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# Targeted Independent Practice: Reading Fluency

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Thank you,

Mark Pennington

## Introduction

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The **Targeted Independent Practice: Reading Fluency** program provides 43 expository **Animal Articles** for modelled and repeated reading fluency practice. The program provides two effective options for fluency practice: digital and non-digital.

### The Animal Fluency Articles

The **Animal Fluency Articles** are high-interest expository articles. Each of the 43 articles consists of 350–450 words. Readers learn about the physical characteristics of the animal, the animal's habitat, what the animal eats, the animal's family, interesting facts, and the status of the species, whether endangered or not.

The articles are leveled in a unique pyramid design: the first two paragraphs are at an adjusted third grade (*Fleish-Kincaid*) reading level (after deleting a few key multi-syllabic words such as *carnivores* or long animal names such as *armadillos*); the next two paragraphs are at the fifth grade reading level; and the last two are at the seventh grade reading level. The reader begins practice at an easier level to build confidence and then moves to more difficult academic language and sentence length.

Each article is displayed and has been recorded on YouTube videos at three different reading speeds (Level A at 95-115 words per minute; Level B at 115-135 words per minute; and Level C at 135-155 words per minute) to provide modelled readings at each of your students' challenge levels. Visit <http://bit.ly/1HaRC3h> to access the 129 YouTube videos.

Because of the pyramid design and different reading speeds, the fluency practice is appropriate for all age levels. Use the following the “Pets” Fluency Assessment to place students in one of three fluency groups for modelled readings and repeated reading practice.



# The “Pets” Fluency Assessment

## Teacher Notes

As a critical component of reading diagnosis, teachers need to hear their students read. This assessment allows the teacher to assess reading ability and provides a baseline fluency rate. Additionally, the results will help the teacher narrow down the reading level of students to inform selection of books for independent reading practice.

The “Pets” fluency passage is leveled in the same pyramid design as the **Animal Fluency Articles**, but with even greater specificity. The first paragraph is at the first grade (*Fleish-Kincaid*) reading level; the second paragraph is at the second grade level; the third paragraph is at the third grade level; the fourth paragraph is at the fourth grade level; the fifth paragraph is at the fifth grade level; the sixth paragraph is at the sixth grade level; and the seventh paragraph is at the seventh grade level. Thus, the reader begins practice at an easier level that builds confidence and then moves to more difficult academic language through successive approximation. As the student reads the fluency passage, the teacher will be able to note the reading levels at which the student has a high degree of accuracy and automaticity. Automaticity refers to the ability of the reader to read effortlessly without stumbling or sounding-out words.

- The reading level in which the student has 95–100% accuracy with a high degree of automaticity indicates an independent level of reading. In other words, this reading level is appropriate for students to read on their own. Help students to choose books at this level for independent reading practice.
- The reading level in which the student has 85–94% accuracy with a medium degree of automaticity indicates an instructional level of reading. In other words, this reading level is appropriate for students to read with teacher or parent assistance. Help students to choose books at this level for instructional reading practice.
- The reading level in which the student has less than 85% accuracy with a low degree of automaticity indicates a frustration level of reading. In other words, this reading level is inappropriate for effective reading practice.

## Preparation and Organization

Laminate one copy of the “Pets” Fluency Assessment for students. Run off enough copies of the same assessment for each student. Use a stopwatch to ensure that the two-minute timings will be accurate. Set aside a table or two desks in a corner of the room or just outside the door, if practical. Have desks or chairs facing each other.

Announce to the class that you will have students quietly read to you for two-minute reading fluency timings. Say, “Please don’t interrupt the fluency timings, unless there is an emergency. We want to complete these timings quickly, so this is how we will organize things: I will pick one student to read. The first to read will be \_\_\_\_\_. Please sit here. When \_\_\_\_\_ has finished, she will use the stopwatch to time the next reader, who will be \_\_\_\_\_. From now on, the student who does the timing will quietly go get the next reader. Any questions?”



## Fluency Assessment Directions and Scoring

1. Say—"I'm going to have you read out loud for two minutes. Read quickly, but say the words correctly. The title of this article is 'Pets.' Point to the first word of the article on the student's copy and say 'Ready, begin.'"
2. As the student reads, mark a slash on the teacher's copy for mispronounced words, omitted words, added words, and words not correctly pronounced within three seconds. Say the word for the student after three seconds of silence or attempted pronunciation and then say "Next," if the student does not continue to read. Be consistent in test administration regarding marking (or not marking) dialect differences, word repetitions, pre-practice of difficult words, reversals, and self-corrections.
3. Mark a bracket after the last word the student reads correctly when two minutes have elapsed. Say, "Stop." Record the total number of words read, less errors at the bottom left of the page and the name of the student. Say, "Thank you. Now, you will be the timer. When I say 'begin,' push this button. After two minutes, say 'stop,' and push the button again. After the timing has been completed, say "Please go tell \_\_\_\_\_ that he or she is 'on deck.'"

### Do Your Students Need Reading Fluency Practice?

Students reading less than the number of words per minute (correctly), as indicated by the following Fall Grade Level Norms, need the modeled reading and repeated reading practice provided in the **Targeted Independent Practice: Reading Fluency** program. Note that the "Pets" Fluency Assessment is a two-minute timing, *not* the one-minute numbers in the Fall Grade Level Norms, so student words per minute must be divided by two to determine mastery, according to these criteria.

### Reading Fluency Grade Level Norms: Words Correct per Minute

Grade	Fall Mastery Levels	Winter	Spring
4	99 / 158	112	98–118
5	105 / 168	118	118–128
6	115 / 184	132	135–145
7	147 / 235	158	157–167
8–Adult	156 / 250	167	166–171

Adapted by Timothy Rasinski from Hasbrouck, J. E. & Tindal, G. (1992). Curriculum-based oral reading fluency forms for students in Grades 2 through 5. *Teaching Exceptional Children*, (Spring), 41-44 and Howe, K. B. & Shinn, M. M. (2001). Standard reading assessment passages (RAPS) for use in general outcome measurements: A manual describing development and technical features. Eden Prairie, MN: Edformations. Mastery levels and adult extrapolation by Mark Pennington.

