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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: _____

Eerie Silence

People woke up, and they knew that something was very wrong. It was quiet. The quiet didn't make them feel peaceful or tranquil. The quiet was eerie. It was terrifying. It meant that something was horribly wrong.

Niagara Falls is the most powerful waterfall in North America. It straddles the United States and Canada. Hundreds of thousands of gallons flow over the falls every second. The thundering sound of the crashing water is an extremely loud and constant roar.

On March 29, 1848, it was eerily quiet because there were no more falls. The water had stopped flowing. People didn't know why. A few daring people walked out over the riverbed. The river remained dry for 30 hours. Then, with a roar that seemed to shake the foundations of the earth, a huge wave of water thundered down the channel. It crashed over the brink of the precipice. The roaring sound brought relief because it meant that everything was back to normal. Much later, people found out that a massive ice jam had blocked the river.

1. You can infer from the story that back in 1848,
 - a. Niagara Falls had less water in it.
 - b. it was common for Niagara Falls to stop flowing.
 - c. it was not possible to communicate the way that we can today.
 - d. the ice jam could be seen from the falls.
2. This story is mainly about
 - a. a rare but natural event.
 - b. an eerie but common event.
 - c. a normal and peaceful event.
 - d. a quiet and tranquil event.
3. When something is *massive*, it is
 - a. huge.
 - b. constant.
 - c. loud.
 - d. tranquil.
4. The eerie quiet lasted for
 - a. less than a day.
 - b. a day.
 - c. a bit more than a day.
 - d. 30 days.

Name: _____

Over the Falls

De Olde Yorke Times

October 25, 1901

One Cent

WOMAN BARRELS OVER NIAGARA FALLS!

By Terrence Astor

Annie Taylor's birthday was yesterday. Miss Taylor told everyone that she was 43 years old. This investigative reporter found out the truth. It was Miss Taylor's birthday, but she was not 43 years old. She was 63. Miss Taylor lied because she felt that no one would believe she was strong enough to survive if they found out her true age.

Miss Taylor's birthday wish was to be the first person to survive going over Niagara Falls in a barrel. The former schoolteacher had designed the barrel herself. It was made of oak and had ten iron hoops bolted around it. A 100-pound anvil was placed

at the bottom to help keep it upright and to minimize battering by the current. After Miss Taylor was harnessed inside, the barrel was sealed. Air was pumped in by using a bicycle pump. A strip of cloth was pushed into the hole that the pump hose had been inserted into.

Miss Taylor's wish was granted. When cut out of the barrel afterwards, Miss Taylor said, "I would caution anyone against attempting the feat. I would sooner walk up to the mouth of a cannon, knowing it was going to blow me to pieces than make another trip over the Falls."

- Most likely, why did Taylor need to be harnessed?
 - to minimize being battered and tossed around in the barrel
 - so that she could hold on to the anvil
 - to keep the cloth for the pump hose pushed into the hole
 - to make sure that the iron bolts did not come loose
- This is a fictional article, but it is based on facts. Using information from the story, you can tell that Taylor went over the falls on
 - October 23, 1901.
 - October 24, 1901.
 - October 23, 1902.
 - October 24, 1902.
- From the story, you can tell that on her next birthday, Taylor
 - might attempt this feat again.
 - will help someone else to attempt this feat.
 - will not attempt this feat again.
 - will teach others how to make a better barrel.
- What did Taylor do before she went over the Falls?
 - She was a designer.
 - She was a reporter.
 - She was an explorer.
 - She was a teacher.

Name: _____

High-Wire Act

No one had done it at such a dangerous point. There had been tightrope walkers a century before, but their cables were strung much farther down the river. They had crossed much farther from the falls. Nic Wallender wanted to attempt something far more dangerous. He wanted to cross the gorge close to the precipice. He wanted to be so close to where the water went over the edge that he would be buffeted by swirling clouds of spray. The mist would be so great that he would have to wear a raincoat.

