

Building Comprehension

Grade 4 (Vocabulary Gr. 2)

The high-interest, low-vocabulary stories in this book feature diversified subject matter. The contents include:

- *Famous figures*
- *Sports personalities and events*
- *Mysteries*
- *Visual and performing arts*
- *Disasters*
- *Excerpts from legends and mythology*
- *Amazing facts and wonders in science and nature*

The stories are written with a controlled vocabulary averaging two readability levels below the content. A male-female, ethnic, and geographic balance has been maintained in the selections. Follow-up questions reinforce key comprehension skills. These include: recognition of main idea, significant details, word meaning in context, inference, and drawing conclusions.

Thoughtful discussions and on-going projects can be generated from many of the stories. Where space permits, a follow-through activity has been included to lead to self-motivated reading or to valuable discussion, also allowing the teacher opportunity to award extra credit. Questioning format varies to avoid predictability.

The purchase of this book entitles the individual teacher/purchaser to reproduce copies by any photocopy process for single classroom use. The reproduction of any part of this book for use by an entire school system or for any commercial use is strictly prohibited.

Authors

Ellen M. Dolan
Sue D. Royals

Artists

Kathy Mitter
Lee Brubaker

Copyright © 1999, 2014

Milliken Publishing Company

a Lorenz company

P.O. Box 802

Dayton, OH 45401-0802

www.LorenzEducationalPress.com

Printed in the USA.
All rights reserved.

Table of Contents

Jim Davis	1
Monsters on the Roof	2
Who Are They?	3
Trina's Magic Fingers	4
Madurodam	5
The Eagle and the Finch	6
Washoe	7
Joy Riding	8
Dinner for Two.....	9
Medusa.....	10
Jacques Cousteau.....	11
Icebergs	13
Titanic.....	15
Gwendolyn Brooks.....	17
Dressing a Japanese Tree.....	19
The Rice Crop.....	21
Dinosaurs Print Their Story.....	23
The Shed.....	24
Around the World Voyages	25
The Wild One.....	26
The Disappearing River	27
The Greedy Dog	28
The Story of Aesop.....	30
The Marching Ducks	32
The Dancing Ghost.....	34
Natural Art.....	36
The Lost Continent	38
Saint George and the Dragon	40
Great Grizzlies	41
Grizzly Rescues	42
Jungle Spirit	43

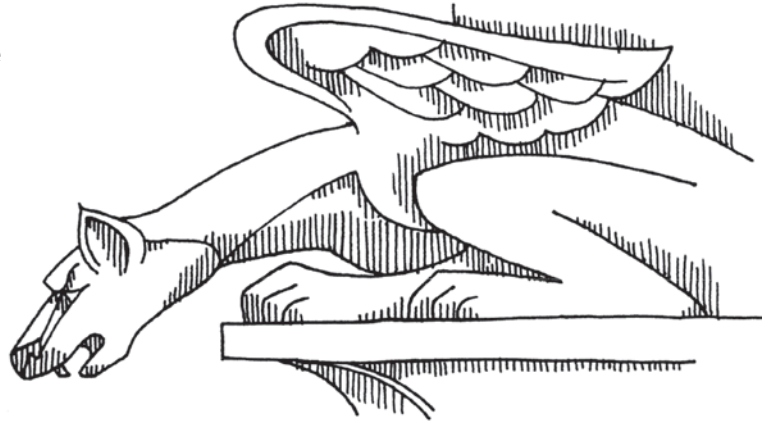
Monsters on the Roof

Would you be surprised if you saw a monster in church? In days gone by, almost every church roof in Europe had a large scary monster on each corner. They were carved from stone and called "gargoyles." Many people believed these monsters would frighten away evil spirits. But the gargoyles did have a real use.

In those times, there were no gutters on the roofs to carry away water. So when it rained, water ran down the sides of the buildings. The rocks turned brown, and the ground got very wet. Builders began to put long pipes on the corners of the roof. They stuck out about three feet from the building. This looked very ugly. So they began to hide the pipes under the stone carvings.

