

# 6th Grade Passages

## Middle of Year (MOY) Student Packet

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## What Was Amanda's Message?

10 Once there was a village beside a river. The lovely  
20 river flowed quietly to the sea. The river gave the  
30 people of the village water to drink. It also gave  
them water for their plants and animals.

37 In this village lived a family with a young daughter  
47 named Amanda. She was quiet like the river.

55 Amanda often walked through the forest near her  
63 house. She loved looking at all the beautiful trees.

72 Her favorite was the willow tree. Its branches bent  
81 toward the ground as if reaching down to her.

90 Amanda had a special ability. She noticed things  
98 that other people did not. Walking through the  
106 forest, she would see a squirrel sitting on the  
115 highest branch of a tree. She would notice the first

125 golden leaf as summer turned to fall. During spring  
134 Amanda was the first to notice that wildflowers  
142 were beginning to bloom.

146 One year there was very little rain. By summer the  
156 river had dried up. The people of Amanda's village  
165 dug a well, but they did not find water. They had  
176 to go to another village far away to get water. It  
187 was a long, hard journey. Sometimes the people  
195 could not carry as much water as they needed. This  
205 caused them to worry.

209 While walking through the forest one day, Amanda  
217 noticed the leaves of the trees. Without rain they  
226 had turned dry and brown. Then she came upon  
235 the willow tree. Its branches still had tender green  
244 leaves!

245 "The willow's leaves are still soft and green, but all  
255 the other leaves are dry and brown," she

263 said to herself. "Perhaps the willow's roots can seek  
272 and find water that other trees cannot."

279 Amanda ran home as fast as she could. She  
288 couldn't wait to relay what she had noticed to her  
298 family. When she reached her house, she saw that  
307 other people from the village were there. They were  
316 talking about how to find water.

322 "The leaves of the willow tree are still green,"  
331 Amanda announced eagerly. "We should dig a well  
339 where the willow's roots end. We might find water  
348 there."

349 The people of the village stared at Amanda in  
358 surprise. She was generally very quiet. In fact,  
366 many villagers had never heard her speak. They  
374 knew that her message must be important, so they  
383 followed Amanda to the willow tree. There they dug

392 a deep well where the willow's roots stopped. Water  
401 filled the well just as Amanda had promised.

409 The people of the village were happy. They began  
418 to sing and dance around their new well. Amanda  
427 was happy, too. She and the willow tree had helped  
437 save her village.

440

## Suni

My name is Suni. I am a Chinese White Dolphin.

10 Do you know what's special about the Chinese

18 White Dolphin? I'm pink. Most people have

25 never heard of, or seen, a pink dolphin.

33 I want to tell you about a serious problem that

43 we are all facing. But first, let me describe

52 myself. I live off the shores of Hong Kong and

62 Southern China. This area is called the Pearl River

71 Delta. There are less than 200 of us here. We

81 are not born pink. In fact, when we are born,

91 we are black. As we get older, our color turns to

102 gray. Then it becomes pinkish gray with spots.

110 It is when we enter adulthood that we become

119 pinkish white and our spots fade. As adults,

127 we usually reach a length of eight to nine feet.

137 Unfortunately, most of the calves born today don't  
145 reach adulthood. Thus, they never get to show  
153 off their beautiful pink color. We could live up to  
163 40 years, but because of the many hazards we  
172 face most of the calves don't even survive. We  
181 are endangered. Our population is dwindling.

187 The water we live in is unhealthy. Raw sewage has  
197 been routinely dumped into our waters. There are  
205 so many fishermen that sometimes we get stuck in  
214 nets or hit by boats. I have a scar on my right side  
227 from when a boat hit me. Some nice humans found  
237 me. They helped me get well again. My wound hurt  
247 a lot, but I was one of the lucky ones. I've known  
259 dolphins that haven't survived that type of accident.  
267 The high numbers of fishermen pose another threat  
275 to us as well. They're catching so many fish that  
285 there aren't enough to sustain all of us here.

294 We can't leave the area. It is part of our nature to  
306 stay close to the shore and to be in these types of  
318 waters. Legislation in Hong Kong has attempted  
325 to keep us safe, but that has not helped much.  
335 To raise money to help keep us safe, Hong Kong  
345 has started a dolphin-watching program. They  
352 bring people out on boats to watch us. We don't  
362 like that very much. We're kind of shy around  
371 people. We tend to go away from boats coming  
380 toward us, especially since so many of us have  
389 been hurt by them. However, sometimes we do  
397 perform and let them see us jump and dive.

406 I want everyone to know about us. I want us  
416 all to be protected. We all want our calves  
425 to live and grow to be adults. We hope that  
435 these rules and many more new ones will help  
444 us survive. We don't want to be extinct.

452



## A Wonderful Friendship

Helen Keller was a young girl who couldn't see  
9 or hear. Alexander Graham Bell was the famous  
17 scientist who invented the telephone. These  
23 two famous people not only knew each other,  
31 but together they also opened up new worlds of  
40 conversation.

41 Helen Keller was born in 1880. When she was a  
51 baby, she lost her sight and hearing. Because  
59 of her inability to hear, she did not learn how  
69 to speak. Even so, it was clear that she was an  
80 intelligent child and was eager to learn. Keller's  
88 family did everything they could to find a way to  
98 educate her.

100 When Helen Keller was six years old, her parents  
109 took her to see Alexander Graham Bell. He was well  
119 known for his inventions. He was also a teacher of  
129 deaf people. He considered teaching to be his most  
138 important work.

140 Bell recognized Keller's intelligence. At his  
146 suggestion her parents hired a private teacher  
153 named Anne Sullivan. She worked with Keller every  
161 day. Through her persistence Sullivan was able to  
169 teach Keller words and their meanings. With a great  
178 deal of constant work, Sullivan taught Keller how to  
187 read and write. One of the first letters Keller wrote  
197 was to Bell.

200 Bell encouraged Keller to learn as much as she  
209 could. Sometimes they would go on rides or visit  
218 the zoo. They also shared a love of books. Bell  
228 would tell her stories by using his fingers to spell  
238 the letters of words in her hand.

245 One day Bell told Keller about his invention called  
254 the telephone. He explained how it was enriching  
262 lives. People all over the world benefited by being  
271 able to talk to each other when they were in  
281 separate places. Although Keller could not use the  
289 phone without help, she understood that it was  
297 important.

298 Bell opened a school for deaf students and formed  
307 an information center to help people understand  
314 the needs and abilities of deaf people. Keller was  
323 very interested in Bell's work with deaf children.

331 Keller had worked hard and set goals for herself.  
340 Because she wanted to help Bell by telling other  
349 people about his work, she decided to take lessons  
358 to learn to speak. When she felt comfortable  
366 speaking in public, she gave a speech at Bell's  
375 information center. She told the audience how

382 happy she was to be able to speak to them about  
393 Bell's work with deaf people.

398 Bell's invention of the telephone helped hearing  
405 people talk to each other. His teaching helped deaf  
414 people talk to each other and to the hearing world.  
424 His support and instruction helped Keller express  
431 herself by writing and even speaking. Helen Keller  
439 went on to finish college and became a well-known  
449 writer.

450 When she wrote a book about her life, Helen Keller  
460 dedicated it to Alexander Graham Bell. This was a  
469 symbol of their lasting friendship.

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