

# 6th Grade Passages

## End of Year (EOY) Student Packet

Passage 1      *Laura*

Passage 2      *Let's Do It Again*

Passage 3      *The Parthenon*

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## Laura

9 Laura Ingalls Wilder is a famous author. She wrote  
18 children's books about pioneer life in the late 19th  
29 Century. Laura was born in 1867 in a log house in  
37 Wisconsin. She was the second daughter of Charles  
45 and Caroline Ingalls. Laura had an older sister  
53 named Mary. They were very close. The Ingalls  
60 family moved frequently. They went wherever their  
69 father could find a job. Shortly after Laura's birth,  
78 the family moved to Missouri. A few years later,  
88 they moved to Kansas to start their own farm. A  
96 third daughter, Carrie, was born there. When Laura  
105 was 13, they left Kansas and returned to Wisconsin  
to be near family.

109 The girls were happy to be there, but their father  
119 longed to farm again. So, four years later, in 1874,

129 the family moved to Walnut Grove, Minnesota.  
136 They built a house and farmed the land. The three  
146 girls had many adventures there. But the family  
154 suffered many tragedies as well. During their  
161 first year there, Charles had grown a good wheat  
170 crop. It was destroyed by grasshoppers. This was  
178 repeated the next year as well. The family was  
187 blessed by a baby boy in 1875, but he died of an  
199 illness at only 9 months. The family suffered yet  
208 another tragedy when Mary lost her eyesight as a  
217 result of a stroke. That same year, Charles took a  
227 job with the railroad. They moved to De Smet in  
237 the Dakota Territories. When the railroad job was  
245 finished, they acquired some land. He began to  
253 farm again. A harsh winter made farming difficult  
261 that first year. But they persevered and were able  
270 to save enough money to send Mary to a school for  
281 the blind.

283 When Laura was 15, she earned her teaching  
291 certificate. She began teaching at a small school  
299 several miles from her home. It was at this time  
309 that she met a farmer named Almanzo Wilder. They  
318 married three years later. They had a healthy baby  
327 girl named Rose. They had many misfortunes as  
335 well, however. Severe storms ruined their crops.  
342 This forced them into debt. Almanzo worked hard  
350 in the fields, but he got sick and became crippled.  
360 During this time, Laura was pregnant with their  
368 second child. He died shortly after birth, unnamed.  
376 Soon after, their house burned down when  
383 something in the kitchen caught fire.

389 The family then moved to Florida, where the  
397 warm conditions improved Almanzo's health. They  
403 eventually returned to De Smet. But, in 1894, they  
412 relocated to Missouri. Here they would spend the  
420 rest of their lives. They bought a farm there and  
430 prospered.

431 Laura was a great storyteller. Her daughter Rose  
439 convinced her to write her stories so that other  
448 children could enjoy them too. Laura did so. In all,  
458 she wrote seven children's books. These comprised  
465 her Little House series. They have been widely  
473 read and admired. She and Almanzo spent the rest  
482 of their lives at their Missouri farm. Laura died in  
492 1957, at the age of 90. Their farm is now open for  
504 people to visit.  
507

## Let's Do It Again

My heart was beating so loudly that I was sure  
10 everyone could hear it over the slow rumbling of  
19 the motor. I jumped into the water and put on my  
30 skis. Slowly the boat crept forward, tightening up  
38 the ski rope. I held on for dear life to the handle on  
51 the end of the rope while Mom smiled encouragingly  
60 at me from the back of the boat.

68 I was trying very hard to recover my earlier feelings  
78 of excitement about learning to water-ski. "Whose  
86 bright idea was this anyway?" I asked myself  
94 anxiously. I sat in the cool water bobbing gently  
103 in my bright orange life jacket. I tried to keep the  
114 tips of my water skis pointing up out of the water  
125 as I had been shown. A wave of fear washed over  
136 me. There were just too many instructions to

144 remember. My little sister Nikki cheered as she  
152 jumped up and down in the back of the boat next to  
164 Mom.

165 Nikki had learned to water-ski at a very young  
175 age. I, on the other hand, always liked underwater  
184 sports such as scuba diving. Moving on top of  
193 the water was going to be very different for me.  
203 But once I mastered this, we would have another  
212 activity that the whole family could enjoy together.