# "Pets" Fluency Assessment

Name \_\_\_\_\_

11 Pets are nice. Pets live with us. They can be good  
 21 friends. Pets make people happy. They can be very fun.  
 32 Some pets are very smart. Many can be trained to do  
 44 what people say. Pets may come to us when we call. Some  
 57 can do special tricks. Some even seem to talk to us with a  
 63 "bark," a "meow," or a "chirp."  
 74 Many people enjoy life more with pets. Pets can be good  
 86 company. Pets can help people feel less lonely. Some pets help us  
 96 feel better. Pets can even help us get more exercise.  
 109 Not all animals make good pets. Most wild animals are afraid of people.  
 125 Others could be dangerous, like large cats or bears. It would be too hard to care  
 141 for some animals. They might need a special place to live or special food to eat.  
 154 Pets and owners must make a good match. People need to think carefully  
 170 about some things before getting a pet. A pet owner needs to have a good place  
 188 for a pet to live. A small apartment may be perfect for a fish or hamster, but not  
 205 for a large dog or cat. Also, some pets cost more to keep than others. Large pets  
 219 eat more than small ones, and their cost of medical care can be expensive.  
 234 People need to consider how much time they will be able to spend with their  
 244 pets. Pets need plenty of fun and attention to stay happy.  
 259 The most popular pets worldwide are dogs and cats. There are slightly more cats than  
 275 dogs. Birds, hamsters, turtles, snakes, lizards, and fish are also the pets of choice for many  
 290 people. In the last few years pets have become more "exotic." Many people are now keeping  
 303 ferrets and monkeys as pets. Most local governments have laws restricting which pets are  
 309 acceptable in their communities.  
 325 Pet owners need to be responsible with their pets. Adult pets need to be spayed or  
 338 neutered to prevent unplanned litters. According to the Humane Society, over three million  
 354 unwanted pets are put to sleep each year. Also, mixed breed cats and dogs can make  
 371 wonderful pets. In fact, some of the best pets can be adopted from local animal shelters at  
 383 little cost. Pets are valuable friends and need our very best care.

	Total Number of Words Read	Total Number of Words Read	
	- Total Number of Mistakes	- Total Number of Mistakes	
	= Total Number of Words Read	= Total Number of Words Read	



# Targeted Independent Reading Fluency Practice Directions

## Differentiated Instruction with Flexible Reading Fluency Groups

For students who need reading fluency practice, as indicated by the Fall Grade Level Norms, refer to the student scores on the “Pets” Fluency Assessment, and assign students to one of three flexible reading fluency groups (A, B, or C), according to the following criteria.

Assigned Fluency Level Groups	“Pets” Score Two Minute Assessment	Assessment Words per Minute	Challenge Level Words per Minute
Level A	< 190	<95	95–115
Level B	191–239	96–119	115–135
Level C	>240	>120	135–155

Keep these groups flexible, as some students will progress rapidly and may need to be reassigned to reflect their improved reading fluency scores. Also, separate students who do not work well together.

The **Targeted Independent Practice: Reading Fluency** program includes two instructional options for independent fluency practice: 1. Digital: YouTube modeled readings and practice 2. Non-Digital: Reading fluency groups modeled readings and practice. Note that teachers may choose to do a hybrid of the digital and non-digital resources and instruction.

## Instructional Materials and Resources

1. Use a timer or the stopwatch app on your phone to time fluency readings.
2. Create fluency folders for each student. Select and print the appropriate Reading Fluency Timing Charts for your students, according to the results of the “Pets” Fluency Assessment. Note that one chart has higher words per minute than the other.
3. Provide a box of *cold* and *hot* color pencils and erasers for each fluency group. Many teachers use blue pencils to record *cold* fluency timings and red pencils for *hot* fluency timings. Or regular pencils for *cold timings* and pens for *hot timings* work equally well.
4. Select the digital or non-digital instructional option for independent reading fluency practice.

**Digital Option:** Provide tablets or computers and earbuds with access to restricted-use YouTube videos, featuring modeled readings of the Animal Fluency Articles: (Level A at 95-115 words per minute; Level B at 115-135 words per minute; and Level C at 135-155 words per minute)

**Non-Digital Option:** Print the Animal Fluency Article for each student. Teachers may choose to laminate the articles for future instruction.





## Reading Fluency Timing Chart

1. Display the “Pets” Fluency Assessment and explain how to count the words for their two-minute fluency timing.
2. Display the following Reading Fluency Timing Chart. Tell students that a *cold timing* is an unpracticed reading. Model how to shade in the *cold timing* with a blue or regular pencil.
3. Tell students that a *hot timing* is a practiced reading. The *hot timing* is recorded above the *cold timing* because the practiced reading timing is usually higher than the unpracticed reading timing. Model how to shade in the *hot timing* with a red pencil or pen. Tell students that if they read fewer words on the *hot timing* than they did on the *cold timing*, they simply draw a dark line to show their *hot timing*.

Tell students to be neat, but to take no more than 30 seconds to shade in their timings.

## Beginning Independent Reading Fluency Practice

1. Assign the A, B, or C reading levels to each student, reminding them that their levels may change as they practice. If using the digital option, show students how to access the YouTube modeled readings.
2. Appoint a reading fluency leader for each group to distribute instructional materials and resources. Direct students to move to the computers or reading fluency groups.
3. Display the print copy of the first Animal Fluency Article, and pre-teach the challenge words in the upper right corner.
4. Instruct students to open their folders and take out their Reading Fluency Charts and the first Animal Fluency Article or navigate to the first Animal Fluency Article on YouTube.

## Cold Timing

Say, “We are now going to read an article about an animal. Read out loud in six-inch voices, with good expression, at your own pace. Make sure to pause at commas and stop at periods. Most importantly, read for understanding. During the timing, don’t stop reading because we want our timings to be accurate. Ready, read.” [Start the timer.]

When the timer goes off, say, “Point your finger to the last word you read. Now shade in your *cold timing* on your Reading Fluency Timing Chart.” Display the chart to remind students how to record their *cold timings*.



## Modeled Reading and Repeated Readings for the Digital Option

Say, “Now put in your earbuds and adjust the volume. Read out loud in six-inch voices, along with the modeled reading, until the end of the article. When finished, repeat the reading over and over on your own until I say, ‘Stop.’ Don’t read along with others; read quickly at your own pace.”

