

RAPID 
Assessment™

PASSAGE COMPREHENSION TASK

LEXIA RAPID ASSESSMENT™

Passage Comprehension Task Student Passages Booklet

This passage booklet is for use with the RAPID Passage Comprehension Task. The RAPID application will indicate a student's assigned passage and corresponding page number in this booklet. Students will read the assigned passage from this booklet. Educators will use the RAPID application to score each student's reading accuracy, fluency, and his or her responses to Passage Comprehension questions.

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An After Dinner Surprise

I was spending the weekend at my aunt and uncle's house. We had just finished eating dinner when my Uncle Ed said, "Now it's time for the best part of the night."

"What do you mean?" I asked him. "Are we going to play a game or go to a movie?"

"No," he said. "We are going to a place where we will build something amazing." Now, I was curious.

My Aunt Linda and Uncle Ed backed the car out of the garage. "Get in," they said, as smiles spread across their faces. I didn't know where we were going, but I was sure it was going to be fun. Visits to Aunt Linda and Uncle Ed's house for the weekend were always fun.

Soon, we arrived at a little restaurant. "Why are we here?" I asked. "We have already eaten dinner!"

"Yes, but we did not eat dessert," my uncle replied.

We entered the restaurant and walked to the back room. The back room of the restaurant was an ice cream shop where you could build your own ice cream sundae! My favorite flavors of ice cream were there! Bowls of toppings were set out in a straight row on a long counter. I could pick anything I wanted for my sundae. I put chocolate chips, cookie crumbles, whipped cream, and a cherry on top of two scoops of vanilla fudge swirl ice cream.

My uncle was right. We did build something amazing, and then we ate it!

Amazing Hummingbirds

Do you hear a humming sound in your garden? Look closely. You might see a tiny hummingbird in flight!

Hummingbirds are named for the humming sound their wings make when they fly. Their wings move very fast and create the humming sound.

Hummingbirds are the smallest kind of bird. These little birds only live in North and South America. Most types of hummingbirds are found in South America.

The Ruby-throated hummingbird is the kind that many people recognize in the United States. It is only about three inches from the tip of its beak to the end of its tail. The female Ruby-throated hummingbird is bigger than the male.

Hummingbirds are different from other birds in an interesting way. They can rotate their wings in a circle to help them fly forwards and backwards. They can fly up, down and sideways, too!

Hummingbirds are also fast. They can fly at a speed of 25 miles per hour. When they are trying to attract a mate, they can fly even faster!

Hummingbirds like to eat sugar. They get sugar from flower nectar and tree sap. Many people put out feeders for hummingbirds. The feeders offer the little birds the sweet nectar they like. People enjoy watching the little birds dip and dart around the feeders.

Hummingbirds seem like sweet birds, but they are very territorial. Territorial means they will attack any other birds that try to eat at their food source! They may be tiny, but they are fierce!

Animals That Come Out at Night

When we see the sun, it is day time. When we see the moon, it is night time. But, when we go to bed, it is time for some animals to wake up! Some animals come out at night. They do not sleep at night. They hunt and eat at night when we are sleeping. They rest when the sun is in the sky.

An animal that comes out at night is the bat. The bat eats bugs. It sleeps in a cave when it is day time.

A fox is another animal that comes out at night. The fox eats birds, rabbits and frogs. The fox can see well and hear well.

People often do not see animals that come out at night. We are sleeping when they are out!

Ants on a Log

I opened the front door to my house and ran to the kitchen. I was so hungry! I decided to eat some chocolate chip cookies and drink a big glass of milk for my afternoon snack. Just then, my mom walked into the kitchen. With the cookies in one hand, and the milk in the other hand, I didn't move. I could tell my mom did not like what I was going to eat for a snack.

"Wait just a minute," she said. "I like that you chose to have a glass of milk to drink. But, I think we can make something fun and healthy for you to eat. It is a snack called Ants on a Log."

I put the cookies on the kitchen counter. My mom took out celery, peanut butter and raisins. The cookies still looked much better, because celery is a vegetable! But then, she put two pieces of celery on a plate. Next, she spread peanut butter up and down on each piece of celery. Last, she put raisins in a row on top of the peanut butter on each piece of celery. She sang a little song while she did it. "One ant, two ants, three ants, four," she sang. I laughed.

"I give to you Ants on a Log, a very healthy snack," she said. I looked at the cookies. I looked at the Ants on a Log snack. I looked at my mom. I felt very happy and healthy!

