

7th Grade Progress Monitoring

December–February Student Packet

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A Soothing Song

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Kayla stood and stared into the box at her feet. The puppy she had found had been crying for an hour. Now Kayla was ready to cry, too. Kayla knew her parents were tired of listening to the noise.

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She had tried everything she could think of—chew toys, food, a warm blanket. Nothing made the puppy happy. She wanted to keep him, and her parents had said he could stay if he behaved.

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So Kayla didn't cry. She wouldn't give up! She sat down on the floor and began to sing. The puppy stopped howling. Kayla smiled and sang some more. Maybe this would work after all .

The Writing Pencil

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Josh had to write a story for school. Time was running out. He had to turn in his paper in two days. He was beginning to worry. “What if I can’t think of a good story?” he wondered. Josh thought of flying cars and tall mountains and faraway lands. He picked up the new pencil that was a present from his aunt. Then he looked at the clean, white paper. No ideas came to him.

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Josh went to sleep. He had a dream about a pencil that could write wonderful stories. All Josh had to do was hold the pencil on the paper.

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When Josh woke up the next morning, he looked at his new pencil. He knew what he would write about. He wrote so fast that the pencil seemed to be writing the story all by itself!

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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.

Koalas

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Koalas live in Australia. Sometimes people call them koala bears. But koalas are not bears. They are marsupials. Marsupials are mammals that have pouches.

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When koalas are born, they immediately go to their mother's pouch. They stay there for about six months. This is where they grow and develop. Baby koalas are called joeys. When they are born, they are very tiny. They are no bigger than a peanut.

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Joeys cannot see or hear when they are born. These senses develop in the pouch. After they leave the pouch, they ride on their mother's backs until they are ready to be on their own. Koalas can be on their own when they are about a year old.

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Koalas are very gentle animals. They keep to themselves and don't hurt other animals. They are nocturnal. Koalas sleep for about 18 hours each day. They have large, rubbery noses. Their ears are big and floppy. And they have thumbs that make it easy to grip trees and food. Their soft fur makes them look cuddly and cute.

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Koalas live in eucalyptus trees. They spend most of their days there. They eat only eucalyptus leaves. Koalas rarely drink water. They get all the water they need from the eucalyptus leaves.

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When a koala is around the age of 2 or 3, he is considered fully grown. At this age, a female koala can have a baby of her own.

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The number of koalas has dwindled over the years. People used to hunt koalas for their fur. Their forests have been destroyed to build houses. Many have been killed or injured by cars. Because of this, Australia has made it a protected animal. People are no longer allowed to hunt them. But there are no laws protecting their forests. Many koalas now live in zoos or special areas where people can make sure they stay safe.

Vickie and the Kitten

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Vickie wanted a kitten more than anything. When she was old enough to take care of a pet, her parents bought her a kitten as a surprise. It was tiny and as white and soft as cotton. In fact, Vickie named him Cotton. After her parents brought him home, Vickie and her brother Kevin played with Cotton. They watched him chase a piece of string. They took turns holding him and petting his soft fur. Vickie and Kevin held the kitten close. Cotton purred and looked up at them with big green eyes.

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Then Kevin began to sneeze, and his eyes became red. The more he held the kitten, the more he sneezed.

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“Uh-oh,” their dad said with a worried look. “Maybe Kevin shouldn’t be in contact with the kitten.”

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“I’ll keep Cotton in my room away from Kevin,” Vickie suggested. “Then Kevin won’t sneeze.”

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But Kevin kept sneezing, and his eyes watered. Finally Vickie’s mom said, “I’m sorry, Vickie. We can’t keep Cotton if he makes Kevin sick.”

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Vickie began to sob. Her mom hugged her and wiped away her tears. “Vickie, I know this is hard. But we’ll find a good home for Cotton. With Kevin sneezing, this isn’t the right home for a cat.” Vickie understood, but she was disappointed.

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The next day Vickie’s mom suggested that they call Mrs. Parsi, who lived across the street. She already had two cats, but she might know someone who wanted a kitten. Vickie agreed sadly while Cotton purred happily.

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“I do know a family who wants a kitten,” Mrs. Parsi told them in a cheerful voice. “Their last name is Martin. They just moved into the house next door to me. They had planned to get a kitten once they were settled in their new home.”

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That evening Vickie and her mom knocked on the Martins’ door. Mr. and Mrs. Martin greeted them warmly. They smiled with delight when they saw Cotton. “He’s beautiful!” Mrs. Martin said. “Cotton is the perfect name for him.”