## Modeled Reading and Repeated Readings for the Non-Digital Option

Say, “Your fluency leader will lead a choral read of the entire article. Everyone reads together in six-inch voices until the end of the article. When finished, repeat the reading over and over on your own until I say, ‘Stop.’ Don’t read along with others; read quickly at your own pace.”

## Hot Timing

A few minutes prior to ending the independent reading fluency practice, say, “We are now going to re-read the article once more for our *hot timing*. Read out loud in six-inch voices, with good expression, at your own pace. Make sure to pause at commas and stop at periods. Most importantly, read for understanding. During the timing, don’t stop reading because we want our timings to be accurate. Ready, read.” [Start the timer.]

When the timer goes off, say, “Point your finger to the last word you read. Now shade in your *hot timing* on your Reading Fluency Timing Chart.” Display the chart to remind students how to record their *cold timings*.

Direct fluency leaders to collect the pencils and pens, fluency folders, tablets, and earbuds.

**Note that students will often inflate their *hot timing* scores. Listen in to students who do so and counsel them to improve their expression and attention to punctuation. The *cold* timings over time provide the best formative assessments. The timings are certainly motivational, but the reading with modeled readings and repeated readings practice are the keys to improving fluency.**



# Reading Fluency Timing Chart

Name \_\_\_\_\_

300																							
290																							
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250																							
240																							
230																							
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130																							
120																							
110																							
100																							
	<b>Pencil = Cold Timing Pen = Hot Timing</b>	<b>Recording Example</b>	<b>“ Ape”</b>	<b>“ Eagle”</b>	<b>“ Ibex”</b>	<b>“ Okapi”</b>	<b>“ Mule”</b>	<b>“ Rooster”</b>	<b>“ Woodpecker”</b>	<b>“ Cow”</b>	<b>“ Koi”</b>	<b>“ Hawk”</b>	<b>“ Ermine”</b>	<b>“ Armadillo”</b>	<b>“ Orca”</b>	<b>“ Anteater”</b>	<b>“ Elephant”</b>	<b>“ Iguana”</b>	<b>“ Otter”</b>	<b>“ Umbrella Bird”</b>	<b>“ Bear”</b>	<b>“ Camel”</b>	<b>“ Dog”</b>

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# of Words Read in Two-Minute Timing

Animal Fluency Article



# Reading Fluency Timing Chart

Name \_\_\_\_\_

300																							
290																							
280																							
270																							
260																							
250																							
240																							
230																							
220																							
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150																							
140																							
130																							
120																							
110																							
100																							
	<b>Pencil = Cold Timing</b> <b>Pen = Hot Timing</b>	“ Fox ”	“ Goose ”	“ Horse ”	“ Jackrabbit ”	“ Kangaroo ”	“ Lion ”	“ Mouse ”	“ Newt ”	“ Pig ”	“ Quail ”	“ Raccoon ”	“ Seagull ”	“ Tiger ”	“ Vulture ”	“ Wolf ”	“ X-ray Fish ”	“ Yak ”	“ Zebra ”	“ Sheep ”	“ Whale ”	“ Python ”	“ Cheetah ”

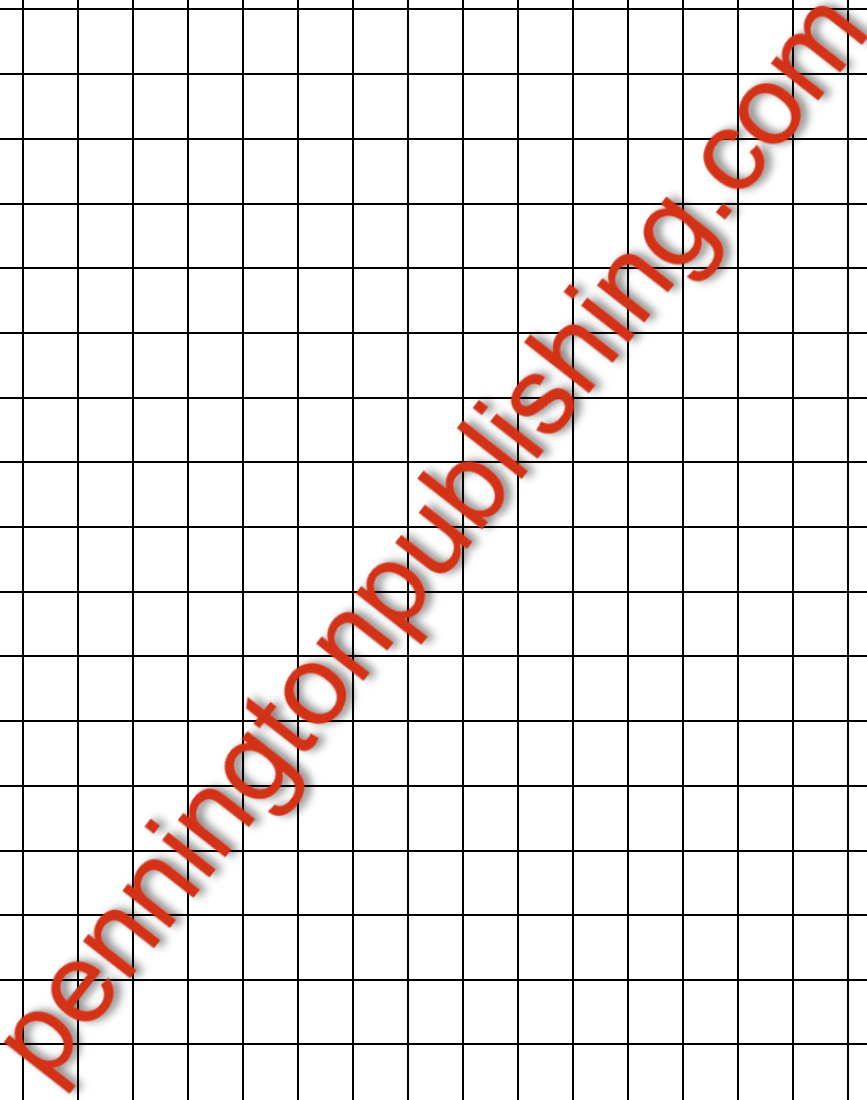
# of Words Read in Two-Minute Timing

Animal Fluency Article

# Reading Fluency Timing Chart

Name \_\_\_\_\_

450																						
440																						
430																						
420																						
410																						
400																						
390																						
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<b>Pencil = Cold Timing</b> <b>Pen = Hot Timing</b>	<b>Recording Example</b>	“ Ape”	“ Eagle”	“ Ibex”	“ Okapi”	“ Mule”	“ Rooster”	“ Woodpecker”	“ Cow”	“ Koï”	“ Hawk”	“ Ermine”	“ Armadillo”	“ Orca”	“ Anteater”	“ Elephant”	“ Iguana”	“ Otter”	“ Umbrella Bird”	“ Bear”	“ Camel”	“ Dog”



