

6th Grade Passages

Beginning of Year (BOY) Student Packet

Passage 1 *Titanic*

Passage 2 *A Friend on the Trail*

Passage 3 *Jane Goodall: A Friend to Chimpanzees*

Texas Middle School Fluency Assessment—Version 1.1 © 2009 Texas Education Agency, University of Houston, and The University of Texas System

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Titanic

- 21 April 10th, 1912, was the most exciting day of my life. Little did I know that it was a prelude to the most terrifying time of my life as well.
- 30 My father had moved to America several months prior to then. He found a good job. He had
48 finally saved enough money to bring my mother and me to join him. He surprised us with second
66 class tickets on a ship called the RMS Titanic. My mother told me it was the biggest ship in the
86 world.
- 87 I couldn't believe my eyes when I saw it. It was enormous! My mom let me wander around
105 alone and explore the ship. I was 8 and grown up enough to know not to get into trouble or to be
127 a nuisance. I quickly made a friend on board. Her name was Marjorie. She was going to visit
145 America with her parents. We spent nearly the entire trip playing together and watching the other
161 passengers. We had hours of fun!
- 167 Everything was normal when I went to bed on April 14th. Around midnight I was startled awake
184 by the voices of men yelling and women screaming. My mother ran into the hall. She heard
201 someone say we had hit an iceberg. The ship was filling with water. We had no time to gather our
221 belongings or get dressed. We followed the panicking crowd toward the main deck. My mother
236 clutched my hand tightly.
- 240 Someone was yelling that the boat was sinking. How could this be? I looked at my mom. I
258 could tell it was true. People were frantic to get to the lifeboats. There were so many people. I
277 wondered how they could all fit into so few boats. People were pushing each other. I was knocked
295 to the ground. I heard my mother scream. A kind man picked me up before I was trampled. He
314 led my mom and me to a lifeboat and made sure we were safely aboard. As other people boarded
333 with us, I saw Marjorie and her family waiting in line. I yelled for them, but they didn't hear me.
353 I was scared for them. I wanted them to come on my boat. I wanted them to be safe, too. I told
375 the crewman that I would make room for them, but he gave the order to release our boat without
394 hearing what I had said. We had to leave without them.
- 405 I don't know how long we floated in the sea. We were freezing, wet, and scared, but we were
424 the lucky ones. We were alive. So many people were left behind that night. I wondered what
441 happened to Marjorie. I never saw her again.

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When we got to America, my father was waiting for us. His eyes were filled with tears, and he sobbed as he held us tightly. Years later I realized that those tears weren't only for us, but for all the people who never made it to America. Ever since then, even though my name is Jessica, he has called me Joy. He gave me that new nickname to reflect how he felt when he was told that we survived.

A Friend on the Trail

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Doodle the rooster usually crowed at sunrise, but this morning Elizabeth awoke to the sounds of other birds. She poked her head through the curtain of her family’s covered wagon and gazed at the unfamiliar surroundings. Late in the spring of 1856, her family had joined a train of covered wagons. They had begun their long journey to make a new home in the West. That was more than four months ago. Soon they would reach their destination.

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After breakfast Elizabeth checked the cage tied to the back of the wagon. This was where Doodle and their three hens rode. Each night Doodle and the hens were allowed to roam freely. They had always returned by morning. Today, however, Doodle was not in the cage.

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“Doodle, where are you?” Elizabeth muttered. She looked in all directions.

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“Why don’t you walk down to the stream,” her mother suggested. “You need to get water for the day’s journey. Perhaps you’ll find Doodle there.”

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Grabbing the bucket, Elizabeth headed for the stream. She crossed through a field of lovely wildflowers. Along the stream’s bank she saw a Native American girl. The girl wore a round hat made of woven grass. She dipped her hat into the water and took a drink. Looking up, the girl smiled.

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“My name is Sisika,” she said. “I’m Elizabeth. I’ve come to get water and to find my rooster,” Elizabeth explained.

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Together they began searching. They did not have to look long before they found Doodle. He was feasting on large crickets in the tall grass.