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Mr. Martin noticed Vickie’s sad face. He said, “Vickie, maybe you can help us take care of Cotton.

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You can come over anytime and play with him.”

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Just then a girl about Vickie’s age came down the stairs. “Oh, what a cute kitten!” she exclaimed

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when she saw Cotton. “I love his big green eyes.”

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“His name is Cotton,” Vickie said. “He loves to chase string.”

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Together the girls played with Cotton. They laughed as Cotton jumped for the string and ran after

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it. They talked together as they played. Vickie learned that the girl’s name was Marie. They would

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be in the same class at school.

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A while later Vickie’s mom said it was time to go home. Vickie smiled as she said farewell to

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Cotton and handed him to Marie. Vickie waved. She thought, “Cotton has the right home now, and

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I have a new friend.”

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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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A Great Comet

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For six months in 1997, people watched a glowing object in the night sky. Comet Hale-Bopp made a show in the sky that lasted from January to June. Its head shone as brightly as a star. Its tail swept back like a fan. Some people thought it might be the best comet to pass by Earth in 20 years.

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Comets begin as dirty chunks of rock in an icy fog. Some of these rocks move toward the sun when its gravity pulls them. Once the rocks get near the sun, they begin to look like comets. Each comet forms a tail and a round head that are characteristic of all comets. The round head and tail make a comet easy to recognize. Comets travel in orbits, or circles, around the sun. These orbits can be big or small. Comets that make small orbits around the sun come near Earth every 200 years or less. They are not very bright, but we see them more often.

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Hale-Bopp is a comet that makes big orbits around the sun. It will not pass near Earth again for about 2,400 years.

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In the 1990s about 12 comets a year were discovered. Most of these could not be seen in the sky without special equipment because they did not come very close to Earth. Even though Hale-Bopp was far away from Earth, it could be seen because its head was huge. The heads of most comets are no larger than six miles in diameter. Hale-Bopp's head was about 25 miles across. Because of its size, Hale-Bopp glowed brightly. Most of the famous comets have had long, thin tails that streamed for millions of miles. Hale-Bopp's tail was wider and shorter.

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People enjoyed watching Hale-Bopp for several reasons. It glowed brightly. Hale-Bopp could be seen without a telescope for six months, from an hour after sunset until an hour before sunrise each day. Everyone had sufficient time to see this bright traveler. There were plenty of chances to look at it. There will continue to be many more comets for us to see. Like Hale-Bopp, they will look like glowing balls in the night sky.

Faces on the Mountain

In 1924 Doane Robinson of the South Dakota Historical Society had an idea. He thought carving huge stone faces into a mountainside would be a wonderful gift to the people of the United States. The monument would also attract tourists to his state. He hired sculptor Gutzon Borglum to do the carving. Mount Rushmore's giant faces now bring millions of visitors to South Dakota to see one of the largest public monuments ever created.

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Borglum chose Mount Rushmore in the Black Hills as the site for the carving. The mountain's rock face was 400 feet high and 1,000 feet across. The carvings would last because the rock was hard granite without deep cracks or other obvious flaws. Because it faced southeast, the rock face was lit by the sun most of the day, so the carved faces would not be in the shadows. Robinson suggested carving the faces of western heroes such as Lewis and Clark. Borglum wanted to honor the Presidents who had helped make the United States a great nation. Borglum's vision won out. He chose George Washington, the first President, and Thomas Jefferson, the author of the Declaration of Independence. Next he chose Abraham Lincoln, his personal hero, and finally the great outdoorsman Theodore Roosevelt.

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Work began on August 10, 1927. Artisans used dynamite to blast rock from the mountain. Then they cut away more rock to create the faces. These master craftsmen sat in special chairs on long cables that hung over the side of the mountain. Borglum used a five-foot-high plaster model of the faces to direct the workers. When workers started carving Jefferson's face, they found that the rock on that side of the mountain was unstable. Borglum had to readjust his plans and carve Jefferson on the other side of Washington. The original carving of Jefferson's face was blasted away with dynamite. Lincoln was carved after Jefferson, and Roosevelt was carved last. It took workers six and a half years to finish the carving, though the memorial wasn't completed for 14 years because of financial problems.

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The memorial's 50th anniversary was celebrated with an elaborate party on July 3, 1991. Nineteen of the men who had helped build the monument attended. Today the site is more popular than ever, attracting close to three million visitors each year.

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