

## To the Teacher

*Develop Reading Power* is a unique supplemental series in which high-interest stories are brought together with activities that promote literal and inferential comprehension. Each lesson features a story from *Highlights for Children*, multiple-choice and short-answer comprehension questions, and a cloze passage derived from the story itself.

The central feature of *Developing Reading Power* is the story that is the basis of a lesson. Each story was selected through a procedure that involved both interest and readability criteria, resulting in a collection of juvenile literature that is of high interest and becomes progressively more difficult.

First, several stories were chosen from past issues of *Highlights for Children*. These stories were selected for their appeal to young readers and represent a wide variety of literary styles, including fiction, humor, folktales, biography, mythology, history, science, and nature study.

The stories were then grouped according to children's interests, and the DRP\* readability of the stories was used to arrange them by text difficulty.

The readability of the stories was measured in Degrees of Reading Power (DRP) untils by the DRP Readability Analysis Service at TASA. TASA has established a carefully standardized set of procedures to ensure that the Bormuth mean of cloze formula, one of the most dependable measures available, is applied consistently to determine the DRP readability of text. (For more information about the DRP Program and linking text difficulty to student reading ability, please call TASA at 800-800-2598.)

The questions that follow each story test both literal and inferential comprehension, and are consistent with the skills featured in most basal reading series and standardized tests. Each question in the lesson's comprehension section reflects one or more of the skills listed below.

## Comprehension Skills List

- Recognizing the main idea
- Recognizing supporting ideas
- Creating a title
- Sequencing events
- Identifying characters
- Recognizing likeness and differences
- Reacting personally to a story
- Comparing and contrasting ideas
- Drawing conclusions
- Making inferences
- Recognizing an emotional reaction
- Recognizing cause-and-effect relationships
- Understanding figures of speech
- Recognizing the author's opinion or intent
- Verifying an opinion, answer, or hypothesis
- Recognizing absurdities
- Identifying and interpreting feeling and attitudes
- Recalling details
- Responding to vivid language
- Recognizing various literary forms
- Recognizing bias
- Understanding irony
- Interpreting new ideas
- Distinguishing important from unimportant details
- Distinguishing fact from opinion

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## Comprehension Skills

Fill in the circle before the answer to each question.

- The main idea of this story is:
  - Tricks are difficult.
  - Everybody can do something well.
  - Pennies are small.
  - Ben likes baseball.
- Which does Ben do last? He
  - goes to the park.
  - shows his trick.
  - watches Mark ride.
  - watches a card trick.
- Who is not in this story?
  - Joe
  - Louis
  - Ben
  - Annie
- Ben is different from his friends because he
  - “can do ten.”
  - is smaller.
  - is younger.
  - is new in town.
- In the next few days, Ben will probably
  - be in the class play.
  - win a basketball game.
  - teach others the trick.
  - lose his ten cents.
- Where in the story do we learn about Ben’s trick?
  - the title
  - the beginning
  - the middle
  - the end

## Reading Power

Fill in the circle before the word that completes each sentence.

- “What can you do ten of?” someone asked.
  - lent
  - jumped
  - rolled
  - bent
- Ben stood up. He 1 back his arm. He put a coin on his arm right near the elbow.
  - finger
  - arm
  - knee
  - ank
- Then he suddenly put his 2 straight down—fast—and caught the coin in his hand.
  - ugly
  - lazy
  - easy
  - lovely

Complete each sentence with as many different words that you can think of. Write the words in the spaces below the story. One word has already been done for you.

Louis took a coin from his pocket and tried. When he put his arm straight down, the coin fell to the ground. “You have to 4 your arm down faster. It takes practice,” said Ben. “And it’s harder with more coins.” Ben took ten pennies out of his 5. “I can do ten,” he said. He bent back his arm and put the ten pennies in a stack near his elbow. Then he 6 his arm—fast—and caught all ten pennies.

- put
- pocket
- straightened

Teacher footnote: Encourage the students to think of grammatically appropriate words that complete the blanks. Discuss how some are consistent with the meaning of the story and some change it. Whenever possible, discuss the variations of meaning implied by different words.

## Wait and See!

Sarah Rose Skaates

One warm spring day Beth dug a hole in the corner of the garden. She looked to see if anyone was watching. She put something small into the hole and covered it with dirt. Her friend Mark came up behind her.

“Hi,” he said. “What are you doing?”

“I can’t tell you,” Beth said. “It’s a secret.”

“A secret! What kind of secret gets hidden in the ground?”

Beth smiled and shook her head. “I can’t tell you,” she said again. “But if you wait and watch, then you will know.”

“Hey!” Mark had an idea. “Is it money? Pirates put money in the ground and dig it up later and spend it. When you dig it up, can I help you spend it?”

But Beth wouldn’t say anything except, “Just wait and see.”

Several days passed. There was nothing to see, and Mark got tired of waiting. So he and Beth played in the park.

Then one day Beth found little green leaves coming out of the ground. “There, Mark,” she said.

“Now do you know my secret?”

Mark looked at the leaves a long time. “I know now,” he said. “You put magic beans in the ground, and this is a magic beanstalk. Can I climb up to the sky with you when it gets big enough?”

But Beth just laughed. “Wait and see,” she said. “You’ll have to wait and see.”

The summer days were warm and sunny. Sometimes Beth went to the swimming pool. Sometimes she had picnics with her friends. The little plant in the garden grew and grew and grew.

Some days dark clouds filled the sky, and raindrops bounced off the roofs and sidewalks. Beth sat on her porch with her toys and books. Mark brought over his checkerboard. The raindrops splashed on big green leaves in the garden.