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“Doodle, you’ve found a good breakfast,” Elizabeth remarked.

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“These are tasty crickets,” Sisika replied. “My mother dries them, and we make delicious cricket soup.”

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“I like to help my mother cook, too,” Elizabeth said. With these words Elizabeth realized something. It occurred to her that she and Sisika might have many things in common. She wished that she could stay and visit longer. Elizabeth carefully picked up Doodle in her arms. Then she remembered her empty bucket.

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“I can help,” Sisika offered. “I’ll fill your bucket and carry it for you.”

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Together Elizabeth and Sisika walked back to the wagon. Elizabeth returned Doodle to the cage.

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The restless oxen tugged on the wagon, signaling that they were ready to depart. Elizabeth reached

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into the wagon for her favorite doll. With a sad smile of good-bye, she gave it to Sisika. Then

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Sisika placed her necklace around Elizabeth’s neck. Just then a man rode up on a beautiful spotted

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horse.

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“This is my father,” Sisika explained to Elizabeth. The man helped Sisika climb up onto the horse.

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Then he noticed the doll that she was holding. He also recognized the necklace Elizabeth was

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wearing.

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“The river up ahead can be treacherous. There are places where it is deep and the waters are fast,”

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he said to Elizabeth. “Tell your father that Sisika and I will lead your wagons safely across the

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river.”

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Sisika and Elizabeth waved to each other. Then Sisika and her father rode to the front of the

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wagon train. Moments later the wagons jerked forward. The wagon train began to roll westward

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again.

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Crossing the river, Elizabeth studied her new necklace happily. She had made a friend on the trail.

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Jane Goodall: A Friend to Chimpanzees

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When Jane Goodall was a child, her family heard that a baby chimpanzee had been born at a zoo in London. To celebrate this exciting news, Goodall's parents bought her a stuffed toy chimpanzee. She named it Jubilee after the real baby chimp at the zoo. From that day on, Goodall kept the stuffed animal by her side.

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Jane Goodall was born on April 3, 1934, in London, England. As a child she was fascinated with animals. At the age of four, she sat for hours in a henhouse, watching closely. She wanted to find out how chickens lay eggs.

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While walking to school, she often stopped to watch a bird or squirrel. By looking and listening, Goodall learned about animals.

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From an early age Goodall loved to read. One of her favorite books was *The Story of Dr. Dolittle*, a tale about a man who could talk to animals. Goodall also enjoyed reading about wild animals. She began to dream about going to Africa to study them.

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About three years after she finished high school, Goodall unexpectedly received a letter. It was from an old classmate whom Goodall had not heard from in a long time. The friend wrote that her family had moved to a farm in Africa. She invited Goodall for a visit, and Goodall accepted. For several months Goodall worked hard and saved money for the trip. She also read more about Africa. In 1957 Goodall sailed to Africa. After visiting her friend, Goodall began a job in Kenya. There she met a scientist who told her about a group of chimpanzees in nearby Tanzania. He helped arrange for her to study the chimps in the wild.

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At first Goodall did not see many chimps. They would run away when she approached, but eventually they began to accept her. Within a few months they did not flee when she was near. Goodall watched how the animals lived and behaved. She carefully wrote down her observations. While doing so, she made many important discoveries about chimpanzees. She learned that chimps do not eat only plants, as scientists had thought. Chimps also eat insects and sometimes meat. Another of Goodall's discoveries was even more amazing. One day she was watching a chimp that she called David Greybeard. David Greybeard poked a blade of grass into an insect mound. When he pulled out the blade of grass, it was covered with insects. Then he ate the insects off the blade of grass. Later Goodall saw the same chimp using a stick to collect insects. This showed Goodall that chimpanzees use tools to get food.

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Goodall has spent many years studying chimpanzees and has become an expert on their behavior.

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Now she travels around the world, giving speeches about chimps. She wants people to be

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concerned about animals, both in zoos and in the wild. Wherever Goodall goes, her stuffed

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chimpanzee Jubilee is by her side.

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