

6th Grade Progress Monitoring

August–November Student Packet

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The Blue Morpho Butterfly

Butterflies are beautiful. Butterflies are amazing.

6 One species of butterfly is the Blue Morpho.

14 The Blue Morpho has bright blue wings. Its

22 wingspan is about 6 inches. The underside of the

31 wings is brown. It has eyespots too. Scientists

39 say that these eyespots scare away predators.

46 The eyespots look like the eyes of larger animals.

55 Thus, predators will not be as likely to attack.

64 The eyespots keep the butterfly safe. The color

72 difference is useful in another way too. The

80 butterfly looks like it keeps disappearing when it

88 flies.

89 The Blue Morpho likes different foods. It drinks the
98 juices of rotting fruit. It likes tree sap. It likes wet
109 mud. It even eats fungi too.

115 The Blue Morpho is found in the rainforests of
124 South and Central America. It likes the tall trees.
133 It likes moist air. Many people love to look at this
144 beautiful butterfly. It is a popular butterfly for
152 collectors.

153

The Aye Aye

13 The Aye Aye is a type of primate. It is found only in Madagascar. It is an interesting animal.

19 Aye Ayes are nocturnal. They sleep all day. They
28 are awake at night. Their homes are nests in trees.

38 They don't live in groups. They live alone.

46 Aye Ayes have a special way of looking for food.

56 One of their fingers is long and thin. They use this

67 to tap the trunks of trees. They are searching for

77 insects inside the tree. They tap the tree so that

87 they can hear if insects have made tunnels inside.

96 They can tell by the feel and sound if they have

107 found a tunnel. They have strong, sharp teeth.

115 They use them to cut a hole in the tree. Then they

127 use their long fingers to scoop the insects out of
137 the tree.

139 Unfortunately, the Aye Aye is an endangered
146 species—not many are left alive. So people must
155 work to protect them.

159

Hans

Hans Christian Anderson was a famous author. He
8 wrote children's stories and fairy tales. But he only
17 became famous after a lot of hard work.

25 When Hans was young, he didn't play sports like
34 the other boys. Hans liked to make up stories. He
44 made a stage out of wood for his dolls and animals.
55 Then, he would have them perform his stories. He
64 could do this for hours.

69 Hans' family was poor. They lived in a small house
79 in Denmark. But that didn't bother Hans. His father
88 loved him very much and encouraged his talents.
96 At age 7, Hans saw his first play. After that, he told
108 his father he wanted to be an actor.

116 Hans left home when he was 14. He went to the
127 city. He wanted to become an actor. But people
136 laughed at him. Nobody gave him a chance.

144 Hans knew he was good at making up stories.
153 People loved to hear them. So he decided to write
163 stories instead of act. Hans could tell wonderful
171 stories. But he didn't have much schooling. He
179 could not write them well. Then he met a man who
190 offered to send him to grammar school.

197 Hans studied hard. But he felt awkward because he
206 was much older than the other pupils. He was often
216 laughed at because he was several years older than
225 the other students.

228 Hans continued to work hard and eventually went
236 to a university. He began to write more. His fairy
246 tales became very popular. Children everywhere
252 loved them.

254 Over the next few years, his writing became so
263 popular that almost everyone knew his name.
270 He began to travel to many countries. Kings and
279 princes invited him to their palaces. Hans felt very
288 important and special.

291 Hans lived a long life and was loved by many
301 people. He felt very proud to be doing something
310 that made others happy.

314

Penguins

Penguins are very interesting birds. Most penguins
7 live in very cold places. To keep warm, they huddle
17 together. The warmest place is on the inside of the
27 huddle. They take turns standing on the outside.

35 They also have feathers that are very small and
44 thick. These feathers help keep the penguin warm.

52 Penguins have small wings but cannot fly. Their legs
61 are very short. And they waddle when they walk.

70 These birds can slide across the ice faster than
79 waddling with their feet. Their feet are like flippers.

88 They use them as paddles. That makes swimming
96 easy.

97 Like other birds, the female lays the egg. Then the
107 male takes over the care of the egg. He keeps the
118 egg off the ice and warm until it hatches. First,
128 he balances the egg on his feet. Next, he covers
138 it with a special fold of skin. This keeps the egg
149 warm. Penguins are unusual birds.
154

A Soothing Song

Kayla stood and stared into the box at her feet. The

11 puppy she had found had been crying for an hour.

21 Now Kayla was ready to cry, too. Kayla knew her

31 parents were tired of listening to the noise.