Beth’s secret plant was getting big. Mark shook his head and sighed. “I guess it’s not a magic beanstalk,” he said. “Beanstalks grow up to the sky. This plant looks more like an octopus. Hey,

## Waking Up the Sun

R. M. Walls

There was once a rooster named Clancey who thought he had to wake up the sun every morning. He would crow and crow until the sun rose. He would crow while the sun was rising. When the sun was finally up, Clancey would crow a few more times to make sure the sun stayed up in the sky where it belonged.

After he rested a bit, Clancey would strut a little and find his other animal friends to tell them all about his difficult job.

“Yes,” Clancey would say, “I didn’t think the sun would make it this morning. There was a pink cloud in its way, so I gave three extra crows. I have found out through mornings of experience that extra crows work best when there are clouds in the sky.”

Finally one morning Priscilla Pig said, “Well, I don’t see what difference your crowing makes. You talk about crowing all the time. To me it’s a bunch of noise.”

“You have no ear for music,”

said Clancey, “and you don’t appreciate the voice of a beautiful singer.”

“Well, I think my voice is just as good,” said Abigail, the cow.

“Mine, too,” said Old Blue, the horse. “Even though I don’t use it much, I have a fine voice.”

All the animals agreed they had beautiful voices and they would wake up the sun the next morning instead of Clancey.

The next morning all of the animals started to sing, even before Clancey normally did. The dogs barked. The cats meowed. The pigs oinked. The ducks quacked. The cows mooed. The horses neighed. The donkey brayed. What a loud sound it was! Surely the sun must have heard it.

Even if the sun didn’t hear, the farmer did. “What is all that racket, Matilda?” he yelled at his wife. “There is something after the animals.” He rushed to the barnyard, but there was nothing there.

That morning, amid the sing-



# Something Special

Sandra Fenichel Asher

City Squirrel saw an acorn across the street. But as he dashed out to get it, cars and trucks screeched to a stop and honked their horns at him angrily. He quickly ran back to the sidewalk.

"Oh, dear!" he cried, "That was very careless of me. But I have not found an acorn all day, and I must store away food for the winter."

A sparrow hopped by and said, "Why not come to the forest with me? There are no cars or trucks there."

"I have been to the forest," said City Squirrel, "but I missed the city. There's something special about the city."

"What?" asked the sparrow.

"I do not know exactly," said City Squirrel, "but I like it here."

"Good-bye then," said the sparrow. And she flew away.

City Squirrel hopped back to the park. Suddenly, he spotted a nut lying on the path. He rushed over to it. But it was only an empty peanut shell.

"Oh, dear," he sighed. "I have

not found a bit of food for the winter."

A rabbit hopped by and said, "Why not come to the country with me? There are lots of nuts there and fruits and berries, too."

"I have been to the country," said City Squirrel, "but I missed the city. There's something special about the city."

"What?" asked the rabbit.

"I do not know exactly," said City Squirrel, "but I like it here."

"Good-bye then," said the rabbit, and he hopped away.

City Squirrel was tired. He decided to rest before looking for food again. He climbed up to his home in the hollow of a tall old tree and curled up into a furry little ball.

Just then some boys and girls came down the path. They sat beneath City Squirrel's tree and began to sing. Soon City Squirrel drifted off to sleep to the lovely sound of singing.

When he woke up the boys and girls were gone. The sun was setting. City Squirrel rushed down from his tree.

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# Reading Power

Fill in the circle before the word that completes each sentence.

Tony ran up the dimly lit stairs and knocked at Mrs. Porter's door. His knock was soon 1.

1.  a. help  b. answered  
 c. here  d. over

"Come in, Tony," the woman said warmly.

2.  a. mad  b. grab  
 c. glad  d. wise

Tony smiled. He was 2 Mrs. Porter didn't mind his after-school visits. He didn't like staying alone in his own apartment downstairs while his 3 were at work.

3.  a. people  b. shoes  
 c. numbers  d. parents

Complete each sentence with as many different words that you can think of. Write the words in the spaces below the story. One word has already been done for you.

"Can we read more about Tom Sawyer?" Tony asked 4.

"Of course we can," Mrs. Porter said. She and Tony sat down at the table. Soon Tony forgot about the streets 5. For a while at least he was floating down the Mississippi River, having exciting 6 with Tom Sawyer.

4. eagerly      5. outside      6. adventures

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

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Teacher footnote: Encourage the students to think of grammatically appropriate words that complete the blanks. Discuss how some are consistent with the meaning of the story and some change it. Whenever possible, discuss the variations of meaning implied by different words.

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# Comprehension Skills

Fill in the circle before the answer to each question.

1. The main character is

- a. Gabrielle.  
 b. Sally.  
 c. Dr. Gray.  
 d. Peppy.

2. Sally thinks Gabrielle is

- a. a movie star.  
 b. an old friend.  
 c. smart.  
 d. stuck up.

3. Why doesn't Gabrielle notice Sally? She

- a. is stuck up.  
 b. feels Sally is stuck up.  
 c. can't see Sally.  
 d. doesn't like Sally.

4. Which is not a clue that Gabrielle is blind? She

- a. lives across the street.  
 b. has dark glasses.  
 c. goes to a special school.  
 d. doesn't see Sally's bike.

5. Dr. Gray's School for Girls is mentioned

- a. in the title.  
 b. at the beginning.  
 c. in the middle.  
 d. at the end.

6. How is Sally different at the end? She

- a. is blind.  
 b. is angry.  
 c. has moved.  
 d. is Gabrielle's friend.

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# Thinking Skills

How did Mr. Green know that Iris did not have a tummy ache?

\_\_\_\_\_

How would Iris know that Mr. Green was still sitting on the cot?

\_\_\_\_\_

How did Mr. Brown get Iris to stop crying?

\_\_\_\_\_

Write about something that you are or were afraid of.

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

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