

The Three Billy Goats Gruff

LISTEN to
your child read
this story aloud.

Once upon a time there were Three Billy Goats Gruff. One day they decided to cross a bridge and eat some new grass. But there was danger! Under the bridge lived a mean, ugly troll.

Trip, trap, trip, trap, went the Littlest Billy Goat as he walked on the bridge. "Who's that crossing over my bridge?" roared the troll.

"It is only I, the Littlest Billy Goat. I want to go to the hillside to eat the new grass."

"I'm going to gobble you up!" screamed the troll.

"I am so very little. Wait for my brother and you will get more to eat!"

"Okay. Be off with you then," said the troll.

Trip, trap, trip, trap, went the Middle-Sized Billy Goat as he walked on the bridge.

"Who's that crossing over my bridge?" roared the troll.

"It is only I, the Middle-Sized Billy Goat. I want to go to the hillside to eat the new grass."

"I'm going to gobble you up!" screamed the troll.

"Oh, don't eat me!" answered the Middle-Sized Billy Goat. "Wait for my biggest brother and you will get more to eat!"

"Okay. Be off with you then," said the troll.

TRIP, TRAP, TRIP, TRAP, went the Biggest Billy Goat as he walked on the bridge.

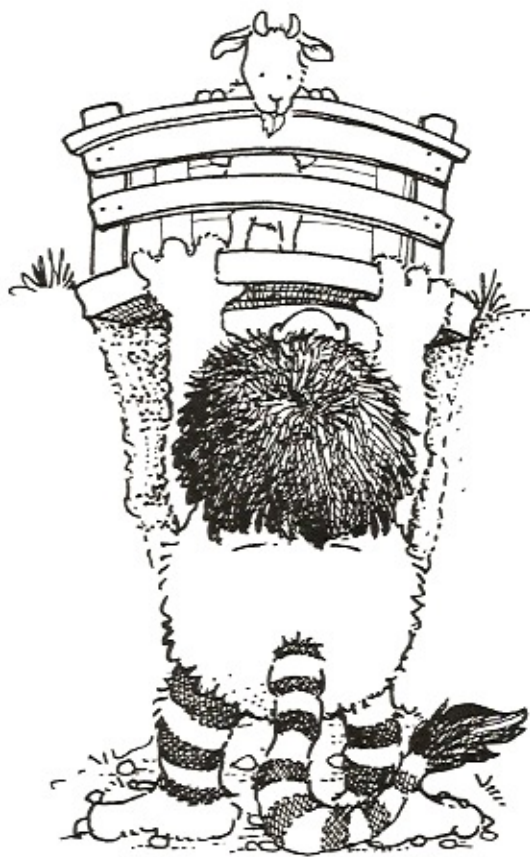
"Who's that crossing over my bridge?" roared the troll.

"It is I, the Biggest Billy Goat. I want to go to the hillside to eat the new grass."

"I'm going to gobble you up!" screamed the troll.

"You can't eat me! I am the Biggest Billy Goat." He lowered his head, stomped his feet, shook his horns, and charged at the troll. With one butt of his head he knocked the troll back in the water under the bridge.

And the third Billy Goat joined his brothers on the hillside to eat the new grass.



Retold by Mary Rose

The Fire on the Mountain

LISTEN to
your child read
this story aloud.

In the city of Addis Ababa lived Haptom Hasei. He was so rich that he was often bored. One night he called his servant, Arha. "How much cold can a man stand?" asked Haptom. "Can a man stand all night on the highest mountain in the coldest wind without a blanket or fire and not die?"

"I don't know," said Arha, "but wouldn't that be very foolish?"

"Perhaps, but what if there was a prize for doing it?"

"I am sure a brave man could do this, but I won't bet against you since I am a servant and I have nothing to bet."

"Well, I'll bet with you anyway. If you can stand among the rocks for an entire night without food or water or blankets or fire and not die, I will give you ten acres of farmland with a house and cattle."

Arha was so excited he agreed. The next morning he went to see Hailu, the wisest man he knew. Hailu said, "Tonight when you go to the mountain, I will build a fire here in the valley. All night long stare at it and think of its warmth. Your thoughts will keep you warm."

So that night Arha went to the top of the mountain. The servants of Haptom watched him to make sure he did not cheat. It was bitter cold and Arha was miserable. All night long he stood and stared at the fire in the valley.

The next morning he went to see Haptom. "You are a strong fellow," said

Haptom.

"How did you do this thing?"

"I looked at a fire in the valley," said Arha.

"Thinking of the fire made me warm."

"Then you have cheated," said Haptom.

"You used fire to live through the night. I will not give you the land."

Arha was very sad. He went to see Hailu, who promised to help his friend. Hailu held a feast at his house. He invited Haptom. It was a grand party, but Hailu would not serve the food. "Hailu, we are hungry. Why do you not feed us?" asked Haptom.

"Can you smell the food?" asked Hailu.

"Yes, we can smell it, but that smell does not make us full."

"It is the same as the distant fire that you can see, but not feel. If Arha was warmed by the fire in the valley, then you are fed by the smell of my food."

The people of the party all agreed. Haptom was ashamed and he gave the house, the cattle, and the ten acres of land to Arha.



Rewritten by Mary Rose

(Originally from *The Fire on the Mountain*
by Harold Courlander and Wolf Leslau)

The Grasshopper and the Ant

LISTEN to
your child read
this story aloud.

Once there was a happy grasshopper. All summer long he hopped and leaped in the grass and lay in the warm sun. He was happy to be alive and spent every day doing all of the things he wanted to do. He ate the green grass and the leaves of the bushes. He sang his grasshopper songs and played in the summer rain. He slept under the roses and calmly watched all the other insects.

Living nearby was an ant. The ant was happy too, but she knew that summer would not last. The ant knew that soon the warm sun would be gone and winter would come. She dragged dead bugs into her nest. She stored little seeds to eat. She dug her home deep into the earth so she would not be cold later. She worked very hard all summer. She did not have time to sing and play.

The warm days of summer passed quickly. Soon all of the plants were dead and brown. All of the leaves had fallen to the ground. The sun was hidden behind clouds and the air was cold. The grasshopper was very hungry. He looked everywhere for something to eat, but couldn't find anything.

Then he saw the ant. "Please, Ant, will you give me something to eat?"