The Bird's Nest

There is a big tree in my yard. One day, I saw a nest in the tree! I got my big sister. "Look!" I said. "There is a nest in the tree!" We looked at the nest.

"Let's look for the birds," said my sister.

We saw a big bird fly into the nest. It had a worm! Then, we saw baby birds. The big bird fed the worm to the baby birds.

We liked to look at the nest after school. We saw the big bird put sticks in the nest. We saw the big bird feed the baby birds. We saw the baby birds grow up. Then, we saw them fly away!

The Blue Whale

What is the biggest animal? It is not a bear. It is not a lion. It is not an elephant. The biggest animal is a blue whale!

The blue whale is a very large animal. It is longer than two buses. It is very heavy. The blue whale lives in the ocean. It eats and swims all day long. It can swim very fast and very deep. It does not sleep! The blue whale needs to eat lots of food each day.

Do you know that blue whales are like people? The blue whale breathes air, just like us! But it does not have a nose. The blue whale breathes with a hole on top of its head. This hole is called a blowhole.

Now you know about the biggest animal on the planet!

The Brave Traveler

It is December. School closes for the Winter Holiday. Dalton is excited. He will visit his grandparents for part of the Winter Holiday.

This visit is no ordinary trip to see his grandparents. It is the first time Dalton will fly on an airplane without his parents.

Dalton is ten years old. He convinces his parents he is brave enough to fly without them. He also knows that the flight attendants on the airplane will look out for him. Dalton's friend, John, visited his grandparents during the previous summer. John traveled on an airplane without his parents, too. John tells Dalton he will feel like a grown-up when he flies on an airplane without his parents!

On the day of the trip, Dalton's parents take him to the airport. They walk with him to the gate. The gate is where people wait to get on an airplane. A flight attendant calls Dalton's name. Her name is Toni.

"I will be looking out for you during your flight. I am here to help you if you need me," Toni tells Dalton in a comforting voice.

As brave as Dalton feels, he's glad to meet Toni. He looks back at his parents, waves to them, and steps confidently onto the plane.

His next stop will be the city where his grandparents live. When his plane lands, Toni walks with him to meet his grandparents.

"There's our brave traveler," his grandfather exclaims. Dalton smiles and gives his grandparents a giant hug!

A Card for Sam

“Get up,” Mom says. “It is time to go to school.”

“No! I do not want to go,” I say.

“What? You do not want to go to school?” Mom asks. “But you like school. Why do you not want to go today?”

“My best friend, Sam, is sick,” I tell my mom. “He will not be at school today. I want to stay at home, too.”

“Now I see why you do not want to go to school,” Mom says.

Mom gets some paper. “I have an idea,” she says. “Let’s make Sam a card. We can take it to his house on the way to school. You can draw a picture for him. It will help him feel better.”

“I like that idea,” I say. “I will make Sam a card with a picture of us playing ball. He will feel better. He will come back to school.”

The Constrictors: A Family of Snakes

What do you know about snakes? They do not have arms. They do not have legs. They come in all different sizes. Some are poisonous. Some are not. One way snakes are alike is that they all eat meat. But, snakes kill their prey in different ways.

One kind of snake squeezes its prey to death. Snakes like this are known as constrictors. Boas and pythons are in this family of snakes. These snakes wrap themselves around their prey. They squeeze their victims tightly. When their victims are dead, these snakes open their jaws wide and swallow them in one piece.

Common boas are called boa constrictors. They grow up to 10 feet long. Boa constrictors eat small mammals and birds. They are not dangerous to people.

The green tree python of New Guinea is another kind of constrictor. It is just like the emerald tree boa of South America. They both sleep in trees during the day. Their bright green skin helps them stay hidden among the leaves of trees. They hunt their prey at night. They do not use poison to kill their victims. They squeeze their victims to death.

Carpet pythons are another type of constrictor. They live in Australia. They can live in the rainforest or in the desert. They eat different kinds of animals, including rodents and lizards. The designs on their skin help them to hide in the shadows and wait for their prey. They squeeze their prey, crush it, and then swallow it whole.

The Fat Cat and the Yellow Bug

The fat cat sits on a red mat. The fat cat likes the red mat. He naps on the red mat. A yellow bug sees the fat cat.

She jumps on the fat cat. The yellow bug runs up and down on the fat cat! It is fun to run up and down on the fat cat!