220 "Deep breath," I reminded myself. Dad pulled back  
228 the lever to open up the throttle. The motor roared  
238 to life. "Here we go," I thought wildly.

246 Mom gave me a big thumbs-up, and the boat  
256 lurched forward and gave a mighty pull. I pushed  
265 up on my legs as hard as I could and let out a  
278 yell. I was actually standing on my skis, skimming  
287 across the water, but not for long. I fell forward

297 and landed facedown in the water. Thank goodness  
305 I remembered to let go of the rope. My skis came  
316 off, and my life jacket kept me floating on the  
326 surface of the lake.

330 "I don't believe it," I thought, flipping over to my  
340 back with a grin. "I almost felt like I was flying."

351 "Let's do it again," I called to Dad as he circled the  
363 boat around to pick me up.

369



## The Parthenon

The Parthenon, a building in Athens, Greece, is perhaps one of the most memorable structures on Earth. Built 25 centuries ago, it is one of the great architectural achievements of the ancient world. There are many reasons for its greatness.

Athens was the most important city in ancient Greece. In 480 B.C. Greece was under attack by both the Persian army and the Persian navy. The Athenian commander, Themistocles, knew that his forces could not defeat the Persian army then marching toward Athens. Hoping instead to make a stand against the Persians at sea, Themistocles and his forces fled Athens for a nearby island. Although the Persian army overwhelmed Athens and left it in ruins, the Greek navy, led by Themistocles,

121 annihilated the Persian fleet. This victory by the  
129 Greeks led all Persian forces to retreat within one  
138 year. About 30 years later the building of the  
147 Parthenon began. Construction took place between  
153 447 and 432 B.C. during the rule of Pericles. The  
163 Parthenon was constructed on the same site as an  
172 unfinished structure intended to honor the men  
179 who had lost their lives in an earlier battle against  
189 the Persians. The Parthenon would stand as a  
197 symbol of the strength and importance of the Greek  
206 people.

207 Many important cities in ancient Greece had  
214 an acropolis, or "high city," on which people  
222 constructed important buildings. The acropolis was  
228 the highest and most defensible location, so it also  
237 served as a fortress in the event of enemy attack.  
247 The Parthenon is located about 500 feet above  
255 the city of Athens. Before the Parthenon could be  
264 built, some areas of the acropolis had to be leveled

274 down, and other areas had to be built up. Then  
284 a large, solid foundation was constructed out of  
292 limestone blocks. The entire area was buttressed by  
300 a reinforcing wall.

303 The Parthenon is a rectangular structure consisting  
310 of two inner areas surrounded by columns. There  
318 are eight columns at each end and seventeen  
326 columns along each side. It is a large structure,  
335 considering when it was built. It is about 200 feet  
345 long and about 100 feet wide. It stands about 60  
355 feet high.

357 One extraordinary aspect of the Parthenon is its  
365 construction. It required between 20,000 and  
371 30,000 tons of marble that had to be precisely  
380 carved so that huge blocks of it could be fitted  
390 together without mortar to form the columns and  
398 the interior walls.

401 Perhaps even more impressive are the “optical  
408 corrections” that were used. The columns bulge  
415 slightly in the middle because experience had  
422 shown the Greeks that perfectly straight columns  
429 would not look straight to the viewer. Because  
437 corner columns normally appear smaller than  
443 others, the corner columns of the Parthenon were  
451 made slightly thicker and were placed closer to the  
460 other columns. The columns were also designed to  
468 lean inward slightly because perfectly perpendicular  
474 columns seem to slant outward. Furthermore, the  
481 platform on which the Parthenon sits was made  
489 to curve upward in the middle because a perfectly  
498 level floor would appear to sag in the center.

507 The Parthenon stands today despite the centuries  
514 that have passed. It is a timeless tribute to the  
524 enduring culture of the Greek people and is  
532 considered a model of excellence in concept and  
540 construction. It established the classic style of

547 architecture seen today in many public buildings,  
554 such as the White House and the Lincoln Memorial  
563 in Washington, D.C. This architectural style is a  
571 lasting gift from the ancient Greeks to the modern  
580 world.  
581