"Why should I give you something to eat? What have you been doing all summer while I worked to get ready for the cold?"

"I did not have time to work," said the grasshopper. "I sang songs, I hopped and leaped, and sat in the sun."

"Grasshopper, you played and never worked. I worked and never played. Why should I help you out when you did not help yourself?"

The grasshopper hopped slowly away and the ant went into her warm nest to nibble some seeds. "Foolish grasshopper," she said. "Now he will have to pay for the time he wasted. The winter will not be kind to the lazy one."



Retold by Mary Rose

The Man With the Coconuts

LISTEN to
your child read
this story aloud.

One day a man went out to gather coconuts. He found a great many, so he put a heavy load of them on his horse and started home.

On the way he met a boy. The man said, "How long will it take me to reach my house?"

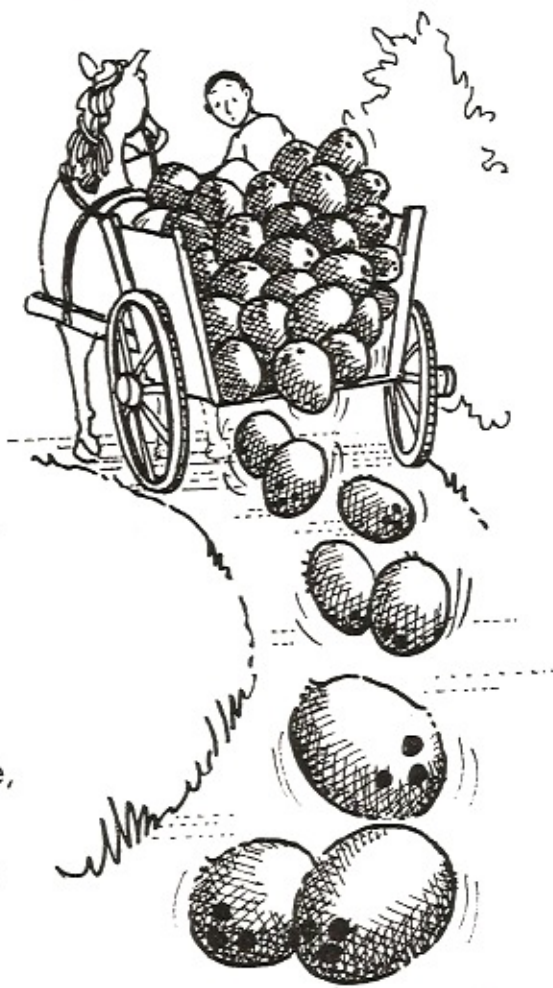
The boy looked at the heavy load of coconuts on the horse. Then he said, "If you go slowly, you will arrive very soon, but if you go fast, it will take you all day to reach your house."

The man thought over this strange speech, but he could not believe the boy. So he began to hurry his horse. The coconuts fell off, and he had to stop to pick them up.

Then the man hurried his horse all the more to make up for the lost time. Again the coconuts fell off. Again the man had to stop and pick them all up.

Then he hurried his horse more than ever to make up for more lost time. Again and again the coconuts fell off. Again and again the man had to stop to pick them up. Again and again he hurried his horse more and more to make up for all of the time he had lost.

When at last he reached home, it was night. He thought of the boy's speech, but it did not seem strange to him anymore.



By Mabel Cook Cole

The Real Princess

LISTEN to
your child read
this story aloud.

Once upon a time there was a prince who was looking for a real princess to marry. He looked and looked and looked. He wanted a real princess to be his wife. All of the girls he met had something wrong with them, and he knew they weren't really princesses.

One night there was a terrible storm. The wind blew and the rain came down very hard. Then there was a knock at the castle door. The king opened the door and saw a girl. She looked terrible. Her hair and clothes were wet and dirty, but she was very pretty.

The king let the girl come in the house. The queen said she could stay all night because of the storm. The girl said that she was a real princess. The queen decided to find out if this was true.

The queen put one single pea on the girl's bed. Then she placed twenty mattresses on top of the pea, and the girl went to sleep.

The next morning the king and queen asked the girl if she had a good night's sleep. She said no. She said that there was something hard in her bed and now she was black and blue.

The prince and the king and the queen knew that only a real princess could feel the pea through twenty mattresses. The prince married the princess and they lived happily ever after.



By Hans Christian Andersen. Retold by Mary Rose

The Little Red Hen

LISTEN to
your child read
this story aloud.

Once upon a time there was a little red hen who loved bread, so she wanted to plant wheat.

"Who will help me plant the wheat?" asked the little red hen.

"Not I," said the dog.

"Not I," said the cat.

"Not I," said the pig.

"Then I will do it myself," said the little red hen. And she did.

Soon the wheat was ready to cut. "Who will help me cut the wheat?" asked the little red hen.

"Not I," said the dog.

"Not I," said the cat.

"Not I," said the pig.

"Then I will do it myself," said the little red hen. And she did.

The wheat had to go to the mill to be ground into flour. "Who will help me take the wheat to the mill?" asked the little red hen.

"Not I," said the dog.

"Not I," said the cat.

"Not I," said the pig.

"Then I will do it myself," said the little red hen. And she did.

"Who will help me bake my bread?" asked the little red hen.

"Not I," said the dog.

"Not I," said the cat.

"Not I," said the pig.

"Then I will do it myself," said the little red hen. And the little red hen made bread.

When the bread was done, the little red hen asked, "Who will help me eat the bread?"

"I will," said the dog.

"I will," said the cat.

"I will," said the pig.

"No, you will not," said the little red hen. "You did not help me plant or cut or bake the bread. You will not help me eat it. I will eat it myself." And she did.



Retold by Mary Rose



How the Camel Got His Hump

LISTEN to
your child read
this story aloud.

Back when the world was new, animals began to do work for people. The horse with a saddle on his back came to the camel and said, "Oh, Camel, come and work like the rest of us."

But the camel did not want to work for people. He just said, "Humph!"

The dog with a stick in his mouth came to the camel and said, "Oh, Camel, come and fetch like the rest of us."

But the camel did not want to fetch. He just said, "Humph!"

Then the ox wearing a yoke on his neck came to the camel and said, "Oh, Camel, come and plow like the rest of us."

The camel did not want to plow. He just said, "Humph!"

