

7th Grade Progress Monitoring

December–February Student Packet

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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

Titanic

April 10th, 1912, was the most exciting day of my
10 life. Little did I know that it was a prelude to the
22 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 me to
59 join him. He surprised us with second class tickets
68 on a ship called the RMS Titanic. My mother told me
79 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 alone
106 and explore the ship. I was 8 and grown up enough
117 to know not to get into trouble or to be a nuisance.

129 I quickly made a friend on board. Her name was

139 Marjorie. She was going to visit America with her
148 parents. We spent nearly the entire trip playing
156 together and watching the other passengers. We
163 had hours of fun!

167 Everything was normal when I went to bed on April
177 14th. Around midnight I was startled awake by
185 the voices of men yelling and women screaming.
193 My mother ran into the hall. She heard someone
202 say we had hit an iceberg. The ship was filling with
213 water. We had no time to gather our belongings
222 or get dressed. We followed the panicking crowd
230 toward the main deck. My mother clutched my
238 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 were

289 pushing each other. I was knocked to the ground.
298 I heard my mother scream. A kind man picked me
308 up before I was trampled. He led my mom and me
319 to a lifeboat and made sure we were safely aboard.
329 As other people boarded with us, I saw Marjorie
338 and her family waiting in line. I yelled for them,
348 but they didn't hear me. I was scared for them. I
359 wanted them to come on my boat. I wanted them
369 to be safe, too. I told the crewman that I would
380 make room for them, but he gave the order to
390 release our boat without hearing what I had said.
399 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 the
425 lucky ones. We were alive. So many people were
434 left behind that night. I wondered what happened
442 to Marjorie. I never saw her again.

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

Koalas

Koalas live in Australia. Sometimes people call

7 them koala bears. But koalas are not bears. They

16 are marsupials. Marsupials are mammals that have

23 pouches.

24 When koalas are born, they immediately go to

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

41 months. This is where they grow and develop. Baby

50 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

87 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

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

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

A Great Comet

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

60 Comets begin as dirty chunks of rock in an icy
70 fog. Some of these rocks move toward the sun
79 when its gravity pulls them. Once the rocks get
88 near the sun, they begin to look like comets. Each
98 comet forms a tail and a round head that are
108 characteristic of all comets. The round head and
116 tail make a comet easy to recognize. Comets travel
125 in orbits, or circles, around the sun. These orbits
134 can be big or small. Comets that make small orbits

144 around the sun come near Earth every 200 years
153 or less. They are not very bright, but we see them
164 more often.

166 Hale-Bopp is a comet that makes big orbits around
176 the sun. It will not pass near Earth again for about
187 2,400 years.

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

291 People enjoyed watching Hale-Bopp for several
298 reasons. It glowed brightly. Hale-Bopp could be
306 seen without a telescope for six months, from an
315 hour after sunset until an hour before sunrise each
324 day. Everyone had sufficient time to see this bright
333 traveler. There were plenty of chances to look at it.
343 There will continue to be many more comets for us
353 to see. Like Hale-Bopp, they will look like glowing
363 balls in the night sky.
368

Faces on the Mountain

In 1924 Doane Robinson of the South Dakota

8 Historical Society had an idea. He thought carving

16 huge stone faces into a mountainside would be a

25 wonderful gift to the people of the United States.

34 The monument would also attract tourists to his

42 state. He hired sculptor Gutzon Borglum to do the

51 carving. Mount Rushmore's giant faces now bring

58 millions of visitors to South Dakota to see one of

68 the largest public monuments ever created.

74 Borglum chose Mount Rushmore in the Black Hills

82 as the site for the carving. The mountain's rock

91 face was 400 feet high and 1,000 feet across.

100 The carvings would last because the rock was

108 hard granite without deep cracks or other obvious

116 flaws. Because it faced southeast, the rock face

124 was lit by the sun most of the day, so the carved
136 faces would not be in the shadows. Robinson
144 suggested carving the faces of western heroes
151 such as Lewis and Clark. Borglum wanted to honor
160 the Presidents who had helped make the United
168 States a great nation. Borglum's vision won out. He
177 chose George Washington, the first President, and
184 Thomas Jefferson, the author of the Declaration of
192 Independence. Next he chose Abraham Lincoln, his
199 personal hero, and finally the great outdoorsman
206 Theodore Roosevelt.

208 Work began on August 10, 1927. Artisans used
216 dynamite to blast rock from the mountain. Then
224 they cut away more rock to create the faces. These
234 master craftsmen sat in special chairs on long
242 cables that hung over the side of the mountain.
251 Borglum used a five-foot-high plaster model of the
261 faces to direct the workers. When workers started
269 carving Jefferson's face, they found that the rock

277 on that side of the mountain was unstable. Borglum
286 had to readjust his plans and carve Jefferson on the
296 other side of Washington. The original carving of
304 Jefferson's face was blasted away with dynamite.
311 Lincoln was carved after Jefferson, and Roosevelt
318 was carved last. It took workers six and a half
328 years to finish the carving, though the memorial
336 wasn't completed for 14 years because of financial
344 problems.

345 The memorial's 50th anniversary was celebrated
351 with an elaborate party on July 3, 1991. Nineteen
360 of the men who had helped build the monument
369 attended. Today the site is more popular than ever,
378 attracting close to three million visitors each year.
386