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# Introduction

Reading should be something that students look forward to. However, sometimes students must find fun and accessible literature *before* they can realize how enjoyable reading can be! The passages in this book contain high-interest topics that will immediately hook even the most stubborn of readers. Fun themes, surprise twists, and grade-appropriate content will motivate and excite young readers. Additionally, the passages in this book were designed to be accessible to students of varying reading abilities. Basic sight words are introduced and then reinforced with repetition and practice. As new words are introduced, they are repeated and written into the story in ways that allow a student to use context clues to decipher their meanings.

Each unit begins with five reading passages. The first several passages are short and include four multiple-choice questions. The remaining passages are a bit longer and have five multiple-choice questions. The passages in each unit are a mixture of fact and fiction. The last page of the unit calls for a written response to a prompt that incorporates the theme of the unit.

The passages in each unit are all linked by a loose theme. As the students continue to read more of the unit, they will begin to discover the common thread that weaves together each collection of stories. This approach broadens a student's comprehension and understanding of the subject matter. It allows students to practice new words in various stories and in different genres. It also shows students how separate passages can be linked with other passages and used collectively to expand one's horizons and views. This approach ultimately allows students to become familiar with the flexibility of word use, different viewpoints, and how we can learn from both fiction and nonfiction texts.

All of the texts and activities in the *Let's Get This Day Started* series have been aligned to the Common Core State Standards (CCSS). Visit <http://www.teachercreated.com/standards/> for all standards correlations.



Name: \_\_\_\_\_

## Unfit to Drink

How is it possible that a person can be surrounded by water and yet suffer from thirst? Divide the Earth's surface into 100 parts. About 71 of those parts are water. Despite 71 percent of the Earth's surface being water, the vast majority of it is salt water. Only a small percentage is fresh water. Humans can only drink fresh water.

Why can't humans drink salt water? After all, it's cool and wet, and it can make a parched mouth feel moist. The truth is that the relief will only be temporary. Ocean water is nearly four times saltier than the fluids in your body. People have two kidneys. These organs work to flush out extra salt from our bodies. Kidneys need fresh water to flush out the salt. When you drink salt water, your kidneys need more fresh water to flush out the excess salt. The more salt water you drink, the thirstier you get.

1. When something is *parched*, it is
  - a. moist.
  - b. surrounded.
  - c. temporary.
  - d. dry.
2. From the text, you can tell that
  - a. our kidneys are more important than other organs.
  - b. our body fluids are 71 percent salt.
  - c. our kidneys need eight glasses of fresh water a day.
  - d. our bodies need to maintain a certain salt level.
3. The main idea of this text is that
  - a. our kidneys flush out excess salt.
  - b. Earth's surface is mostly water.
  - c. drinking salt water makes one thirstier.
  - d. ocean water is salty.
4. If you feel thirsty after eating pizza, it may be because
  - a. the pizza was ordered from the store.
  - b. the pizza was not well cooked.
  - c. the pizza was made with lots of salt.
  - d. the pizza did not have any mushrooms.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

## The Important Guest

Mason looked at the medieval tapestry that was on the wall. It showed a lord and his guests feasting in a castle. Mason said, "I can tell who the most important guest is."

Mason's friend Brett scoffed. "Seeing as how this is the 21st century, and you were not alive during the 5th through 15th centuries, I seriously doubt you can."

Mason pointed and said, "That man is. He's by the lord and the guest closest to the salt. Salt at that time was a valuable commodity. Long ago, people didn't have refrigeration or ways to keep food fresh. Salt was a great food preservative, and it had the added quality of making food taste better. If a man was seated where he could easily reach it, it was a sign of his importance."

Brett said, "The value of a commodity sure can change. Today, salt is cheap. In fact, it's the least expensive spice in the store!"

1. What century is part of the Medieval Ages?
  - a. the 14th century
  - b. the 17th century
  - c. the 19th century
  - d. the 21st century
2. A good or thing that can be traded is a
  - a. tapestry.
  - b. preservative.
  - c. commodity.
  - d. sign.
3. What statement does not explain why salt is cheaper today?
  - a. We have other ways to preserve food.
  - b. We use it to make food taste better.
  - c. We can transport it easily around the world.
  - d. We have found easier ways of getting it in a useable form.
4. Most likely, Mason and Brett were
  - a. in school.
  - b. in a grocery store.
  - c. at a zoo.
  - d. in an art museum.