This made the three animals very angry, so they went to talk to the Djinn in charge of all the deserts.*

The animals asked the Djinn, "Do you think it is fair that we have to work and the camel does not?"

"I do not think it is fair," said the Djinn. "I will teach Camel a lesson."

The Djinn went to the camel and asked him to help with the people's work.

But Camel just said, "Humph!"

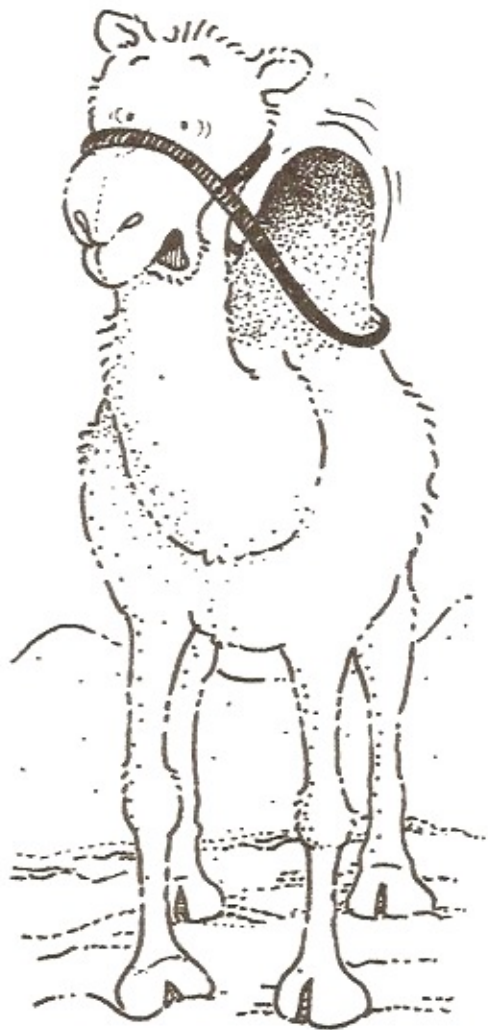
"Since you just keep saying 'Humph!' I will give you a 'hump'," said the Djinn.

Then the camel's back began to swell up to a big hump.

"Now you are going to work for people," said the Djinn. "You will walk in the desert for days and live from the water and food in your hump."

And so the camel learned how to work, but he has never learned how to be polite when people are around.

* In Muslim legend, a Djinn is a supernatural figure who affects the lives of men and women.



By Rudyard Kipling. Retold by Mary Rose

The Story of Snuggles

LISTEN to
your child read
this story aloud.

Suddenly everything was quiet. The tiny dog blinked her big brown eyes, but she couldn't see anything. She began to whimper, but no humans came to help her. She wagged her tail, but no hands came to pet her. She sniffed the air, but could not smell anything that reminded her of home. She was hungry and cold. She began to walk in the rain.

In the morning she saw that she was in a street, but it was not her street. She walked up to a man, but he kept going. She saw some children go by on bikes. Then a soft voice said, "Where are you going, little one? Have you been out here all night?"

A lady took the tired, wet dog home. She rubbed her dry and gave her some food, but the little dog was still shaking and afraid and stayed by herself. For one whole week the lady tried to find the owner of the dog. One day Lana, a little girl from next door, came to visit. She sat on the floor and the little dog crawled into her lap and went to sleep.

"You may have her," said the lady, "but she is still very scared of everything. I think she was blown away from her family in the big tornado we had here last week."

"She is shaking," said Lana. "And look how she hides her head in my arms."

"This little dog will need lots of love to make her forget a tornado," the lady told Lana.

"I will name her Snuggles! Every time she is scared, she can snuggle with me."

Snuggles whimpered and wagged her tail and Lana smiled. The tiny dog had found a new home at last.





Michael's Racetrack

*LISTEN to
your child read
this story aloud.*

For two weeks, five-year-old Michael kept asking his parents to let him drive his new race car. Every morning and every night he would say, "Please, Mommy, please. I need to drive my cars."

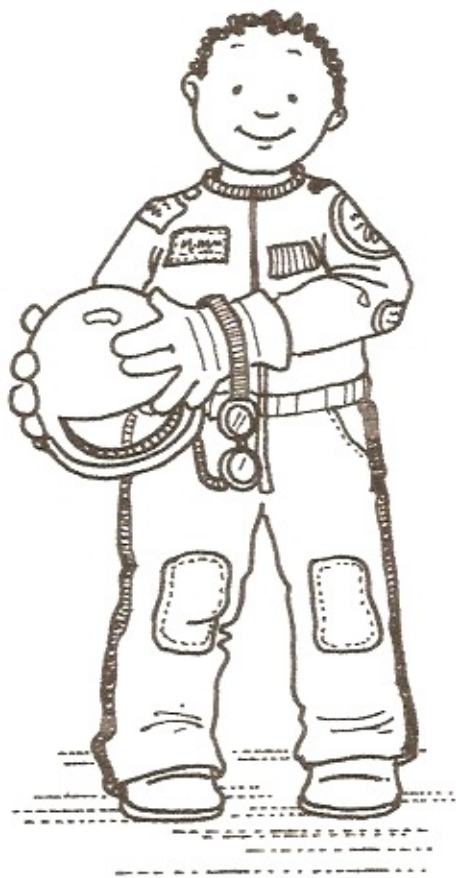
Michael's father built a racing track in the backyard that was just the right size for the new car. Then one evening after supper, Michael's father helped him put on his racing clothes. He had a tiny racing suit that zipped up the front. He had a racing helmet. He had racing gloves and shoes. He even had goggles. His father strapped him safely into the car and started the engine.

Michael's mother got out some chairs and iced tea. She put the chairs near the big track in the backyard. She sat down and waited to watch Michael drive his car round and round the track.

Here came Michael! But then he did something his mother didn't expect. He drove off the racetrack and onto the grass in the middle of the track. He turned the steering wheel all the way to the left and shoved the gas pedal down hard. The car began to spin in a circle. Three times around he went.

The tires made a perfect circle of dirt in the grass. Then Michael turned off the car and climbed out. He seemed to know just what he wanted. He sat on the ground and reached into his pocket. He got out his favorite tiny toy cars and began to play with them in the new flattened dirt.