# of Words Read in Two-Minute Timing

Animal Fluency Article



## “The Ape” Reading Fluency #1

8 16 25 32 41 50 52 59 73 83 96 111 121 133 148 164 179 189 200 213 230 242 255 264 282 298 316 333 346 362 381 399 413 422	<p>The ape is a very interesting animal. One type of ape is the orangutan. Male orangutans can weigh as much as two normal size humans. Females weigh about half as much. Orangutans have long, strong arms and their hands and feet are shaped like hooks. They are shaggy and have red hair.</p> <p>Orangutans used to live all over Southeast Asia. Now they only live in a few rain forests on the islands of Sumatra and Borneo. Orangutans swing from tall trees to move around. It is warm where these animals live, but not too warm. There is a lot of rain there, so trees and plants grow very tall and big.</p> <p>Orangutans are <i>omnivores</i>, since they eat some birds and small mammals. However, they mostly eat plants, like fruit and leaves, instead of meat. Their diet consists of mostly fruit. The fruits they tend to prefer have a lot of sugar in them. Figs are the favorite fruit of the orangutans. Figs come from trees, and they are easy for orangutans to pick and eat. Orangutans also eat lots of young leaves from many trees in their habitat.</p> <p>Unlike many other animals, orangutans are single adults, so they have no family structure. Mother orangutans raise their children one at a time. The baby rides on its mother’s back for three years at the start of its life. There, it learns how to pick food and protect itself from danger. Female orangutans usually have one baby every six years. Older male orangutans may fight each other for the attention of the available female orangutans.</p> <p>The territory of an adult orangutan is not clearly established, as is the case with many animals. Often, orangutan territories will overlap. However, this does not mean that orangutans are social animals. They limit their social interaction to feeding, mating, and calling each other. Only rarely will orangutans get in fights with each other over food or territory. In these fights, the apes will demonstrate their strength by destroying branches, charging at each other, and biting each other until one gives up.</p> <p>Due to deforestation of the rain forest (cutting down trees for grazing or farmland), orangutans are becoming more and more endangered with each day. Palm oil farmers have cut down much of the forest on Sumatra and Borneo. Some people even capture orangutans to use them as pets in their homes. Orangutans are already on international endangered species lists, and their habitat has been increasingly threatened by humans, mainly through the deforestation of the rain forest.</p>	<p><b>orangutan</b> <b>Sumatra</b> <b>Borneo</b> <b>omnivore</b> <b>endangered</b> <b>species</b></p>	
	Total Number of Words Read	Total Number of Words Read	
	- Total Number of Mistakes	- Total Number of Mistakes	
	= Total Number of Words Read	= Total Number of Words Read	



## “The Eagle” Reading Fluency #2

<p>9 eagle is the bald eagle. This bird of prey has  19 a large yellow beak shaped like a hook and a  29 pure white head. Its body is brown with a  38 white tail. Female bald eagles are much bigger  46 than males.</p> <p>48 Bald eagles live all over North and South  56 America. They make their nests near rivers, ponds, and lakes. There  67 they can find many fish. Bald eagles build the biggest nests of any  80 bird in America. Mostly, the birds stay away from people. Some  91 birds move their nests frequently.</p> <p>96 Bald eagles eat whatever they can find. But, mostly they eat fish. Some  109 of their favorite meals are trout and salmon. To catch fish, bald eagles swoop  123 down over the water and grab the fish with their feet, called talons. If the fish  139 is too heavy for the eagle to carry, it might have to swim in the water. Many  156 eagles aren’t able to swim very well. Sometimes, bald eagles will steal their  169 food from other birds that are smaller.</p> <p>176 At about five years old, bald eagles find mates. They pick partners as  189 their mates for life. Sometimes, if the pair cannot have a baby, they will find  204 new partners. Babies are hatched from eggs in their nests, which are made from  218 twigs and branches. Nests are usually in trees near open water. Mother and  232 father eagles will take turns watching the eggs while the mate finds food or  246 adds on to the nest.</p> <p>251 The bald eagle is also an important symbol of the United States of America. It is known as the  270 national bird of the United States. In 1782, the Continental Congress named the bald eagle as the national bird.  289 Ben Franklin once wrote that he thought that it was a bad choice. He said the bald eagle was too cowardly to  311 symbolize the nation. Instead, he suggested the turkey. Today, the bald eagle appears on official seals of the  329 United States on the backs of several coins. It was on the back of the quarter until 1999, with its head turned  351 towards an olive branch.</p> <p>355 The bald eagle used to be a common sight in the United States. But, over the nation’s history, this  374 eagle’s population has slowly decreased. This decrease is due to hunting and the use of pest spray by farmers.  393 Many farmers used to spray DDT to reduce pests on their crops. This spray, when breathed by eagles, made  412 them unable to have babies. Fortunately, the bald eagle population has begun to increase since DDT was  429 banned as a pest spray. The bald eagle was officially removed from the list of endangered species in 1995.  448</p>	<p><b>prey</b>  <b>salmon</b>  <b>Continental</b>  <b>official</b></p>	
Total Number of Words Read	Total Number of Words Read	
- Total Number of Mistakes	- Total Number of Mistakes	
= Total Number of Words Read	= Total Number of Words Read	