The fat cat puts on a hat. The yellow bug is under the hat. Oh, no – it is a trap! The yellow bug is sad.

What will she do?

The yellow bug taps on the hat. What is that? It is a hole in the hat!

The yellow bug is glad. She can get out!

The yellow bug runs out on the mat. The fat cat taps the yellow bug. The fat cat grins.

They will be friends.

Fire Engines

Look! You can see lights flashing. Listen! You can hear a loud noise. A fire truck is coming! It might be on its way to a fire.

A fire engine is a special kind of fire truck. Fire engines take firefighters to battle fires. Fire engines carry many of the tools that firefighters need when they fight fires.

When a fire engine arrives at a fire, it acts like a giant supply box for the firefighters. The fire engine carries water and special equipment. You will find hoses, water pumps, and axes on a fire engine. You will also find fire extinguishers on a fire engine. Some types of small fires may be put out with a fire extinguisher. Since fire extinguishers are small, they are easier to carry. Also, they do not cause as much damage to a structure as water does.

The firefighters who ride on the fire engine have an important job. They get the water and put out the fire. The water to put out fires flows through hoses kept on the fire engine. The hoses that the firefighters use are heavy. The water comes out of the hoses with a lot of power! It takes at least two firefighters to carry the hose.

The next time you see a fire engine, remember how it carries firefighters and their tools to bravely fight fires!

Fireflies

Have you ever seen tiny lights blink on and off in your yard on a hot summer night? If you have, then you have seen fireflies in action.

Fireflies are actually beetles. They are also called lightning bugs.

Fireflies live in warm, humid areas. They come out in the summertime at night. You might find them in forests and fields, among the long grasses. They can also be found around water such as ponds, lakes, streams or rivers.

Fireflies use their lights to communicate with each other when they fly. They mainly use their lights to attract mates. They also use their lights to warn enemies to go away. If you watch long enough, you may discover their blinking patterns.

Firefly lights are produced by three special chemicals in a firefly's body. Scientists call firefly lights "cold lights" because no heat is produced by the firefly's light. Think about a light bulb in a lamp. That kind of light can get hot! It is different from a firefly's light.

If you want to see firefly lights twinkling on a warm summer night, keep your outside lights off! Too many bright lights can confuse fireflies and cause them to stay away. When the night is dark, fireflies will be easy to see. All you will need to do is look for the blinking lights.

A Fish for a Pet

I went to the pet shop with Dad. We looked at all the pets. I saw a black cat. I saw a brown dog. I saw lots of fish. The pet shop had frogs and mice, too! I got to pet a puppy. I got to feed a kitten.

We had fun at the pet shop! I asked my Dad if I could get a pet. Dad said, “You can get a pet for your birthday.” My birthday is next week! “I would like to get a red fish for a pet. I will take care of it,” I said to Dad. Dad said we will come back next week. Then, I can pick a fish. I felt very happy!

Frog's Day

The green frog likes to hop and swim. He can hop and swim all day. He hops in the grass. He sees ants in the grass. "Hello, ants!" he says. Then, he hops into the pond. He sees a fish in the pond. "Hello, fish!" he says. "Do you want to swim with me?" The fish says yes! The green frog and the fish go for a swim.

"That was fun!" says the fish.

Then, the green frog hops on top of a log. He sees a brown frog on the log. "Hello, frog!" he says. "Do you want to hop with me?" The brown frog says yes! The two frogs hop in the grass. They go for a swim. They have fun together. Then, they go home and take a long nap!

A Gift for a King

A long time ago, the ruler of Egypt wanted to give the king of France a gift. Egypt is in Africa. Since you could only find a giraffe in Africa back then, the ruler of Egypt decided to give the king of France a giraffe! This gift would be special. Because giraffes had never been seen in France before, the ruler of Egypt thought this gift would help the people of the two countries become better friends.

The giraffe's name was Zarafa. Her name means "charming" or "lovely one." She was a gentle and quiet creature.

Zarafa was a baby when she was captured in Africa. She stayed in a little African village until she was strong enough to start her long journey to France. Villagers took care of her. They gave her camel's milk to drink!

Next, Zarafa traveled in a little boat down the Nile River to a big city in Egypt. She had two men who traveled with her and took care of her. Then, she sailed in a big boat across a giant sea to the coast of France.