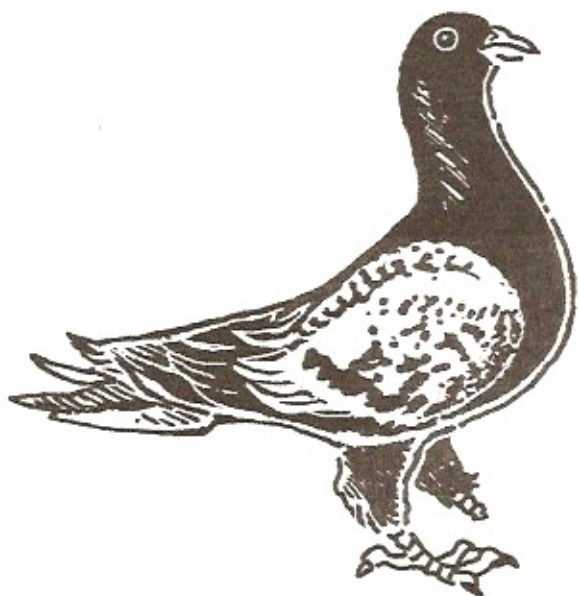
Michael's parents looked at each other and burst out laughing. They realized now that Michael had not really wanted to drive his big race car. Instead, he had his own plan. He had just needed to make a perfect, little racetrack for his toy cars.



By Susan Seay

John Silver the Pigeon

LISTEN to
your child read
this story aloud.



When you walk down any city street, you will see birds called pigeons. There are many kinds of pigeons, and one special kind is called the "homing pigeon." Homing pigeons were used before there were radios or telephones. These birds are especially smart. When they are taken to places far from their homes and released, these pigeons actually fly straight back home.

During World War I, the army found these birds to be very useful. A soldier would put a little silver tube on a pigeon's leg and place an important message inside. He would then let the bird go and it would fly home,

where another soldier was waiting to receive the note. These birds were a great help to the soldiers.

One homing pigeon was released during a battle at Meuse-Argonne in France in World War I. An explosion near the pigeon tossed him around, but he kept flying. When he finally got back to his home, he was almost dead. Part of his chest was gone and his right leg was missing, but the message tube was still there.

The men named him "John Silver" after the one-legged pirate in Robert Louis Stevenson's *Treasure Island*. He was treated kindly and honored as a war hero.

At the Wright Patterson Air Museum in Dayton, Ohio, you can still see John Silver. He is on display with famous airplanes and artifacts from wars. Every year on an army holiday called Organization Day, they call out the names of soldiers who died in wars. When the name "John Silver" is called, a soldier always replies, "Died of wounds received in battle in the service of his country."

Who would have thought that a pigeon could be a war hero? The next time you see pigeons strutting on the sidewalk, think of the homing pigeon, John Silver.

By Mary Rose

The American Bald Eagle

LISTEN to
your child read
this story aloud.



How much do you know about the symbol of America, the bald eagle? First of all, when we are talking about birds, *bald* does not mean “no hair on the head.” A bird is bald if it has a white-feathered spot on its head. Both the eagle’s head and its tail are white, and it has black feathers on the rest of its body. It is a beautiful bird.

The eagle is huge. If a grown man stretched out his arms as wide as they could go, he could not stretch them as wide as an eagle’s wings. These wings can span seven and a half feet from the end of one wing to the end of the other. The eagle is amazing.

The eagle also has excellent vision. It can see things from far away, and that makes it a great hunter. It can see a fish even if the fish is underwater. That good vision means that the eagle is wonderful.

Each one of the eagle’s claws can be over an inch long. Those claws, or *talons*, help it to catch its supper. They even have bumps on them to keep slippery fish from wiggling free. The eagle would probably be a very unhappy bird if it didn’t have those claws.

The eagle also has a very sharp beak. The beak can be as long as two inches and is very strong. It could probably eat any fish it wanted in five minutes by using that beak.

You can find a picture of the eagle on coins and on the Great Seal of the United States of America. The bald eagle is the best bird in the country.

By Mary Rose

Know About Snow?

LISTEN to
your child read
this story aloud.

We love to roll in it, catch it on our tongues, play with it, throw it, ski and sled in it, make pretend ice cream out of it, and just look at its beauty. It is cold. It is white. It is wonderful. What is it? SNOW!

In 1931, Wilson Alwyn Bentley photographed snowflakes and published the pictures in a book called *Snow Crystals*. Before then, people had not realized that snowflakes were really crystals, and they did not know that every flake that ever fell from the sky was different from every other one.

The shape of a snow crystal depends on how cold the weather is, how much water is in the air, and how hard the wind is blowing. Snowflakes can look like stars, columns, plates, or bullets. Most often the crystals freeze together and make a six-pointed star. The shape of the crystals determines if the snowflakes will make a light and fluffy powder—which is great for skiing—or if it will make the thick and heavy snow that is perfect for making snowmen.

The next time you are in snow, do what Mr. Bentley did. Let a few flakes fall onto something that is dark colored, and use a small magnifying lens to look at them. You are sure to see beautiful snowflakes and you can remember, as you play in the snow, that each one is different.

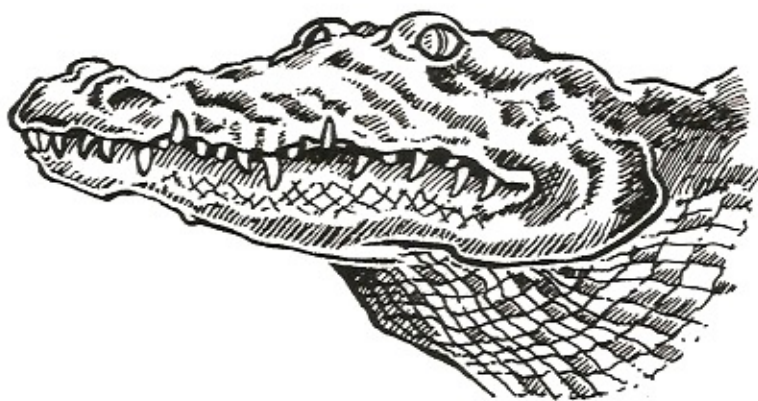


By Mary Rose

Danger Ahead: The American Alligator

LISTEN to
your child read
this story aloud.

There are just two kinds of alligators in the world. One is the Chinese alligator, which lives in the Yangtze River in China. It is only about five feet long and is not dangerous to humans.



