

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*

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Titanic

April 10th, 1912, was the most exciting day of
9 my life. Little did I know that it was a prelude
20 to the most terrifying time of my life as well.

30 My father had moved to America several months
38 prior to then. He found a good job. He had finally
49 saved enough money to bring my mother and
57 me to join him. He surprised us with second class
67 tickets on a ship called the RMS Titanic. My mother
77 told me it was the biggest ship in the world.

87 I couldn't believe my eyes when I saw it. It was
98 enormous! My mom let me wander around
105 alone and explore the ship. I was 8 and grown
115 up enough to know not to get into trouble or
125 to be a nuisance. I quickly made a friend on

135 board. Her name was Marjorie. She was going to
144 visit America with her parents. We spent nearly
152 the entire trip playing together and watching
159 the other passengers. We had hours of fun!

167 Everything was normal when I went to bed
175 on April 14th. Around midnight I was startled
183 awake by the voices of men yelling and women
192 screaming. My mother ran into the hall. She
200 heard someone say we had hit an iceberg. The
209 ship was filling with water. We had no time
218 to gather our belongings or get dressed. We
226 followed the panicking crowd toward the main
233 deck. My mother clutched my hand tightly.

240 Someone was yelling that the boat was sinking.
248 How could this be? I looked at my mom. I could
259 tell it was true. People were frantic to get to the
270 lifeboats. There were so many people. I wondered
278 how they could all fit into so few boats. People

288 were pushing each other. I was knocked to the
297 ground. I heard my mother scream. A kind man
306 picked me up before I was trampled. He led my
316 mom and me to a lifeboat and made sure we were
327 safely aboard. As other people boarded with us, I
336 saw Marjorie and her family waiting in line. I yelled
346 for them, but they didn't hear me. I was scared
356 for them. I wanted them to come on my boat. I
367 wanted them to be safe, too. I told the crewman
377 that I would make room for them, but he gave
387 the order to release our boat without hearing
395 what I had said. We had to leave without them.

405 I don't know how long we floated in the sea. We
416 were freezing, wet, and scared, but we were
424 the lucky ones. We were alive. So many people
433 were left behind that night. I wondered what
441 happened to Marjorie. I never saw her again.

449 When we got to America, my father was
457 waiting for us. His eyes were filled with tears,
466 and he sobbed as he held us tightly. Years
475 later I realized that those tears weren't only
483 for us, but for all the people who never made
493 it to America. Ever since then, even though
501 my name is Jessica, he has called me Joy. He
511 gave me that new nickname to reflect how
519 he felt when he was told that we survived.
528

A Friend on the Trail

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

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

125 "Doodle, where are you?" Elizabeth muttered. She
132 looked in all directions.

136 "Why don't you walk down to the stream," her
145 mother suggested. "You need to get water for the
154 day's journey. Perhaps you'll find Doodle there."

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

213 "My name is Sisika," she said. "I'm Elizabeth.
221 I've come to get water and to find my rooster,"
231 Elizabeth explained.

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

258 "Doodle, you've found a good breakfast,"
264 Elizabeth remarked.

266 "These are tasty crickets," Sisika replied. "My
273 mother dries them, and we make delicious cricket
281 soup."

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

335 "I can help," Sisika offered. "I'll fill your bucket and
345 carry it for you."

349 Together Elizabeth and Sisika walked back to the
357 wagon. Elizabeth returned Doodle to the cage. The
365 restless oxen tugged on the wagon, signaling that
373 they were ready to depart. Elizabeth reached into
381 the wagon for her favorite doll. With a sad smile of
392 good-bye, she gave it to Sisika. Then Sisika placed
402 her necklace around Elizabeth's neck. Just then a
410 man rode up on a beautiful spotted horse.

418 "This is my father," Sisika explained to Elizabeth.
426 The man helped Sisika climb up onto the horse.
435 Then he noticed the doll that she was holding. He
445 also recognized the necklace Elizabeth was wearing.

452 "The river up ahead can be treacherous. There are
461 places where it is deep and the waters are fast," he

472 said to Elizabeth. "Tell your father that Sisika and I
482 will lead your wagons safely across the river."

490 Sisika and Elizabeth waved to each other. Then
498 Sisika and her father rode to the front of the wagon
509 train. Moments later the wagons jerked forward.
516 The wagon train began to roll westward again.

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

541

Jane Goodall: A Friend to Chimpanzees

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

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

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

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

168 About three years after she finished high school,
176 Goodall unexpectedly received a letter. It was from
184 an old classmate whom Goodall had not heard from
193 in a long time. The friend wrote that her family had
204 moved to a farm in Africa. She invited Goodall for
214 a visit, and Goodall accepted. For several months
222 Goodall worked hard and saved money for the trip.
231 She also read more about Africa. In 1957 Goodall
240 sailed to Africa. After visiting her friend, Goodall
248 began a job in Kenya. There she met a scientist who

259 told her about a group of chimpanzees in nearby
268 Tanzania. He helped arrange for her to study the
277 chimps in the wild.

281 At first Goodall did not see many chimps. They
290 would run away when she approached, but
297 eventually they began to accept her. Within
304 a few months they did not flee when she was
314 near. Goodall watched how the animals lived
321 and behaved. She carefully wrote down her
328 observations. While doing so, she made many
335 important discoveries about chimpanzees. She
340 learned that chimps do not eat only plants, as
349 scientists had thought. Chimps also eat insects and
357 sometimes meat. Another of Goodall's discoveries
363 was even more amazing. One day she was watching
372 a chimp that she called David Greybeard. David
380 Greybeard poked a blade of grass into an insect
389 mound. When he pulled out the blade of grass, it
399 was covered with insects. Then he ate the insects

408 off the blade of grass. Later Goodall saw the same
418 chimp using a stick to collect insects. This showed
427 Goodall that chimpanzees use tools to get food.

435 Goodall has spent many years studying
441 chimpanzees and has become an expert on their
449 behavior. Now she travels around the world,
456 giving speeches about chimps. She wants people
463 to be concerned about animals, both in zoos and
472 in the wild. Wherever Goodall goes, her stuffed
480 chimpanzee Jubilee is by her side.

486