# **6th Grade Passages**

## Between BOY and MOY Student Packet

Passage 1 Caroline Herschel

Passage 2 An Unusual Job

Passage 3 A Great Comet

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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#### **Caroline Herschel**

Did you know that one of the first women astronomers began her career as a maid?

16 32 48	Caroline Herschel was one of six children. When Caroline was small, she suffered from a disease called typhus. She recovered, but her growth was permanently stunted. She only grew to be four feet three inches tall. Her father told her that the only thing she could do in life was to be a maid.
70 89 107	Her brother, William, felt sorry for her. He took her to England to live with him. She was his housekeeper. William had a job as a chorus director. He was very skilled in music. But he really had an interest in astronomy. He began to make very powerful telescopes.
119 135 151	Soon, people realized how well-made his telescopes were. He began making and selling them. He quit his chorus job. William became very respected in the field of astronomy. He even discovered Uranus.
152 168 184	Caroline spent years watching her brother. She began to develop an interest in astronomy too. She learned all she could from him. Soon, she was helping him build telescopes. She kept wonderful notes about their observations.
188 205	William even gave her her own telescope. He knew she would want to make observations on her own.
206 223	Her first big accomplishment came when she discovered a comet. She would go on to discover 7 more.
224 240 254	Caroline won several awards for her work in astronomy. She was even honored in other countries, including Germany and Prussia. In 1835, she became an honorary member of the Royal Astronomical Society. She was one of the first women to achieve this goal.
267 285 287	Caroline lived to be 98 years old. She had many friends. When she died, everyone who knew her was sad.

### **An Unusual Job**

repairs cracks on Abraham Lincoln's nose. He smoothes the lines on George Washington's forehead. Of course, Crisman does not work on real Presidents. He works on Mount Rushmore.  46 What is Mount Rushmore? Mount Rushmore is a mountain in South Dakota. It is made of a very hard rock called granite. The faces of George Washington, Thomas Jefferson, Abraham Lincoln, and Theodore Roosevelt are carved into the side of this mountain. The carvings begin at the top of the mountain. They are about 60 feet tall. They were made as a monument to honor these great Presidents. The carvings make people think about what these leaders stood for — courage, leadership, freedom, and a love of country.  Why do the carvings need repair? Over time tiny cracks occur in the hard granite. When they first appear, these small cracks are not a problem. But the weather causes some to get bigger. In the winter, rain and melted snow get inside the cracks. When the water freezes, it makes the cracks longer and deeper. When a small crack becomes a large crack, it needs to be repaired. If it is not fixed, pieces of the carvings may break off.  214 How does Robert Crisman do the repairs? Every September Crisman goes down the side of the mountain to see if anything needs to be repaired. To do this, he first puts on special gear. He uses safety belts like the ones used by people who climb mountains. Then Crisman straps himself into a seat. The seat is fastened to strong ropes. Two people on top of the mountain lower Crisman down. Each year Crisman works on the side of the mountain for four days. Each day he works on a different carving. As Crisman climbs around the huge faces, he carefully checks each one. He inspects the carvings for breaks and chips. If he finds a large crack, he fixes it. Before 1991 Crisman filled in the cracks with a paste that took three years to dry. Then a company made something new for him to use called silicone. The silicone fills up the cracks and dries in just one day.  When Crisman first started his job, he did not lik		Robert Crisman has a big job. He works to keep the faces of four Presidents looking good. He
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#### **A Great Comet**

	For six months in 1997, people watched a glowing object in the night sky. Comet Hale-Bopp made
18	a show in the sky that lasted from January to June. Its head shone as brightly as a star. Its tail swept
40	back like a fan. Some people thought it might be the best comet to pass by Earth in 20 years.
60	Comets begin as dirty chunks of rock in an icy fog. Some of these rocks move toward the sun
79	when its gravity pulls them. Once the rocks get near the sun, they begin to look like comets. Each
98	comet forms a tail and a round head that are characteristic of all comets. The round head and tail
117	make a comet easy to recognize. Comets travel in orbits, or circles, around the sun. These orbits
134	can be big or small. Comets that make small orbits around the sun come near Earth every 200
152	years or less. They are not very bright, but we see them more often.
132	years of less. They are not very bright, but we see them more often.
166	Hale-Bopp is a comet that makes big orbits around the sun. It will not pass near Earth again for
186	about 2,400 years.
100	about 2,400 years.
189	In the 1990s about 12 comets a year were discovered. Most of these could not be seen in the sky
209	without special equipment because they did not come very close to Earth. Even though Hale-Bopp
225	was far away from Earth, it could be seen because its head was huge. The heads of most comets
245	are no larger than six miles in diameter. Hale-Bopp's head was about 25 miles across. Because
263	of its size, Hale-Bopp glowed brightly. Most of the famous comets have had long, thin tails that
280	
200	streamed for millions of miles. Hale-Bopp's tail was wider and shorter.
201	
291	People enjoyed watching Hale-Bopp for several reasons. It glowed brightly. Hale-Bopp could be
306	seen without a telescope for six months, from an hour after sunset until an hour before sunrise each
324	day. Everyone had sufficient time to see this bright traveler. There were plenty of chances to look
341	at it. There will continue to be many more comets for us to see. Like Hale-Bopp, they will look
362	like glowing balls in the night sky.
368	