The other alligator is the American alligator. It can be as long as 20 feet, and it is very dangerous to humans. American alligators will eat almost anything that shows up near their watery homes. They can eat fish, frogs, snakes, turtles, birds, raccoons, dogs, and cats. They will attack humans, too. And just because an alligator *looks* like it is asleep, don't think that it really is. Don't go near it. When an American alligator decides to attack, it moves as fast as lightning—you cannot possibly run fast enough to escape!

Alligators have really strong jaws and large, sharp teeth. They can kill most animals with just one quick bite. If the bite doesn't kill the prey, the alligator will drag it underwater to drown it.

The most dangerous time to be around an alligator is in the spring when the female has babies. She lays her eggs in a nest of mud and plants and stays nearby to keep them safe. When the eggs hatch, she becomes a very gentle and protecting mother. To move her babies to a safe place, the mother alligator makes many trips, gently carrying baby alligators inside her huge mouth. She cares for them and leads them around for one whole year, until they can take care of themselves. She is such a protecting mother that she will do almost anything—and attack almost anything—to keep her babies safe.

So, unless you are in China or unless you are a baby alligator, stay away from these dangerous animals!

By Mary Rose

Hoffman's Sloth

LISTEN to
your child read
this story aloud.

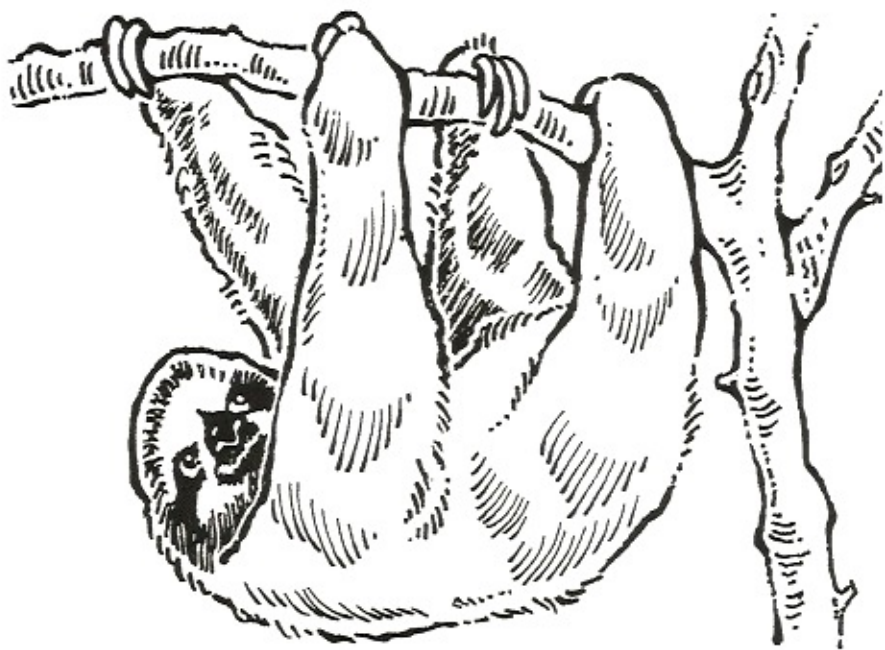
The Hoffman's sloth is one of the strangest animals in the world. First of all, the sloth hangs upside down in a tree almost its whole life. It also has very unusual fur. Take a look at a dog's fur. It grows from the dog's back and hangs down toward the belly. The sloth's fur grows in the opposite direction, from its belly to its back. So even though rain falls on this sloth about four or five times every day, the rainwater runs right off the sloth's fur.

There's something even more amazing about this sloth. There is a little line in each hair. Inside those lines grow tiny green plants called algae. There is so much algae living in the sloth's fur that it makes the whole animal look like a clump of green moss. The sloth is nearly invisible!

The Hoffman's sloth has three toes on its back feet, but only two claws on its hands. The claws are long and sharp and help the animal hang upside down for its whole life. The sloth can also fight with its claws.

Because sloths hang upside down so much, their back muscles are very weak, and they cannot walk. If they go to the ground to get to a new tree, they drag themselves along with their claws.

The sloth does *everything* upside down. It eats, sleeps, and has babies while it hangs in a tree. Most of the time it does nothing except eat leaves, fruits, and small twigs—and sleep! Now that you have read about the Hoffman's sloth, do you agree that it is very strange?



By Mary Rose

The History of Gum

LISTEN to
your child read
this story aloud.

The history of gum began thousands of years ago when prehistoric men and women chewed lumps of tree resin (a sticky brown material that oozes from trees). The ancient Greeks chewed on resin, and so did Native Americans. Early settlers to New England loved to chew resin, too. In 1869, a man from New York named Thomas Adams invented gum as we know it today. He used *chicle*, which is the sap from a sapodilla tree. Soon everyone in New York was chewing!



Then a new product called Dentyne[®] came out. This chewing gum was supposed to be healthy for your teeth. Around 1900, someone covered pieces of Dentyne[®] gum with sugar and called the new product Chiclets[®].

The first bubble gum, called Blibber-Blubber, was invented in 1906. It was so sticky that if a bubble popped on your face, it would not come off, so the company had to stop making it.

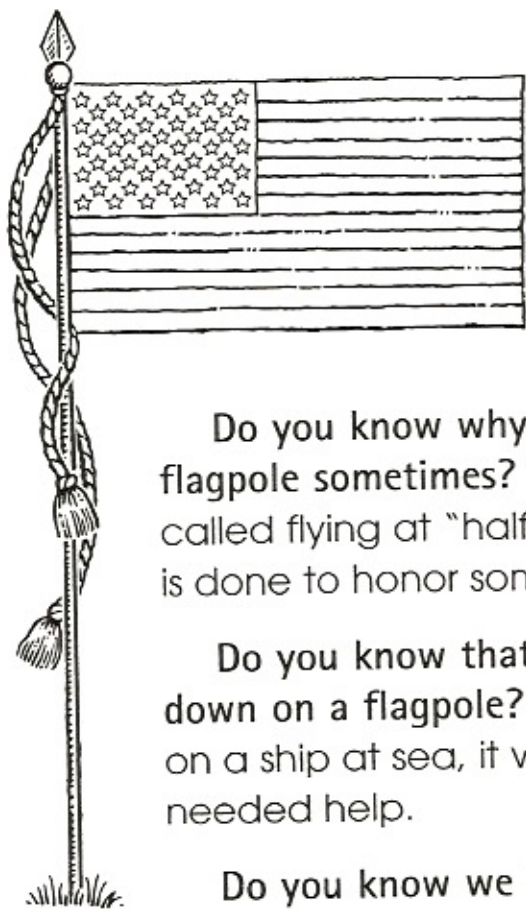
Finally, in 1928, Walter Diemer came up with the perfect bubble gum recipe. He invented Double Bubble[®], the first real bubble gum. He made it pink because that was the only color of dye he had. He took a five-pound lump of the gum to a grocery store. It sold out that afternoon.