"Gargoyle" means throat. The pipe ran through the stone monster's throat and

poured the rainwater out of its mouth. It fell far from the side of the building. Most of the gargoyles were mean and scary looking. But sometimes the carver had a little fun. The monsters might end up looking like a friend. Or sometimes, it might be an enemy. Today, gargoyles are just decoration. But it is sometimes hard to look at them without giving a shiver. Do they still keep evil spirits away?



Main Idea

1. This story is mainly about
 - a. rain.
 - b. stone carvings.
 - c. pipes.

Significant Details

2. Gargoyles are often seen on
 - a. roofs.
 - b. wet ground.
 - c. stones.
3. The word "gargoyle" means
 - a. church.
 - b. friend.
 - c. throat.

Context Clues

4. A **gargoyle** is something like a
 - a. building.
 - b. statue.
 - c. rock.
5. To **frighten** means to
 - a. scare.
 - b. send help.
 - c. scold.

Drawing Conclusions

6. Did gargoyles help most with evil spirits or rain run-off? Explain your conclusion.

Following Through

7. Look around your own town or city for decorations on buildings. Describe something that you find, and tell about its uses.

The Rice Crop

(Adapted from Lafacadio Hearn's *Gleanings in Buddha-Fields*)

Many years ago in Japan, there lived a kind, old man. He was called *Ojiisan*, the Japanese word for grandfather.

One day, the people in the village below were having a party. Everyone's rice crop had grown well this year, and the villagers were happy. Ojiisan stood in front of his house with his grandson, Tada. They could see the whole village, which stood next to the sea. Ojiisan smiled as he watched the villagers. He was glad everyone's rice crop had grown so well. His own rice fields were ready to be picked.

All at once, the ground started to shake! Probably just another one of Japan's mild earthquakes. But then a strange thing happened. The waves on the shore rolled back into the sea. Villagers ran to the shore to look at the sea.

Ojiisan's smile quickly disappeared. He knew something was wrong. "Hurry, Tada," he shouted. "Light a torch!"

Tada quickly lit a torch. He handed it to his grandfather. Ojiisan took the torch and set his rice crop on fire.

"Oh grandfather! What are you doing?" sobbed Tada. "Please stop."



But Ojiisan wouldn't stop. He kept burning his fields until large clouds of black smoke rose to the sky.

The villagers saw the smoke and came running up the mountain to help. The people were worried about Ojiisan. Why was he acting so strangely? When the last villager was on the mountaintop, Ojiisan pointed to the sea.

continued...



A huge tidal wave, as tall as a cliff, came thundering onto the shore. Water sprayed everywhere. When the wave rolled back out to sea, the whole village was gone. The tidal wave had destroyed everything.

At first, no one on the mountain said anything. Then, Ojisan spoke. "That is why I set fire to my rice fields," he said. "There was no other way to warn you. I knew you would all come up to help me."



Main Idea

1. The main idea of this story is
 - a. the villagers were celebrating because their rice crops had grown so well.
 - b. Ojisan was afraid of earthquakes.
 - c. Ojisan gave up something of his own to help other people.

Significant Details

2. Why did Ojisan burn his rice fields?

3. The word *Ojisan* means
 _____.
4. The village stood next to the
 _____.

Drawing Conclusions

11. What type of person do you think Ojisan was? _____

12. Do you think Ojisan had good neighbors? Why or why not? _____

13. What lesson can be learned from this story? _____

14. Did this story have a happy or sad ending? Explain. _____

5. After the earthquake struck, the wave on the shore _____.
6. Tada was _____.
7. When the villagers saw the smoke, they _____.
8. The village was destroyed by a _____.

Context Clues

9. The rice **crop** grew well.
 - a. village by the sea
 - b. plants grown in a field
 - c. mountain
10. The **tidal wave** thundered onto the shore.
 - a. waves made by an earthquake
 - b. waves made by a large boat
 - c. waves in Japan