### “The Ibex” Reading Fluency #3

9	An ibex is a wild goat. Ibexes have big,	<b>Europe</b> <b>herbivores</b> <b>predators</b> <b>taxidermists</b> <b>medicinal</b>	
18	long horns that turn behind their heads. The horns		
28	have spiky bumps on them. Their fur is very short,		
38	and not shaggy like a dog’s fur. As the weather		
47	warms, the fur gets darker. Ibexes are about five		
56	feet long and three feet high. They weigh about		
63	as much as two people put together.		
70	Ibexes live in the mountains. They are		
78	found in Europe, Asia, and Africa. Their homes		
88	are made in the rocks. Ibexes have very hard feet,		
102	so they can walk on rocks all day long. Some even live in snowy		
114	mountains, where it’s very cold. Mostly, they like to stay in the		
120	shade of trees in the daytime.		
134	Ibexes are <i>herbivores</i> , so they eat only plants. In the daytime, when it is		
148	warm, they search for food. They usually eat leaves from trees that grow in		
162	their natural habitat. Many ibexes also search for fruit to eat. However, fruit is		
175	less common in some of their grazing areas. Although ibexes are plant eaters,		
188	this does not mean that they are less dangerous to humans. Ibexes dislike being		
201	near humans and will sometimes attack. The main animal that hunts for ibexes		
205	is the leopard.		
219	Ibexes live in two different groups. Groups are made up of about ten to		
232	twenty ibexes. Males make up one group, and females and babies make up the		
247	other. Males fight each other to establish power in their groups and to win		
260	females as their mates. The most powerful male ibexes avoid each other and		
269	do not fight. This helps them avoid serious injury.		
284	Ibexes are known for their charging abilities when they attack predators. Ibexes put down their heads		
302	and butt into their predators. Although younger ibexes often fight, they avoid hurting each other. In fact, much		
316	of their fighting involves circling and pretend charges, which are called <i>mock</i> charges.		
333	Ibexes used to be the subjects of many game hunts. The handsome male heads were prized by hunters,		
352	and many of these heads were stuffed by <i>taxidermists</i> and then displayed in the homes of big game hunters.		
368	They were also hunted because of the medicinal properties of various parts of their bodies. However, the		
385	advancement of modern medicine has stopped most of the hunting of ibexes for their medicinal value. About		
396	ten thousand ibexes still live today in the world.		
	Total Number of Words Read	Total Number of Words Read	
	- Total Number of Mistakes	- Total Number of Mistakes	
	= Total Number of Words Read	= Total Number of Words Read	

## “The Okapi” Reading Fluency #4

<p>9 16 24 32 41 50 58 64 75 88 99 109 122 134 148 161 174 188 203 204 219 232 245 260 272 287 306 324 341 358 376 389</p>	<p>The okapi looks like a mix of zebra and giraffe. These animals have dark backs. On their legs, they have white stripes. These stripes make them look like zebras. Their bodies look like small giraffes. But, they do not have very long necks. Their ears are big and pointy, and their tongues are long, too. Okapis have short horns that are covered by skin.</p> <p>These animals like to live in large areas away from towns. They can be found only in the middle of Africa in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. Most okapi live in the mountains and forests. They leave scents to mark their territories. Males protect their land, but they allow females to walk through it to find food.</p> <p>Okapi are strange eaters. They are <i>herbivores</i>, so they eat tree leaves, grass, and fungi. But, they also have been known to eat charcoal from burnt trees! Also, they commonly eat red clay from the ground near streams or rivers. Along with plants, charcoal, and clay, they eat fruit and berries. Okapi spend most of their day eating and searching for food. When they find food, they chew it, spit it out, and chew it again. This helps their weak digestive system.</p> <p>Female okapi give birth to a single baby, called a calf. Babies are fed by their mothers and they grow quickly. Only thirty minutes after they are born, okapi can stand up and walk around. Mothers leave their babies during the day. They return at night to feed them. In zoos, okapi live for about thirty years. But, no one knows how long they live in the wild.</p> <p>Although they generally live alone, Okapi have ways of communicating with each other. They make different sounds that zoologists are able to identify. One sound, called a <i>chuff</i>, is made when one okapi meets another. The <i>bleat</i> is used when an okapi calf is separated from its mother and put into danger.</p> <p>The forests of the Democratic Republic of the Congo are threatened by people eager for their rich natural resources. As a result, okapi are losing their territory. Okapi are not only threatened by loggers, miners, and farmers, but they are also threatened by illegal hunters, called <i>poachers</i>, who hunt them for their valuable skins. The okapi population is currently classified as “near threatened” by extinction.</p>	<p><b>Democratic</b> <b>digestive</b> <b>communicating</b> <b>zoologists</b> <b>extinction</b></p>	
	Total Number of Words Read	Total Number of Words Read	
	- Total Number of Mistakes	- Total Number of Mistakes	
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## “The Mule” Reading Fluency #5

7 15 24 33 43 50 60 69 81 91 104 115 127 128 141 154 167 182 193 204 216 230 247 257 273 289 306 325 328 345 363 371	<p>Mules are babies, born from donkey and horse parents. They have short, thick heads. They have long pointy ears. Mules have a short mane, like most horses. They come in all shapes and sizes. Some mules can grow to weigh as much as six humans! Mules have small, strong hooves.</p> <p>Most of the mules in the world are in China. In that country, mules are used for riding. Mules are also used for pulling carts. Many other mules are found in Mexico, South America, and North Africa. Mules live mostly on farms with people. There are only a few wild mules and many of these animals live in California. They were lost during the California Gold Rush of the 1850s and have survived in foothill canyons ever since.</p> <p>The mule’s owner can purchase food for mules at any farm store. Mules have the same diets as horses and donkeys. However, they need less protein than horses. Their favorite snacks are hay or other dried grasses. Mules need lots of fresh, clean water. But, if they drink too much, they can have serious problems. Mule owners need to control their food and drink levels.</p> <p>Since mules come from two different parent animals, they are called hybrids. Most mules are sterile. This means that they cannot produce any babies. But, some mules have been able to have babies. Mule babies are called <i>foals</i>. If a female mule and a male horse are the parents, then the foal is mostly horse-like. A male donkey produces a mostly donkey-like foal.</p> <p>Mules are intelligent animals. They can endure hardship and severe conditions, which is why they are commonly used for transportation and farm work. Mules are stubborn if treated harshly. Horses will forgive their owners for treating them poorly, but mules generally will not. Mules are very proud animals. When treated well by their owners, mules are usually very friendly. They will bond and work well with people who treat them nicely.</p> <p>The number of mules in the world is increasing. Endangered animal agencies have rated the mule of “no concern” for extinction. In China, where there is the densest population, mules are still bred daily. The mule population is even increasing in industrialized nations.</p>	<p><b>hybrids</b> <b>sterile</b> <b>intelligent</b> <b>transportation</b> <b>industrialized</b></p>	
	Total Number of Words Read	Total Number of Words Read	
	- Total Number of Mistakes	- Total Number of Mistakes	
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## “The Rooster” Reading Fluency #6