You can still buy Dentyne[®], Chiclets[®], and Double Bubble[®] bubble gum today—proof that some great things have been great for a very long time!

Abridged by Mary Rose from an article by Lauren Tarshis

Flag Facts

*LISTEN to
your child read
this story aloud.*



Do you know why your school puts up the flag every day? In 1800, James B. Upham wanted school-children to save pennies to buy American flags for their schools. Today the flag is always flown when children are in class.

Do you know why the flag is only halfway up the flagpole sometimes? When the flag is only halfway up, it is called flying at "half-staff." (The staff is the flagpole.) This is done to honor someone important who has died.

Do you know that sometimes the flag was flown upside down on a flagpole? When the flag was put up this way on a ship at sea, it was a way to tell others that the ship needed help.

Do you know we have a special day to honor our flag? It is June 14 every year.

Do you know why our flag is red, white, and blue? The red stands for bravery, the white stands for innocence and purity, and the blue stands for justice. These are among the most important qualities valued by our country.

Do you know any rules about handling the flag? The American flag should never touch the ground. It should always be flown higher than other flags. You should put the flag up quickly and take it down slowly. If the flag is not made of plastic, it should not get wet. The flag should not be flown at night unless there is a light shining on it.

By Mary Rose



Puzzled by Puzzles?

*LISTEN to
your child read
this story aloud.*

When you were very young, you probably put together wooden jigsaw puzzles that had pieces about as large as your hand. Each puzzle had about four or five pieces, and each piece fit into a space all by itself. The pieces might not even touch each other in the finished puzzle. By now you have probably learned to like jigsaw puzzles that have many small pieces. And in a few years, you may be doing really hard puzzles—ones with a thousand pieces!

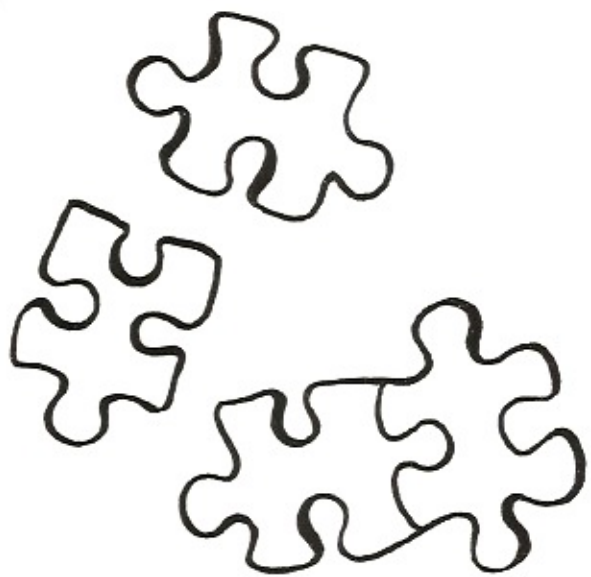
The first jigsaw puzzles were made in 1760—even before America was a country. People in Europe pasted maps onto wood and then cut them apart. The trick was to put the map back together to make a country.

In the early 1900s, people really started to love wooden jigsaw puzzles, but they were not very much like our modern cardboard ones. For one thing, the pieces did not lock together. One little bump, and the whole puzzle would fall apart. Often there was no picture on the lid or the puzzle box. This made it really hard to put the puzzle together. The finished picture was always a surprise.

In the 1930s, The Parker Brothers Company made their puzzles more fun by cutting the pieces into shapes like children, dogs, numbers, and flowers. During the Great Depression people bought ten million puzzles a week. If they didn't have enough money to buy one, they could rent one at the library for three cents. Puzzles sometimes came free when you bought something else, much like the prizes in cereal boxes today.

Today the most famous puzzles are made by The Stave Puzzle Company. They cut all of their puzzles by hand and will even cut a piece shaped like your name. They make trick puzzles that will go together more than one way. Some of the Stave puzzles cost as much as \$4,000!

Puzzles have come a long way since the first ones were invented. You, too, have come a long way since you first fit that giant puzzle piece into its special place.



By Mary Rose

Wham-O® Toys

LISTEN to
your child read
this story aloud.

Do the names Richard Knerr and Arthur "Spud" Melin mean anything to you? You have probably never heard of them, but in 1948, these two men started the Wham-O® toy company, and the company is still making toys today.

In the 1950s, these men heard about people using circles made from bamboo to help with exercise and losing weight. The men thought kids would like to play with the circles too. They made their circles out of hollow plastic. They made 25 million of their toys in the first two months. After a few years they had sold 100 million. What do you think the toy was?



Another toy made by the Wham-O® toy company really started out as a pie pan..It became popular for young people to toss around the pie pans from the Frisbie Pie Company, after they had eaten the pie. This gave Fred Morrison an idea. He made a toy shaped like these pans, using plastic instead of metal. He called it the "Pluto Platter," but people didn't buy very many of them. Then he changed the name of the toy. In 1957, he began selling his new toy. You can still buy this toy today. Can you guess what it is?



A third toy from Wham-O® is much newer. Children often play with this toy in the summer, and when they do, they get really wet. No, it is not a garden hose. It is not a plastic pool. It is not a water gun. Here's a hint: You lie on your tummy and slide on it. Now do you know what toy it is?

This summer you can thank the Wham-O® toy company for making your life more fun!



By Mary Rose

Fluency Rate:

Monday: _____ Tuesday: _____ Wednesday: _____ Thursday: _____ Friday: _____

RW: 144

Good Work Habits Count

People who have good work habits succeed at work. People with good work habits are on time. They miss work only for illness or earned vacations. They follow the rules of the workplace. Workers with good work habits find the best ways to do their jobs.