39 She had tried everything she could think of—chew

48 toys, food, a warm blanket. Nothing made the

56 puppy happy. She wanted to keep him, and her

65 parents had said he could stay if he behaved.

74 So Kayla didn't cry. She wouldn't give up! She sat

84 down on the floor and began to sing. The puppy

94 stopped howling. Kayla smiled and sang some

101 more. Maybe this would work after all.

108

The Writing Pencil

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

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

103 When Josh woke up the next morning, he looked
112 at his new pencil. He knew what he would write

122 about. He wrote so fast that the pencil seemed to

132 be writing the story all by itself!

139

Koalas

Koalas live in Australia. Sometimes people call

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them koala bears. But koalas are not bears. They

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are marsupials. Marsupials are mammals that have

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pouches.

24

When koalas are born, they immediately go to

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their mother's pouch. They stay there for about six

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months. This is where they grow and develop. Baby

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koalas are called joeys. When they are born, they

59

are very tiny. They are no bigger than a peanut.

69

Joeys cannot see or hear when they are born.

78

These senses develop in the pouch. After they leave

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the pouch, they ride on their mother's backs until

96

they are ready to be on their own. Koalas can be on

108

their own when they are about a year old.

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

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

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

236 The number of koalas has dwindled over the years.
245 People used to hunt koalas for their fur. Their
254 forests have been destroyed to build houses. Many

262 have been killed or injured by cars. Because of this,
272 Australia has made it a protected animal. People
280 are no longer allowed to hunt them. But there are
290 no laws protecting their forests. Many koalas now
298 live in zoos or special areas where people can make
308 sure they stay safe.

312

Underground Town

How would you like to live underground? Many

8 families in the town of Coober Pedy, Australia, do
17 just that. Their houses, called dugouts, are carved
25 out of the earth. They are similar to regular houses.
35 They have kitchens, bedrooms, and living rooms,
42 but they have few windows. Most of the light in
52 the houses is artificial. It comes from lamps and
61 overhead lights instead of direct sunlight. The roofs
69 of the homes are made of layers and layers of dirt.

80 People in the town build dugouts because of where
89 they live. Coober Pedy is in a desert in southern
99 Australia. Temperatures can climb as high as 120
107 degrees in the summer. They can plunge as low as
117 32 degrees in the winter. Dust storms and swarms
126 of flies can make life miserable. Underground,

133 though, it is always a comfortable 75 degrees.

141 People don't even need fans.

146 Why would people want to live in such a place?

156 Coober Pedy is an opal-mining town. Opals are

165 colorful stones used for jewelry. The mines in

173 Coober Pedy produce most of the world's opals.

181 Early settlers in Coober Pedy realized that they

189 could avoid the harsh temperatures by building

196 their homes underground. Today almost half of

203 the 3,500 people in the town live in dugouts.

212 Restaurants, schools, and other buildings are also

219 underground. People in Coober Pedy enjoy their

226 lives "down under."

229

Vickie and the Kitten

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

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

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

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

145 But Kevin kept sneezing, and his eyes watered.

153 Finally Vickie’s mom said, “I’m sorry, Vickie. We
161 can’t keep Cotton if he makes Kevin sick.”

169 Vickie began to sob. Her mom hugged her and
178 wiped away her tears. “Vickie, I know this is hard.

188 But we’ll find a good home for Cotton. With Kevin
198 sneezing, this isn’t the right home for a cat.” Vickie
208 understood, but she was disappointed.

213 The next day Vickie’s mom suggested that they call
222 Mrs. Parsi, who lived across the street. She already
231 had two cats, but she might know someone who

240 wanted a kitten. Vickie agreed sadly while Cotton
248 purred happily.

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

297 That evening Vickie and her mom knocked on the
306 Martins' door. Mr. and Mrs. Martin greeted them
314 warmly. They smiled with delight when they saw
322 Cotton. "He's beautiful!" Mrs. Martin said. "Cotton
329 is the perfect name for him."

335 Mr. Martin noticed Vickie's sad face. He said,
343 "Vickie, maybe you can help us take care of Cotton.
353 You can come over anytime and play with him."

362 Just then a girl about Vickie's age came down the
372 stairs. "Oh, what a cute kitten!" she exclaimed
380 when she saw Cotton. "I love his big green eyes."

390 "His name is Cotton," Vickie said. "He loves to
399 chase string."

401 Together the girls played with Cotton. They laughed
409 as Cotton jumped for the string and ran after it.
419 They talked together as they played. Vickie learned
427 that the girl's name was Marie. They would be in
437 the same class at school.