6 14 22 31 38 46 55 60 72 86 98 107 118 128 130 144 156 170 182 192 207 223 236 241 253 272 289 308 326 342 356 373 386	<p>Roosters are male chickens. There are many types of roosters. They come in a variety of colors: brown, white, black, and red. Roosters have red combs on the top of their heads. They have yellow beaks. They have black feathers on their tails. Below their eyes, roosters have a white spot. Their thin legs and feet are gray or black.</p> <p>Most roosters live on farms. In fact, chickens live in all areas of the world. But, most of them live in China and the United States. Most chicken owners keep their chickens in <i>coops</i>. A coop is a walled or screened shack designed for chickens. Coops keep roosters warm during the winter and cool in the summertime. Female chickens, called <i>hens</i>, even have built-in nesting spots in many coops.</p> <p>Most roosters are fed by their owners. Their diet is made up of insects, worms, slugs, and snails. However, they also eat plants, fruit, seeds, acorns, and other foods. Roosters can find their own food if the owner wishes. But, they must have a lot of room to search for their food.</p> <p>Farmers chiefly keep chickens for their eggs; however, some chicken farmers raise hens and roosters for their meat. The job of the rooster is to protect the nest and the hens. Usually, there is one rooster who is in charge of a group of other roosters and hens. The head rooster wins this position through fighting or pretend-fighting.</p> <p>Throughout history, roosters have been used in “cock fights.” People organize fights between roosters and bet on the winner. Roosters that are used in cock fights are specially bred and trained for strength. Although cock fighting is a traditional sporting event in nearly every part of the world, most Americans considered it to be animal cruelty. In fact, cock fighting is illegal in forty-nine states in the United States. Some community and state laws allow sentencing for up to three years in prison for those convicted of this crime. World-wide, thousands of birds are killed or hurt every year in cock fights.</p> <p>Roosters are domesticated animals. They have no threat of extinction. The number of chickens worldwide continues to increase. In fact, chickens are the world’s largest group of domesticated birds. With a population of over eight billion, there are more chickens than humans on earth!</p>	<p><b>traditional</b></p> <p><b>sentencing</b></p> <p><b>convicted</b></p> <p><b>domesticated</b></p>	
	Total Number of Words Read	Total Number of Words Read	
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## “The Woodpecker” Reading Fluency #7

6 13 23 33 42 48 56 62 70 78 91 102 114 123 128 139 150 159 174 186 194 203 219 232 246 262 275 291 308 321 336 352 365	<p>Woodpeckers are some of the loudest birds around. Not all woodpeckers look the same. Most have two toes on the front of their feet and two on the back. Their tongues are long enough to curl all the way around their heads. Woodpeckers have strong pointed beaks. Their bottom tail feathers are strong and stiff. Most woodpeckers weigh only about one pound.</p> <p>These birds can be found all over the world. They live in wooded areas everywhere but in Australia. Their homes are often made in the tops of trees in forests. Most woodpeckers will make holes in trees with their beaks to build their nests. Some will find holes and use them. Different types of woodpeckers like different trees. But, many woodpeckers prefer cypress trees and redwoods.</p> <p>A woodpecker’s daily diet consists of different foods depending on the type of woodpecker. Common foods include insects, fruits, and nuts. Like many birds, woodpeckers enjoy eating worms. Woodpeckers are mainly omnivores. They use their beaks to hit bark on trees to expose bugs (ants and beetles, usually) which they then eat. Some woodpeckers have been found to eat sap from trees. Others eat mostly acorns.</p> <p>Female woodpeckers produce about four babies each season. Males and females work together to dig holes out of trees to provide a nest for their babies. Babies remain in their eggs for about two weeks until they hatch. When they hatch, they are blind and do not have any feathers. One parent goes out and finds food to bring back to the nest, while the other stays behind to protect the eggs. Babies usually leave the nest after about thirty days.</p> <p>Woodpeckers are known for their repetitive tapping on tree trunks to expose insects from tree bark. Some species tap on trees to communicate or attract other woodpeckers. Woodpeckers can tap more than ten thousand times a day! They are usually not very protective of their territory.</p> <p>The population of woodpeckers is generally not considered to be threatened, but their habitat in some areas has been reduced due to woodcutting and deforestation. Two species of these birds are considered officially endangered by the government. Still, the overall woodpecker population is balanced.</p>	<p><b>Australia</b> <b>beetles</b> <b>repetitive</b> <b>threatened</b> <b>considered</b></p>	
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## “The Cow” Reading Fluency #8

7 15 23 32 41 49 54 62 75 87 100 108 122 136 150 163 177 192 197 210 223 237 248 267 288 307 328 332 348 367 386 394	<p>Cows have many uses. Farmers raise cows for different reasons. Some raise cows for their meat. Others raise cows for their dairy products. Cows come in many colors. Cows can be brown, white, or black. Male cows are called <i>bulls</i>, and they have horns. Female cows are gentle. Bulls can be mean and dangerous.</p> <p>Almost every place in the world has cows. Cows live in grassy meadows or on farms. There are some wild cows left in the world. These wild cows are in Midwestern America, India, and Africa. Wild cows are not the same as farm cows. Still, most cows live on farms, not in the wild.</p> <p>Cows on farms are fed based on their use. Beef cows are fed differently from dairy cows. A beef cow is fed corn, grain, and grasses. Farmers feed these cows a large amount of protein. Dairy cows need large amounts of fiber. Dairy cows provide milk and cream. Cows have very large stomachs that are divided into four parts. Each part has a different job in digesting food. Usually, only older cows are used to make clothes. Their hides (the outer layers of cow skins) are dried into leather.</p> <p>Baby cows are called <i>calves</i>. Some calves die at birth, because they are so large. Older cows have less problems giving birth than do young cows. Calves are nursed by their mothers for about ninety days. Adult cows like to stay in groups with each other. Bulls usually stay by themselves.</p> <p>Cows require a lot of care from farmers. Cow hooves have to be trimmed by farmers once or twice each year. The hair at the end of a cow’s tail (called the switch) must be frequently cleaned and trimmed. In the winter, cows are kept inside at night to protect them from the cold in most climates. Additionally, cows require a lot of fresh hay on which to sleep. They spend 40-50% of their day lying down. Cows take several naps throughout the day.</p> <p>In India, most people follow the religion of Hinduism. Hindus believe that cows are sacred animals. Hindus do not eat them and cows are free to roam about the countryside. Worldwide, cows are certainly not endangered animals. There are over 1.3 billion cows still in the world today. That number is almost equal to one cow for every six people on earth.</p>	<p><b>calves</b></p> <p><b>climates</b></p> <p><b>Hinduism</b></p> <p><b>sacred</b></p>	
	Total Number of Words Read	Total Number of Words Read	
	- Total Number of Mistakes	- Total Number of Mistakes	
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## “The Koi” Reading Fluency #9