Employers hire people who have good work habits. An employer is a person or company that hires and pays workers.

Employers give raises to workers with good work habits. A raise is an increase in pay. For example, a fast-food worker arrives on time every day. The worker checks food orders carefully. The worker may get a raise after a few months.

Workers can improve their work habits by setting goals. A goal is an objective people try to accomplish. Workers must decide which habits need improvement. Then they set small reachable goals to improve those work habits.

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Fluency Rate:

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RW: 148

What language do you speak?

Language is the way we talk to each other – both out loud and on	14
paper. Wherever there are people, there is some kind of language. In fact,	27
there are more than 3,000 languages spoken in the world today. In the	40
United States, most of us speak English. English is our national language.	52
Once people move here, they learn English. That’s because having a	63
common language is important. It lets people give or get information. It	75
lets people learn about each other.	81
Many of us, though, also speak another language. Some of us learn	93
a second language in school. Some of us learned the other language	105
before we learned English. For example, about 16 million Americans	115
speak Spanish. This includes people who came here from Mexico,	125
Central and South America, Puerto Rico, and Cuba. Millions more speak	136
Tagalog, French, Italian, German, Chinese, Vietnamese, or some other	145
language. Do you?	148

Fluency Rate:

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RW: 152

Taking Responsibility

Workers must take responsibility for their work habits. Workers who take responsibility accept blame is they make mistakes. Workers who blame others use excuses to hide their mistakes and poor work habits. For example, an office worker does not finish a task on time. The office worker blames his poor performance on a fellow worker to cover up his problem work habits.

Workers who do not take responsibility for their problems will not improve. They need to understand the reason for their problems. Then they can find ways to solve them.

For example, a typist does not finish work on time. The typist talks to friends on the telephone during work hours. A supervisor points out that they typist's work is late. The typist does not make excuses. The typist takes responsibility for the poor performance. The typist decides to talk with friends only during break time. The typist's job performance improves.

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RW: 157

When Was The First Traffic Light Put Up?

Picture a busy street corner. Here come cars and buses. There go	12
trucks and taxicabs. Here come people on bikes and people crossing the	24
street. What would happen without traffic lights? Watch out!	33
The Romans put up the first traffic signs, long ago, but until	45
now, not many traffic rules were needed. Most people lived in the	57
country. They traveled on dirt roads. They used horses to get around.	69
Then cars were invented in the early 1900's. People could	79
travel faster and farther. Traffic rules became more important. Drivers	89
needed to know when to go and when to stop. Before long, traffic lights	103
were invented. The first ones went up in Detroit, Michigan, around 1920.	115
They worked just as ours do today. A green light told drivers to go ahead.	130
A red light told them to stop. A yellow light meant slow down and get	145
ready to stop. Traffic rules like these help keep us all safe.	157

Fluency Rate:

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RW: 163

How Is A Shirt Made?

Some shirts start out as cotton plant. Cotton plants are big and green. Small white balls of cotton grow on them. After the cotton is picked, the seeds and leaves are taken out. Next the cotton is pressed. Then it is sent to factories. Here people use machines to stretch the cotton and spin it into thread. Other machines weave the thread into thin cloth. Finally, people use more machines to cut and sew many other things.	12 25 38 52 65 77
Shirts may also begin as sheep's wool. Wool on sheep is like hair on people. In warm weather, the wool is washed. Then it is sent to factories. The wool is turned into warm, heavy cloth. The steps are the same as for cotton.	89 104 117 121
Making clothes gives many people jobs. There are farmers, truck drivers, and factory workers. There are people who sell clothes. There are also people who come up with new ways for clothes to look and some people write or teach about clothes.	131 142 157 163

Fluency Rate:

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RW: 164

Punctuality

Punctuality means arriving on time. Punctuality is a good work habit. It shows that workers care about their jobs. Workers who are not on time for work can cause problems. For example, a teacher who is late keeps students waiting. The school principal may have to find another teacher to watch the students until the late teacher arrives.

Sometimes workers cannot prevent being late for work. Responsible workers call their employers when they know they are going to be late. Responsible means being trustworthy and dependable.

Workers who are often late can take steps to be on time. Workers should go to bed early enough to get the amount of sleep they need. They should check that their alarm clocks are turned on and set properly. Workers who drive to work should be prepared if their cars do not start. They should know where the nearest bus stop is. They also could arrange to ride to work with other workers. This is called carpooling.

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Fluency Rate:

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RW: 171

Do The Seasons Change Everywhere?

The seasons change because the earth moves around the sun. So, of course, seasons change everywhere but the seasons are not all alike.

We have four seasons-winter, then spring, then summer, and then fall. The seasons are not exactly the same all over our country, though. Some states are pretty warm all year long. Others get snow and cold winds.

Places far to the south of us also have four seasons, but their seasons are the opposite of ours. When it is summer here, it is winter in Australia and Brazil. When we have spring, Australia and Brazil have fall.

Other places only have two seasons. The poles are like this. The North Pole and the South Pole have a light season and a dark season. For about six months, it is day there. Then it's night for about six months. Still other places have a very wet season and a very dry one.

No matter where you live, seasons change. You'll always need different clothes for different kinds of weather.

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Fluency Rate:

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RW: 171

How Did Black History Month Start?

Carter G. Woodson is called the “Father of Black History.” There is	12
good reason for this. Woodson studied the lives of African Americans. He	24
wrote books about how much they had done for our country. He also had the	39
idea to start Black History Week. This special week would honor all African	52
Americans. It began in 1926.	57
There are about 33 million African Americans in the United States.	68
Most families have been here more than 200 years. Their ancestors come from	81
Africa as slaves. African Americans became free after the Civil War but they	94
still had to fight for their rights. Leaders like Harriet Tubman and Martin	107
Luther King, Jr., showed the way.	113
In 1976, people wanted to do more to honor African Americans.	124
Black History Week then became Black History Month. It takes place each	136
February. Schools and TV shows tell about famous African Americans. They	147
also show those who are not so famous. Black History Month lets us learn	161
more about Americans who have given much to their country.	171

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RW: 174

What Harm Does Litter Do?