Wallender attempted his feat on June 5, 2012. It is estimated that over a billion people watched on television. Close to 130,000 spectators gathered at the falls. It took Wallender about 25 minutes to make the 1,800-foot traverse. He made the trek on a two-inch steel cable. More than 200 feet below him, the water crashed over the precipice at 65 miles per hour. Wallender had to focus and concentrate. He could not let the high winds blow him off balance.

When Wallender arrived in Canada, he had to show something. He was told he had to bring it. Wallender had it in his pocket. He had put it in a plastic bag for safekeeping. What was Wallender told to bring? It was his passport!

1. A very steep rock face or cliff is a
 - a. traverse.
 - b. spectator.
 - c. cable.
 - d. precipice.
2. Which is the greatest number?
 - a. the number of spectators who were at the falls
 - b. the speed at which the water was crashing down
 - c. the number of people who were watching on television
 - d. the number of feet that Wallender walked on the cable
3. What adjective does **not** fit Wallender?
 - a. bold
 - b. determined
 - c. courageous
 - d. distracted
4. How do you know that Wallender was very close to the water?
 - a. He had to wear a raincoat because of the spray.
 - b. His cable was 1,800 feet long.
 - c. He put his passport in a plastic bag.
 - d. He was buffeted by high winds.
5. From the story, you can infer that
 - a. more people will now walk on tightropes across the falls.
 - b. you need a passport when traveling to a different country.
 - c. Wallender will no longer do high-wire acts.
 - d. few people are interested in high-wire acts.

Name: _____

Crazy, Crazier

Zhang Wei looked at his friend Lucy and saw that she had a furrowed brow. “A wrinkled forehead is always a sign of puzzlement,” he laughed. “What can I help you with?”

Lucy told Zhang Wei that she was trying to figure out who was crazier: Charles Blondin or Harry Colcord. She explained, “Blondin was a tightrope walker who, in 1859, walked on a two-inch-wide, 1,300-foot-long hemp rope over Niagara Falls. He did it several times. One time while on the middle of the rope, he took a stove that he had carried on his back, started a fire, and cooked his own breakfast! Another time, he somersaulted and backflipped across, occasionally stopping to dangle with one hand! He performed all these crazy crowd-pleasing antics, but it’s the one with his manager Colcord I can’t get over.

“Blondin once crossed with Colcord on his back! Before crossing, he said, ‘You are no longer Colcord, you are Blondin. Until I clear this place, be a part of me—mind, body, and soul. If I sway, sway with me. Do not attempt to do any balancing yourself. If you do, we will both go to our deaths.’”

“So,” Lucy concluded, “I’m trying to decide who was crazier. Blondin for tightrope walking or Colcord for trusting him with his life!”

1. Blondin did all of the following on the rope except
 - a. hang from it with one hand.
 - b. somersault across it.
 - c. cook dinner on it.
 - d. carry someone on his back across it.
2. What was Colcord’s relationship to Blondin?
 - a. He was his brother.
 - b. He was his friend.
 - c. He was his uncle.
 - d. He was his manager.
3. An *antic* is
 - a. a serious speech or talk.
 - b. a healthy treat or snack.
 - c. a playful trick or act.
 - d. a deadly bite or sting.
4. This story is mainly about
 - a. what makes people crazy.
 - b. a tightrope walker.
 - c. how Zhang Wei helped Lucy decide.
 - d. what Blondin told Colcord.
5. You would most likely furrow your brow when
 - a. answering “ $1 + 1$.”
 - b. determining 62 percent of 43.5.
 - c. answering “ 2×5 .”
 - d. answering “ $5,000 + 400$.”

Name: _____

Write On!

Write a newspaper article about either Blondin or Wallender crossing over Niagara Falls. Include the name of your newspaper, a headline, and a byline. (A byline is the name of the author.) You can make up details, spectator comments, or quotes from Blondin or Wallender, but include as many facts as possible.

[illegible]