8 17 24 33 39 46 53 65 76 88 100 112 116 128 142 153 167 181 194 206 221 236 252 260 277 297 316 331 343 358 376 393 410 422	<p>Koi fish are freshwater fishes and are kept by many as pets. Koi come in many different colors. Most of them are orange. Koi have eyes on both sides of their heads. Behind their eyes, they have gills. These gills help them breathe under water. On their backs, they have a fin.</p> <p>The koi fish are related to carps. Carps come from the Caspian Sea in Europe. Colored koi fish were first discovered in Japan. Today, they live everywhere in the world. They are mostly kept as pets, but some have been released into the wild. People like keeping koi because of their bright colors. Many people have built koi ponds to enjoy these fish.</p> <p>Koi will eat many different foods if they are available. Koi owners usually feed them fish food from the store. However, they may feed their fish with some live foods. These foods include worms, prawns, tadpoles, and frogs. Some live foods, like insects, are dangerous for koi to eat. Owners can also feed their koi fish brown bread and lettuce. But, owners need to be careful as not to harm their fishes with foods that they can't digest.</p> <p>Sometimes, male koi will bully females. If this happens, an owner must separate the two. After the babies, called <i>fry</i>, are born, they will find a place to hide. After two or three days of growing, the newborn koi fish will start swimming up to the surface of the water. The fry need to be fed and treated differently by their owner to help their growth.</p> <p>Koi require a constant, good filtration system for the water in which they swim and live. Adding simple tap water to their habitat could even kill the fish. Tap water is filled with chlorine and other chemicals that may have negative effects on koi fish. Koi habitats must have water that has the right texture (hardness or softness), temperature, sunshine, and chemicals. It is recommended that new koi owners read information about creating a home for their fishes before bringing their fish home.</p> <p>Since koi are domesticated water animals, they are not threatened by extinction. The population of koi in the world is increasing steadily as the demand for these beautiful colored fishes grows. Humans have destroyed some koi that have been released into the wild, because they pollute the water around them, making it undrinkable for livestock. However, large amounts of money have been spent to try to destroy these wild populations of koi, and those operations have been largely unsuccessful.</p>	<p><b>discovered</b></p> <p><b>separate</b></p> <p><b>filtration</b></p> <p><b>steadily</b></p>	
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## “The Hawk” Reading Fluency #10

8	The hawk is a large, powerful bird. One		
17	type of hawk is the red-tailed hawk. These birds	<b>talons</b>	
26	are mostly brown in color. Their feathers have two	<b>falconry</b>	
33	different colors: light and dark brown. Red-tailed	<b>squirrels</b>	
42	hawks are known for their bright red tails. They		
50	are slightly larger than common house cats. Their		
58	claws are called <i>talons</i> . They are very sharp.		
70	Red-tailed hawks fly all over the world. Most of them live		
82	in North and South America. These hawks like to live in many		
94	different places. Some live in forests and some in fields. They live		
106	in deserts and cities, too. Red-tailed hawks are often seen on		
107	telephone poles. Where there are trees, there are also red-tailed		
115	hawks.		
128	These hawks are birds of prey. That means that they usually hunt for food		
143	while flying. They do not have three meals a day. They mostly feed on small		
157	animals. They like rabbits, snakes, and rats. But, they also eat fish and other		
173	birds. When hunting, they fly high in the air and look down. As soon as they		
186	see food, they swoop down quickly and grab it with their talons.		
198	Red-tailed hawks can have babies when they are two years old. They		
212	have partners that they stay with for many years. When a partner dies, the		
227	hawk will seek a new one. Hawks remain in the same nest for many years.		
240	Each spring, female red-tailed hawks lay one to three eggs. They protect these		
246	eggs from owls and other birds.		
263	Humans have often used red-tailed hawks in falconry—the sport of using birds to hunt game. Hunters		
282	have trained these hawks to track down game such as squirrels, rabbits, and ducks. And, they have even been		
303	trained to work with dogs in hunting. When a hawk catches its prey, the trainer will then locate the bird and		
324	trade its catch for a piece of ready-to-eat meat. There are very few falconers today. It can be a very dangerous		
325	sport.		
341	In the United States alone, there are about one million red-tailed hawks. Animal rights activists state		
359	that the number of hawks has decreased due to deforestation—the cutting down of forests. However, as more		
376	national parks have opened, the hawk population has risen greatly. Red-tailed hawks are not main targets of		
389	bird-hunters, even though the hawks have been known to hunt small farm animals.		
	Total Number of Words Read	Total Number of Words Read	
	- Total Number of Mistakes	- Total Number of Mistakes	
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## “The Ermine” Reading Fluency #11