Zarafa had to wait until winter ended to continue her journey. When the weather was warmer and drier, she and her helpers walked all the way to where the king of France lived. The king of France was enchanted by his gift! Many visitors came to see Zarafa in the King's Garden where she lived. All of France loved her.

Hermit Crab Facts

Are you considering a new pet? Are you looking for something unique and interesting? If you are, a hermit crab might be the pet for you!

Before purchasing a hermit crab, you need to know some facts. There are many different kinds of hermit crabs. Some live on land, while some live in the sea. Hermit crabs are typically red, orange, or brown in color. They may have some purple spots. Hermit crabs have a total of ten legs. The front two legs are claws.

Most of the time, their soft bodies are concealed in their shells. Hermit crab shells do not actually belong to hermit crabs. They borrow their shells from sea snails. When hermit crabs grow and become too large for one shell, they transfer to another shell. As a hermit crab owner, you will always need to have another, bigger shell available in your crab's habitat.

All hermit crabs molt. Molting means shedding their tough outer skin so they can grow larger. The tough outer skin is called the exoskeleton. Younger hermit crabs molt more often because they grow at a faster rate.

Hermit crabs are not picky about what they eat. As a hermit crab owner, you can offer fruit, vegetables, meat and fish to your hermit crab. Grapes, raisins and popcorn have been noted as hermit crabs' favorite foods.

Hermit crabs are social creatures. They like a crowd. Make sure you purchase more than one. You don't want a lonely, sad crab in your house!

Home Alone

“Be good girls today,” the dogs’ owner says as she walks out the door.

The house is quiet now, except for the sound of paws running across the tile floor. The big, brown dog named Coco barks by the front door as her owner’s car drives down the street. The little dog named Princess follows behind her, barking at a person walking by the front of the house.

For the next seven hours, the house belongs to the dogs! Coco looks at Princess. Princess looks at Coco.

“What should we do today?” Coco asks Princess.

“Sleep,” Princess says.

“Let’s jump up on the couch,” Coco suggests.

“The couch is brown and my fur is brown, so if I shed any hair, it won’t show,” Coco says wisely.

“But my fur is white,” Princess exclaims. “The people will know I was on the couch, and I’ll get in trouble!”

“Look! There are white pillows on the couch,” Coco points out. “Just make sure you stay on those, and any fur you shed will blend right in with the pillow.”

“You are so smart,” Princess says. “That’s why you are the big dog!”

Seven hours later, the dogs hear the rattle of the garage door opening. “Wake up, Princess,” Coco exclaims. “Jump down on the floor and look like you’ve been there for a while.”

The dogs’ owner walks through the living room. She finds Coco and Princess sleeping on their dog beds on the floor. “You are such good girls,” she says.

How Crayons Are Made

Whether you color inside the lines or outside the lines, at one time or another, you have probably used a crayon. But you may not know how crayons are made. Keep reading to find out how one of the most famous school supplies ever to fill a backpack is produced.

There are two ingredients in crayons: color powder and wax. The color powder is mixed with the wax. The two ingredients are heated until they become a liquid. The liquid is poured into a heated mold that has little holes shaped just like crayons. The molds are cooled. Then, the new crayons are popped out of the molds.

The new crayons are checked to make sure there are no broken tips or other problems. Any extra wax from the mold and any broken crayons are recycled. Over two million crayons can be produced in a single day. More than 120 colors are possible.

Since many little children use crayons, the glue that holds the label on the crayon must be safe. If little children peel off the label and eat it, the glue will not make them sick. The label is wrapped around each crayon twice to make the crayon strong. The label also tells the name of the color.

The next time you take out your crayons to create something fantastic, think about all you have learned about how crayons are made!

How to Get Ready for a Camping Trip

If you like flowers and trees, I think you will like camping in the woods. If you like fish, birds, and bears, I think you will like camping in the woods. To go camping in the woods, you must know how to get ready. I will tell you how to get ready for a camping trip in the woods.

Pack food for your camping trip. Take water with you, too! Take a tent and a sleeping bag. You need to stay dry and warm when you sleep at night. Pack some soap and a towel. You will want to be clean. Take some clothes with you. Pack well so you do not run out of things to wear! Have fun camping! There are many pretty things to see in the woods!

Little Deer Alone

“Let’s go for a walk in the forest,” dad said. We put on our hiking boots. We walked in the tall grass of the meadow. We entered the forest and walked on a green path between giant trees.

