

8th Grade Passages

End of Year (EOY) Student Packet

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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

A Dream Turns 70

Early afternoon finds the base for Australia's Royal Flying Doctor Service a blur of activity. A 35-year-old man has been seriously injured. In less than 90 minutes, a medical team will be airborne, on its way to the victim 200 miles away.

Flying to give emergency care to the victim is just another day at the office—or in this case, away from the office—for the men and women of the medical service, which today celebrates the 70th anniversary of its first flight. That first flight, on May 17, 1928, was a dream come true for John Flynn, the medical service's founder. Flynn came to the Outback in 1911. At that time, only two doctors served this remote area of Australia. Flynn set up hospitals throughout the region. His goal was to

135 make medical care readily available to everyone
142 living there. However, because of the Outback's
149 vast size, many people were still not able to reach
159 help quickly. Flynn refused to give up. He continued
168 to look for ways to improve medical care in the
178 Outback.

179 A friend suggested using airplanes to fly doctors
187 to people in need of emergency care. Flynn liked
196 the idea and began asking for donations to start a
206 flying medical service. It took Flynn years to raise
215 the money to make his dream a reality. But his
225 efforts were finally successful. On May 15, 1928,
233 the Aerial Medical Service was born. Just two days
242 later it made its first flight. During its first year it
253 made 50 flights, treated 225 patients, and saved at
262 least four lives.

265 Much has changed since then. The Royal Flying
273 Doctor Service, as it has been known since 1955,

282 helps thousands of people every year. Its 40
290 planes, equipped much like hospital emergency
296 rooms, make thousands of flights from bases
303 across Australia. Technology continues to affect life
310 in the Outback. However, the medical service's vital
318 role has not diminished. Doctors still fly to people
327 in need of emergency care, and the service still
336 flies patients to hospitals when necessary. After 70
344 years, people in the Outback still depend on the
353 flying doctors.
355

Rocks from the Sky

Shooting stars are not really stars at all, but
9 are actually rock fragments that enter Earth's
16 atmosphere from space. These fragments, which
22 scientists call meteors, move so swiftly that they
30 begin to burn when they pass through the gases
39 of the atmosphere. Most are about the size of a
49 pebble and burn up completely before they reach
57 Earth's surface. Some larger ones, however,
63 pass through the atmosphere and fall to the
71 ground. Once they hit the ground, they are called
80 meteorites.

81 Since ancient times people have claimed to have
89 seen objects flash across the sky and, on occasion,
98 fall to Earth. But years ago most scientists did
107 not believe these stories. During the 1700s some

115 scientists acknowledged that rocks might fall from
122 the sky, but only after being hurled into the air
132 from Earth by lightning or a volcanic eruption.
140 Thus, scientists remained incredulous that these
146 rocks had originated in space.

151 A few scientists began to study these events
159 thoroughly. A German scientist named Ernst
165 Friedrich Chladni read written accounts of such
172 occurrences and realized that the stories were
179 similar in many ways. He also examined some of
188 the meteorites themselves and concluded that they
195 were not like the rocks of the regions in which they
206 were found. In a book published in 1794, Chladni
215 argued that rocks could fall from the sky following
224 the appearance of a meteor and that the rocks
233 came from space. Chladni's book was not taken
241 seriously by other scientists, but other evidence
248 soon followed.

250 In 1802 British chemist Edward Charles Howard
257 examined suspected meteorites collected from four
263 widely separated parts of Europe. He ascertained
270 that these rocks contained large amounts of iron
278 and nickel, which do not normally occur together on
287 Earth. Based on the rocks' chemical composition,
294 he declared that they probably had originated
301 somewhere other than Earth.

305 In 1803 an event occurred that convinced those
313 scientists who were still unsure. On the clear
321 afternoon of April 26, residents of the French
329 village of L'Aigle heard thunder and saw a huge
338 ball of fire in the sky. Explosions followed, and
347 thousands of rocks fell to the ground. News of the
357 spectacular occurrence spread, and a physicist
363 named Jean-Baptiste Biot came to L'Aigle to
371 investigate. Biot interviewed many of the villagers
378 and examined many of the rocks that had fallen.
387 Although the rocks resembled one another, they

394 were unlike the rocks in the area. He concluded
403 that the meteorites had indeed come from space.
411 This event was critical in changing the minds of
420 most scientists. They could no longer deny the
428 existence of meteors and meteorites. But the 1803
436 meteor shower did not offer a clear and thorough
445 understanding of meteorites. Another hundred
450 years would pass before scientists realized that
457 very large meteorites sometimes strike Earth,
463 leaving craters like those on the moon. Not until the
473 twentieth century, when airplane travel provided
479 better views of the landscape, did the existence of
488 these meteorite craters become obvious. Today,
494 scientists agree that Earth has a number of craters
503 caused by rocks falling from space.
509