Ken went to the beach with his parents. They planned a long, happy	13
day. They unpacked blankets and the picnic basket from the trunk of the	26
car. At the beach, Ken took off his shoes and socks. He started running	40
across the sand toward the water. Suddenly, Ken cried out and fell to the	54
ground. His parents could see that he was hurt. Ken has stepped on a	68
piece of glass buried just under the sand. Someone had broken a bottle	71
and left it on the beach.	87
That bit of glass was litter. Litter is trash left where it doesn't	100
belong. There are laws against littering. Most cities put large cans for	112
trash along the streets and in parks. Some people don't care or are too	126
lazy to throw away their trash. They think that litter doesn't matter.	138
Litter does matter. It makes our streets, beaches, playgrounds, and	148
parks ugly. Litter can also make those places dangerous. So throw your	160
trash away. If you can't find a can, take the trash home. Don't litter.	174

Fluency Rate:

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RW: 174

What Happens To Letters That You Mail?

Think of it. Rain or shine, someone brings mail to your family.	12
Before radios, telephones, or TV, mail was the only way to get news from far away. Without mail, there might not have been countries. People around the world might not have known much about one another.	26
To mail a letter, you put a stamp on it. Then you put it in a mailbox. A post office worker comes in a truck to pick up all the letters in the mailbox. The letters go to your neighborhood post office. There people sort them into bundles. Each bundle goes to a different place. Some of the mail travels by truck. Mail to places farther away goes by airplane. Soon the mail gets to another post office. Workers sort the letters again. This time they put the mail together by street. Each mail carrier gets a bundle. Then the carrier takes the mail to homes and offices. Mail has been around a long time. Mail goes everywhere. No matter where you live, you get mail.	37
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RW: 176

How Do We Celebrate the New Year?

December 31 is the last day of the year. At midnight, a new year	14
begins. People all over the world celebrate. Here in the United States, we	27
welcome the New Year with noise and laughter. We blow horns and ring	40
bells. Families and friends have parties. Or people gather on city streets.	52
About the only serious thing we do is make promises to ourselves. We	65
think about things we'd like to do better in the New Year.	77
January 1 isn't the only time a new year begins. Chinese New	89
Year starts between January 21 and February 19. People celebrate for	100
four days. In big cities like New York and San Francisco, there is often a	115
dragon parade on the last day. People march along inside a dragon	127
costume that can be up to a block long. The Jewish New Year is more	142
serious. It's called Rosh Hashanah and happens in September or early	153
October. This is a time for prayer. So, the way we celebrate a New Year	168
depends on which New Year you're talking about.	176

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RW: 176

Is School Important?

Every country has schools. While you are in class learning, children	11
everywhere are also learning. In school, children find out about their	22
country. They also learn about the rest of the world. Schools teach about	35
being fair, honest, and about getting along with others. Schools train	46
people for jobs. They teach us things that we will use all out lives.	60
Reading is one of the most important things that we learn. Books	72
tell us about the past. Make-believe stories make us laugh or cry. We	85
also need to be able to read everyday things. We read mail and traffic	99
signs. We read street names and store signs. We read words on food	112
boxes and on TV.	116
Not long ago, only rich people could send their children to school.	128
Some other people wanted all children to have the same chance. Mary	140
McLeod Bethune was one of them. She started a school for African	152
American children in 1904. The school grew and grew. People know	163
how important learning is. By 1923, Mrs. Bethune's school was a big	175
college.	

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RW: 185

Why Do We Put Up Monuments?

A monument is something that we build in order to remember. It	12
may honor an idea, a person, or an event. One of our greatest monuments	26
stands for an idea. The Statue of Liberty was a gift from the people of	41
France. Since 1886, it has stood in New York Harbor. The huge statue	54
welcomes new Americans and for all of us, it stands for freedom.	66
Our country's capital has many monuments to people. The Lincoln	76
Memorial is one of the most beautiful. The stone building holds a large	89
statue of President Abraham Lincoln. It also has some of his words	101
carved in stone. Another very special monument is in Washington, D.C.,	112
too. It honors people who died in the Vietnam War. This monument is	125
unusual in many ways. First, it was planned by a young woman. Maya	138
Lin was only 21 years old when she got the job. Also, the monument is	153
very plain. It is a shiny black V-shaped wall with more than 58,000 names	167
cut into it. Many Americans visit it just to touch the name of a friend or	183
loved one.	185

Fluency Rate:

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RW: 188

Have Cars Changed the Way We Live?

Without cars, what would be different? There would be no fast food or bank drive-through, or course. There would be no big highways or gas stations. There would be no motels or shopping centers. Most important of all, you couldn't travel far to work or to visit people. It might take you all day to go 50 miles.	13 25 38 55 58
That's what life was like back in the 1800's. Of course, there were no traffic jams or accidents then, either. Parking was never a problem and no one had heard of dirty air. That came with millions of cars burning gas.	72 86 99
Cars were invented in the late 1800's, but few people had cars. In 1939, Henry Ford found a fast and cheap way to make cars. After that, more people owned them. Today, there are about 190 million cars on U.S. roads.	113 128 140
Cars certainly changed our lives. Some changes helped and some didn't. As more cars try to fit in less space, we may have to change again. We may have to save our cars for long trips. For our everyday needs, we may have to use buses and trains.	151 168 184 188

Fluency Rate:

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RW: 217

Madame C.J. Walker

Madame C.J. Walker was born as Sarah Breedlove on a Louisiana	11
cotton plantation in 1867. She went on to start the most successful company in	25
American owned by an African American woman. As a child, she worked as a	39
sharecropper in the cotton field alongside her parents, who were former slaves. They	52
lived in a shack with no windows and slept on a dirt floor. When she was seven,	69
both her parents died. At age fourteen she married. At eighteen she gave birth to a	85
daughter and by age twenty she was a widow.	94
For the next eighteen years, she worked as a cook and washer woman. Like	108
many African American women of the day, she straightened her hair. When it began	122
falling out, though, she invented a conditioning formula containing both shampoo	133
and pomade, which she applied with a hot comb. She also brushed her hair	147
vigorously. Her hair became shiny and smooth.	154
In 1905, after moving to Denver and marrying Charles Joseph Walker, a	166
newspaperman, she started a business selling Madam C.J. Walker's Wonderful Hair	177
Grower and sixteen other products. She went door-to-door and soon she trained	189
other women salespeople. By 1919 she had more than 20,000 agents and she also	203
had a chain of beauty salons. She was the first female African American millionaire.	217