Name: \_\_\_\_\_

## Rubbing Salt

*Rubbing salt in the wound* is an idiom. An idiom is a group of words that have a meaning that you couldn't deduce from the meanings of the individual words. Using only what the individual words mean, *rubbing salt in the wound* means that salt was rubbed in a wound. Ouch! That would hurt! But the phrase means something completely different. It means to make a difficult or bad situation even worse.

Perhaps you woke up early and couldn't get back to sleep. Finding out it is a holiday only rubs salt in the wound. Perhaps you were late to lunch. You were already upset about having less time to play. Then, the person in front of you gets the last dessert! You missing out on dessert is like rubbing salt in an open wound!

What is the origin of this phrase? Centuries ago, sailors were forced into service. Punishment at sea was harsh. At times sailors were lashed on the back. Often, the whip would break open their skin. Salt was rubbed into their wounds. This hurt terribly. Long ago, people did not have the medicines we have today. Salt was a valuable antiseptic. It was used to help prevent infection.

1. The *origin* of something is
  - a. what it means.
  - b. when it is used.
  - c. why it is important.
  - d. how it began.
2. *It is raining cats and dogs*
  - a. means that it is raining cats and dogs.
  - b. is an idiom meaning that it is raining heavily.
  - c. means that cats and dogs are chasing each other.
  - d. is an idiom meaning that cats and dogs will never get along.
3. Why might a doctor tell someone to gargle with salt water?
  - a. Salt is a natural antiseptic.
  - b. Salt tastes good.
  - c. Salt is as valuable as expensive medicine.
  - d. Salt will make your mouth sting.
4. Most likely, the idiom "worth his salt" or "worth her salt" means
  - a. that he or she likes to add salt to their food.
  - b. that he or she is valuable.
  - c. that he or she weighs more than salt.
  - d. that he or she does not know what salt is.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

## The Magic Lamp

When Sasha was walking home from school, she saw something glinting by a tree root. Attracted by its shine, she bent down and extracted it by scraping off the dirt. It appeared to be an odd-shaped lamp. "Maybe it is magic," Sasha thought with amusement, as she rubbed it clean with the edge of her shirt.

Suddenly, a genie appeared! "I've been in that thing for centuries!" the genie said. "My, how the world has changed! What kind of animal is that?" he asked, pointing to a car. "That doesn't look like a camel, and why isn't the ground sandy?"

"I wish for my backpack to be filled with treasure!" Sasha said quickly. "Do that one thing, and you are free forever." The genie nodded, and suddenly Sasha's backpack became so heavy that she nearly bent under its weight. Thinking of her wealth and all her riches, she raced home as quickly as she could. Her excitement turned to woe when she opened her backpack.

It was filled with slabs of salt. "Salt!" Sasha cried out in anguish. "What's so precious about salt?" Then, she remembered her history. In ancient times, huge camel caravans traveled across the African deserts in order to trade gold for salt.

- What title best sums up this text?
  - "A Camel and a Backpack."
  - "A Genie and a Car."
  - "Ancient Treasure and a Wish."
  - "Centuries and a Caravan."
- When a person feels *woe*, he or she feels
  - rich or wealthy.
  - excited or thrilled.
  - anguish or sorrow.
  - amused or entertained.
- How do you know Sasha really didn't expect the lamp to be a magic lamp?
  - It was under a tree root and needed to be extracted.
  - She was hopeful when she thought about it being magic.
  - It was odd-shaped and dirty.
  - She was amused when she thought about it being magic.
- Most likely, the genie
  - thought that he was giving Sasha real treasure.
  - didn't want to make Sasha's wish come true.
  - was angry that Sasha had found the lamp.
  - had only been in the lamp for one century.
- This text is fiction, but it has one fact in it. What statement is a fact?
  - Gold was once traded for salt.
  - Genies once lived in lamps.
  - Sasha let the genie go free.
  - Sasha's backpack was filled with slabs of salt.



Name: \_\_\_\_\_

## Write On!

You are stranded on a deserted island. Would you rather be left with a backpack full of gold or a backpack full of salt? Give reasons why you think one would be better. When you give reasons about salt, you must use information from the texts. Finally, explain which one you would pick and why.

[illegible]