We had not been walking for long when I said, “Dad, look!” Sleeping by a fallen pine tree was a baby deer, called a fawn. “He’s alone,” I said, looking around. “Where is his mother? He will die all alone in the woods. May we take him home?” I asked. I begged my dad.

My dad smiled. “No, we must not disturb him,” my dad said. “Just because he is alone now does not mean he has been left by his mother,” my dad explained. “Deer are born without a scent so that enemies cannot smell them. But, enemies can smell the mother deer. The mother deer will stay away from the fawn so that her scent will not lead enemies to her baby,” dad said. “The mother deer will come to the fawn to feed him and take care of him, but then she will leave.”

I looked at my dad, still confused. “When can the baby deer walk and run with his mother?” I asked. Dad smiled again. “When his legs grow strong enough to keep up with her,” he explained.

I looked at the fawn. He was sleeping so peacefully. I was glad to know his mother would take good care of him!

Max the Dog

Max the dog is a fun dog. He runs and plays. He sits and stays. He looks up at me and wags his tail. I can tell what he wants to do. He wants to run and jump! I can run and jump with him! I can run fast with Max by my side. No one can run and jump like we can. We run up little hills, and look out from the top to see what we can see. It feels like we can fly! We have a good time when we play. But, we must eat. We must rest. Soon, we will want to run, jump and play again!

My Day at the Farm

I am happy about going to school today. My class will visit a farm! I want to have fun at the farm with my teacher and friends.

When I get to school, my class will get on a bus. We must ride on the bus to the farm.

“Look,” says my friend, Sam. “There is the farm!”

We see lots of animals. We see pigs and cows. We see sheep and goats. We see horses.

“Stop that!” I say, as a goat chews on my pants!

We get to see baby animals at the farm. I feed a baby pig from a bottle. I feel happy when I take care of a baby animal. I ride a horse at the farm. My friend, Sam, rides a pony.

“It is time to go,” says my teacher. “We can now write a story about our good day.”

My Favorite Food

Do you have a favorite food or snack? I like lots of different foods, but my favorite food is popcorn. It can be a healthy snack.

Popcorn is made from corn. When the corn heats up, it pops! You can make popcorn at home. You can buy it at the store. You can also buy it at the movies! Some people like to eat sweet popcorn. Some people like to eat salty popcorn.

I like every kind of popcorn! I bring it to school and have it at lunchtime. I share it with my friends. I also help my mom make popcorn at our house. My family likes popcorn, too! We put it in a big bowl for everyone. We always eat every piece! Popcorn is fun to make and share.

My First Whitewater Rafting Trip

My family travels to the mountains every summer. We like to do many exciting things as a family while we're there. We hike in the woods. We build campfires and roast marshmallows. We go fishing for rainbow trout.

This summer, we will add a new adventure to our list of things we do in the mountains. We will go whitewater rafting on a river. We had to wait until I was seven years old and weighed 60 pounds before we could go. These requirements make sure I am big enough to go rafting on the river. Before this summer, I was too little.

The day finally came for our rafting trip on the river. We arrived at the outdoor center where we learned how to paddle. We also learned what to do if we fell out of the raft. Next, we climbed onto a bus that drove us to the river. Our guide helped us carry our raft from the bus to the river.

We took off down the river on water that was moving rapidly! I paddled hard! We had to work as a team to move the raft through the fast water and waves. Our guide always told us how to paddle over the areas of fast moving water and large waves. No one fell out of the raft!

We laughed hard as the waves splashed cold water into the boat. We were all soaked by the end of the rafting trip! We drove home soaking wet, but happy!

Neil Armstrong: The First Man to Walk on the Moon

Can you imagine what it would be like to fly in a spacecraft to the moon? Can you imagine what it would be like to walk on the moon's surface? Brave American astronauts have traveled to the moon.

An astronaut named Neil Armstrong was the first man to walk on the moon. Neil Armstrong commanded a spacecraft that landed on the moon on July 20, 1969. The name of the spacecraft was Apollo 11. Two other astronauts were with him on this historic journey. Their names were Buzz Aldrin and Michael Collins.

When Neil Armstrong stepped from the spacecraft onto the moon's surface, he said something that people still remember. He said, "That's one small step for man, one giant leap for mankind." What did he mean when he said those famous words? He meant that he was making a small step onto the moon as one man. But, all people in the world would grow with their knowledge of the moon because of the work he and his fellow astronauts did there.

