Rodriguez, Illustrator

Francesca Mahaney, Illustrator

Amber Marquez, Image Researcher and Illustrator

Jocelyn Martinez, Image Researcher and Illustrator

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Melisa Osorio Bonifaz, Art Director

Emma Pokorny, Illustrator

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Carolyn Pinkerton
Scott Ritchie
Kelina Summers

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Contributors to Earlier Versions of These Materials

Susan B. Albaugh, Kazuko Ashizawa, Kim Berrall, Ang Blanchette, Nancy Braier, Maggie Buchanan, Paula Coyner, Kathryn M. Cummings, Michelle De Groot, Michael Donegan, Diana Espinal, Mary E. Forbes, Michael L. Ford, Sue Fulton, Carolyn Gosse, Dorrit Green, Liza Greene, Ted Hirsch, Danielle Knecht, James K. Lee, Matt Leech, Diane Henry Leipzig, Robin Luecke, Martha G. Mack, Liana Mahoney, Isabel McLean, Steve Morrison, Juliane K. Munson, Elizabeth B. Rasmussen, Ellen Sadler, Rachael L. Shaw, Sivan B. Sherman, Diane Auger Smith, Laura Tortorelli, Khara Turnbull, Miriam E. Vidaver, Michelle L. Warner, Catherine S. Whittington, Jeannette A. Williams.

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