442 A while later Vickie's mom said it was time to go
453 home. Vickie smiled as she said farewell to Cotton
462 and handed him to Marie. Vickie waved. She
470 thought, "Cotton has the right home now, and I
479 have a new friend."

483

Jim Henson

Those of you who have seen the show Sesame
9 Street know the wonderful puppets made by Jim
17 Henson. When Henson was a child, he never played
26 with puppets or saw a puppet show. But when he
36 grew up, he made puppets that became famous.
44 One of Henson's first puppets was a frog made
53 out of his mother's old green coat. The frog's
62 best friend was a pig. Soon many other puppets
71 followed.

72 Jim Henson was born in Mississippi in 1936. He lived
82 in a small town, where he rode horses and fished.
92 When Henson was in the fifth grade, his family
101 moved near Washington, D.C. After high school
108 Henson needed to find a job. A television station
117 was looking for someone to work with puppets on a

127 new show. Henson had learned about puppets when
135 he had joined a puppet club in high school. He was
146 excited about a chance to be on television. He and
156 a friend made three puppets and tried out for the
166 job. They were both hired, but the show was on
176 television for only three weeks.

181 People at another television station liked Henson
188 and his puppets. They decided to put them on an
198 afternoon show. Later Henson did another show
205 called Sam and His Friends. Many people thought
213 only small children would be interested in watching
221 it. People of all ages, however, thought the show
230 was funny. In 1958 it won a prize for being one of
242 the best shows in town.

247 Henson's puppets began doing commercials on
253 television, trying to get people to buy things such
262 as coffee. His puppets also appeared on weekly
270 television shows. In 1969 Henson helped make a

278 new show called Sesame Street. On this show his
287 puppets helped children learn numbers, letters, and
294 shapes.

295 Seven years later Henson's puppets had their own
303 show. In 1980 the show was chosen as the greatest
313 international television show of all time. It was seen
322 in homes all over the world.

328 Henson worked below the stage so his puppets
336 would be watched instead of him. When the camera
345 was pointed in a certain direction, the people
353 moving the puppets could not be seen. Henson
361 always watched a television below the stage. This
369 let him see exactly what the people at home saw
379 during his show. Henson made his puppets seem
387 real by turning their heads or changing the angle
396 of their mouths. This made them appear to be sad,
406 happy, or surprised.

409 Today people all over the world smile when they
418 see these life-like puppets on television and in the
428 movies.
429

Mrs. Mason's Gift

Gina climbed the steps to Mrs. Mason's porch.

8 She enjoyed visiting the former schoolteacher and

15 listening to her stories. Mrs. Mason was sitting

23 with a book on her lap, surrounded by her cats

33 and the many plants she tended. Today was the

42 day Gina would say good-bye until next summer.

51 School would start next week. Her stay with her

60 grandmother and the afternoons spent with her

67 grandmother's neighbor Mrs. Mason were over for

74 this year. Gina's parents were waiting for her in the

84 car.

85 "Thanks for all the cookies and stories, Mrs. Mason.

94 From what you've told me, school sure must have

103 been different when you were teaching. It's hard to

112 believe that computers weren't around then."

118 Mrs. Mason smiled and said, "I have something for
127 you." She handed Gina the book she was holding.
136 The pages were blank. The word Journal was
144 printed on the cover.

148 After waving good-bye to her grandmother and
156 thanking Mrs. Mason for the gift, Gina settled
164 down in the back seat for the long drive home. She
175 opened the journal Mrs. Mason had given her and
184 found a letter inside. After reading it carefully, she
193 knew she would soon fill her journal with memories
202 of the summer and hopes for the new school year.

212 Dear Gina,

214 Use this journal as a tool to focus on yourself and
225 the world around you. You can write about your
234 thoughts, memories, and daily life. Your journal
241 will then be a personal record of things that are
251 important to you. To keep a journal, follow these

260 simple steps. 1. Set aside a time to write every
270 day. Decide what time of day is best for you.
280 2. Write about things that interest you. People,
288 places, and everyday happenings are good topics.
295 You may choose to stick to prose or try some
305 poetry. 3. Write the day's date before each entry.
314 What you write will become more interesting to you
323 as time goes by. Later you'll have fun reading your
333 first entries. Once you start writing, you will get
342 more ideas. I hope this little book will lead to many
353 years of journal writing. See you next summer.

361 Your friend,

363 Mrs. Mason

365