What work did the astronauts do while they were on the moon? They spent almost three hours doing experiments and collecting samples to be studied. They also took many photographs. The sights on the moon were magnificent.

Neil Armstrong and his fellow astronauts were important because they did something that had never been done before. They walked on the moon. They studied what was on the moon. They showed that anything is possible.

The Picnic

“Today is a great day for a picnic!” Grandpa said to Alex.

“Where will we have a picnic?” asked Alex.

“We will have a picnic in the park,” said Grandpa.

Alex and Grandpa got ready for the picnic. First, Grandpa made a big lunch. He put it in a picnic basket. He packed apples and carrots. He also packed sandwiches. Then, Alex and Grandpa walked to a park near Grandpa’s house. Alex helped Grandpa put a big, soft blanket under a tall tree. They sat on the blanket and ate their lunch. They watched the squirrels run in the park.

After lunch, Alex and Grandpa went on a long walk. Alex showed Grandpa colorful rocks. Grandpa showed Alex some fox footprints in the mud. Then, they walked home. They had a great time on the picnic!

Picture Day Surprise

I like Picture Day at school. I look forward to it every year.

When my mom read the note from school about Picture Day, she said, “Let’s go shopping!” I knew what that meant. I was going to get some new clothes to wear for my school picture. I started thinking about what clothes I wanted to wear for my school picture.

“I think I want to wear a pink shirt with a picture of a puppy dog on it,” I said.

My mom laughed. “Why do you want to wear a puppy dog shirt?” she asked. I smiled at my mom, practicing my best smile. “That’s easy,” I replied. “I’m hoping that every time you and dad look at my school picture, you’ll think of how much I want a real puppy of my own.”

My mom paused. “You are a clever girl,” she said.

On the day of school pictures, I proudly walked up to the photographer. I was wearing my pink shirt with a picture of a puppy dog on it. My hair was pulled up in two ponytails, which looked a lot like puppy dog ears. I smiled my biggest, brightest smile. When my mom picked me up that afternoon after school, she was not alone in the car. My new puppy, Smiles, had his paws hanging outside the car window. His tail was wagging. I was smiling again!

Pizza Night

Sunday night is a special night at Justin's house. It is the night his family makes homemade pizza for dinner.

At 6:00 o'clock, Justin's dad calls everyone into the kitchen. Justin's mom takes out the pizza stone. It is a round, flat stone that the pizza will bake on while it is in the oven. Using a pizza stone makes the pizza dough turn out brown and crusty. Justin's family likes the crust that way.

It is Justin's job to shape the pizza dough. First, he forms it into a ball. Then, he flattens it with his hands, starting at the center of the dough ball and working outwards. He uses his fingertips to press the pizza dough into the shape of a circle.

Next, Justin's dad brushes the pizza dough with olive oil. The olive oil prevents the dough from getting soggy under the sauce and toppings.

Justin's mom steps in to spoon on lots of chunky tomato sauce. His little sister, Amanda, carefully sprinkles cheese over the tomato sauce. Then, she adds thin pepperoni and mushroom slices to the pizza.

When the pizza goes in the oven, Justin and Amanda set the table. After about 15 minutes, the timer on the oven sounds. The pizza is ready! Mom lights a candle on the dinner table and the pizza is served! Their homemade pizza is delicious!

Planting a Butterfly Garden

When people think about a garden, they may only think about plants and flowers. To bring those plants and flowers to life, just add butterflies! Then, you will have a butterfly garden! Just follow these steps, and you can bring these colorful insects to your backyard.

First, you will need to have lots of flowers that produce nectar. Nectar is a sweet liquid found deep within a flower. Flowers with nectar bring butterflies to your garden. Butterflies eat nectar. It is their favorite food. If you have many flowers with nectar in your garden, you will attract many butterflies. Butterflies like red, so red flowers are good to have in your garden.

Second, you will want the butterflies to stay in your garden. To get them to stay, you will need to provide special plants where the female butterflies can lay their eggs. These special plants are called host plants. It is important to have host plants in your butterfly garden. The host plants take care of the eggs and the caterpillars! They provide a place for the eggs. They also provide food for the caterpillars when they hatch. When the eggs hatch, the caterpillars will eat the leaves of these special plants. Caterpillars are very hungry when they hatch. Make sure you have plenty for them to eat!

Butterflies also like to bask in the morning sun. Provide rocks and bricks for them, or build a gravel path where they can bask in the sun. You might enjoy basking in the sunshine with them!

Reading with the Principal

Connor is in the second grade. He likes to read about sharks. He likes to demonstrate how well he is learning to read.

“May I read to you today?” Connor asks Miss White, the school principal. Connor has wanted to read with his principal for a long time. Today he decides to ask if she has the time to read with him. He knows she is a busy lady since she is the principal of an elementary school. “Will she have time to read with me?” he wonders.

Miss White smiles at Connor. “Of course I’ll read with you! We can select a book on your favorite topic,” Miss White states.

Connor gasps! “That sounds incredible,” he exclaims. “I already know what I want to read about. I want to read about sharks.”

Happily, Connor leads Miss White to the school library. Connor walks directly to the nonfiction book section. He selects a book on sharks and starts reading.

“Did you know that Mako sharks are one of the fastest species of sharks?” he asks Miss White. “They are also excellent jumpers and can leap great distances.”

“I did not know that,” Miss White says. “Keep reading so we can learn more about sharks.”

“Did you know that whale sharks are the biggest sharks and can reach lengths of 40 feet or more?” Connor asks excitedly.

“That is amazing,” Miss White says.

Studying the Planet Mars

Has life ever been possible on the planet Mars? This is the question that scientists want to answer.

The planet Mars is the fourth planet from the sun. After the Earth, it is the next planet away from the sun. Mars and Earth are space neighbors. Unlike Earth, the planet Mars is like a cold, rocky desert.

People cannot visit the planet Mars. To study Mars, scientists had to build a type of space laboratory they could send to the planet. It took more than eight months for the space laboratory to travel to the planet Mars.

Once it landed on Mars, the space laboratory moves on its own. It is built to do this. The laboratory is called a rover. The rover has its own name. Scientists call it Curiosity.

The rover Curiosity has the power to operate a robotic arm and wheels. It also has powerful computers and cameras. The Curiosity is able to gather rocks and soil. It can test the rocks and soil. It looks for water, too. Water is an important sign of life.

Curiosity sends information and pictures back to Earth. Scientists study the information and pictures to learn about Mars.

Scientists hope to learn if life was ever possible on the planet Mars. They also hope to learn more about how Earth and Mars are alike and different.

The Sun

On a farm, roosters crow when the sun comes up in the morning. Roosters aren't the only ones that depend on the sun. The sun makes life on our planet possible.

Our planet, Earth, would be frozen without the sun. The sun gives our planet light. The sun gives our planet heat.

The sun is very hot. It is made up of burning gases. There is no solid ground on the sun. Astronauts will never visit the sun. The sun is old. Scientists say that it has been around for four and a half billion years. That is a long time!

The sun is a giant yellow star. It is found in the middle of the solar system. The solar system is what we call the sun and all the objects that move around it. The sun looks so big and bright when we see it in the sky because it is the closest star to the planet Earth. Earth moves around the sun. It takes one year for Earth to move all the way around the sun one time. Seasons change as the Earth makes its orbit around the sun.

Each day, Earth also spins one time. The spin of the Earth makes it seem like the sun moves across the sky. As the Earth spins, the sun looks like it rises in the east every morning and sets in the west each night.

The Tree Fort

“I have a great idea,” Dad says. “Let’s build a tree fort in the giant oak tree in our backyard.”

“Really?” Adam asks. “Will it be for you and me only?”

Adam is the youngest child in his family. He has a mom, three older sisters, and two female cats. He enjoys time with his dad away from all the girls in his family. Building a tree fort with his father sounds like the perfect project for just the two of them.

“First, we need a plan,” Dad instructs. He takes out some drawing paper and two pencils. They begin to sketch a picture of what the tree fort will look like. Together, they design a tree fort with four windows, a front door, and a tall ladder that leads to the front door.

“What materials do we need to purchase at the builders’ supply store?” Adam inquires.

His dad puts his hand on his chin and replies thoughtfully, “We’ll need wood, nails, hammers, and a ruler.”

Dad smiles when he adds, “Everything you are learning in math class will help us as we measure and cut the wood.”

Adam laughs. “I knew math was important. I just didn’t realize it would help me build a tree fort!”

Dad and Adam spend several weekends working on the tree fort. Finally, it is finished. They climb the ladder to the front door. On the door, Adam proudly hangs a sign: Dad and Adam’s Tree Fort – Private!

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