7 16 24 33 41 49 53 60 74 87 100 110 121 136 149 164 173 185 199 214 228 241 256 268 278 296 316 336 355 361 381 400 413	<p>The ermine is also called the short-tailed weasel. Ermines weigh less than one pound. In the summer, their coats are brown. Their stomachs are white. But, when it turns cold, their coats turn white. Ermines have long necks and bodies, but short legs. Their heads are shaped like triangles with two pink ears.</p> <p>Ermines live in Canada, Alaska, Europe, and Asia. They like to live in cold places. Ermines find rocks to live by. They make lots of homes in between the rocks. In fall, ermines shed their brown coats. Their white coats let them match the snow in the winter. If they cannot be seen, they cannot be eaten!</p> <p>Ermines are carnivores. Mostly, they eat rabbits. With their sharp teeth, they are able to catch prey much bigger than themselves. But, they also like to eat rodents and small insects. During wintertime, ermines will use their sharp claws to dig under snow. Under the snow, they can often find food to eat. They also use their claws for burying their food.</p> <p>Male ermines become adults at one year of age. Females become adults much faster, at only two months of age. Females have ten to thirteen babies every year. Baby ermines weigh only about as much as a coin! At eight weeks of age, the mother teaches them how to hunt. After that, females leave their mothers. Males stay with their mothers until the next spring. Males never help raise any of the babies. Ermines live for about four to seven years. They live, eat, and hunt on their own. However, they sometimes communicate with each other through scents. Ermines have an excellent sense of smell.</p> <p>In colonial history, ermines were once used as furs for coats. The Kings and Queens of England often wore ermine on their robes. The ermine was known as a symbol of purity in Europe, because of its bright white color. Ermine fur was only harvested in the winter, when the ermine was totally white and had shed its brown coat from summer. Even today, in some areas of Japan, the ermine is considered a symbol of good luck, because of its friendly appearance.</p> <p>Today, ermine fur is still popular. In some countries, an ermine coat is just as prized as is a mink coat. Ermines are not close to extinction. The Endangered Species List rates them as “not a concern.” In fact, they spread quite quickly and ermines are even overpopulated in parts of Europe.</p>	<p><b>ermine</b> <b>stomachs</b> <b>carnivores</b> <b>purity</b> <b>mink</b></p>	
	Total Number of Words Read	Total Number of Words Read	
	- Total Number of Mistakes	- Total Number of Mistakes	
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## “The Armadillo” Reading Fluency #12

6 14 21 28 35 42 52 62 74 88 98 104 115 129 144 159 175 186 198 210 223 236 252 262 269 288 306 328 341 355 370 387 405 417	<p>Armadillos are made to dig. They have short, strong legs. These legs are good for finding food. Most armadillos have bony plates on their tails. Armadillos also have shells on their backs. They are mostly brown, and they have short pointy ears.</p> <p>Armadillos are about the same length as corn on house cats. Armadillos live all over America. They mostly live near rivers or lakes. They like to dig holes for their homes. Armadillos often stay in the shade under trees. But, they also like to stay under the homes of people. Some armadillos will make their home underneath your house or in your backyard.</p> <p>Armadillos are <i>omnivores</i>, since they do eat some dead birds. However, they mostly eat plants and bugs, instead of meat. Their diet consists mainly of ants, beetles, and worms. They do not have very sharp teeth, so most of what they eat must be very easy to chew. Armadillos do have sharp claws, and they dig for bugs. Also, they use these claws to tear apart rotten wood to search for ants. Armadillos can eat up to 40,000 ants in one meal!</p> <p>Female armadillos give birth to their babies in nests. These nests are usually dug into the ground for protection. Once per year, female armadillos get pregnant and lay just one egg. From this egg hatches four baby armadillos. All the babies look the same. These armadillos will usually live to be ten to fifteen years old. Most of the time, armadillos like to live by themselves. Sometimes they will meet to find food. Armadillos call out to each other with grunting noises.</p> <p>Armadillos like to swim, and they are quite talented at it. They usually use their arms and legs to dog paddle through lakes or streams. Armadillos can also go underwater, if they want. They can hold their breath for four to six minutes at a time. And, because their heavy shell makes it hard for them to float, they breathe air into their bodies to stay afloat, just like inflating a raft.</p> <p>Unfortunately, most species of armadillos are endangered. Only one species seems to be increasing in number—the <i>nine-banded armadillo</i>. Many armadillos are dying off because of people. As people populate more and more land, armadillos are losing their natural habitats. Also, the pets that people bring with them to live in the armadillo habitats present problems. Sometimes dogs have been known to kill these interesting creatures. Still, there are many nine-banded armadillos left in the world.</p>	<p><b>armadillos</b> <b>pregnant</b> <b>unfortunately</b> <b>populate</b></p>	
	Total Number of Words Read	Total Number of Words Read	
	- Total Number of Mistakes	- Total Number of Mistakes	
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## “The Orca” Reading Fluency #13

8	The orca is also called the <i>killer whale</i> .	<b>octopuses throughout commercial trainability</b>
17	An orca is a black and white dolphin. Orcas	
25	have white chests and sides. They also have	
34	white spots above their eyes. The rest of the	
45	body is black. Each orca has a large fin on its	
53	back. Orcas are very large. One killer whale	
67	can be as long as two cars! Their great size makes them very strong.	
79	Killer whales can be found all over the world. In fact, killer	
92	whales live in all five oceans. They also live in some seas. Orcas like	
104	cold water more than warm water. They have even been known to	
116	swim under ice! Each season, orcas swim to different places. But,	
127	every year, they come back to the same places during summer.	
140	Orcas are known as the “wolves of the sea.” They are called <i>wolves</i> ,	
155	because they hunt in packs. A killer whale’s diet is mainly made up of large	
169	salmon. But, orcas have been known to eat other water animals too. Some of	
181	their prey includes tuna, sharks, octopuses, and reptiles. Rarely, orcas will eat	
194	mammals. They have also been known to eat seals, sea lions, and other whales.	
207	Some have even been seen eating blue whales, which are the largest animals	
220	on earth. Orcas eat up to 500 pounds of food each day!	
232	At fifteen years of age, female orcas become adults. Mothers have a	
246	single baby, called a <i>calf</i> , once every five years. Nearly half of all newborn	
260	calves die before turning one year old. Orcas live in large groups called <i>pods</i> .	
273	These groups each have their own language, which is different than that of	
285	other pods. Orca speech sounds like loud screaming. Killer whales hunt with	
299	their groups and share food with each other. Pods of orcas have been known to	
306	travel with each other during hunting.	
320	Throughout history, commercial whaling—the business of killing whales for food, blubber, and oil—has	
335	been common. This whaling has reduced the orca population significantly. Additionally, orcas have been shot	
352	or even bombed by some governments, because orcas are such good hunters that they compete with	
362	commercial fishermen and reduce the supply of fish to catch.	
377	The intelligence, trainability, and beauty of orcas have made them popular attractions at many zoos	
393	and wildlife exhibits. Orcas are not listed as endangered or threatened, although, numbers have declined in	
407	some parts of the world. The orca population especially thrives in the Antarctic ocean.	
	Total Number of Words Read	Total Number of Words Read
	- Total Number of Mistakes	- Total Number of Mistakes
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## “The Anteater” Reading Fluency #14

6 13 23 31 38 45 52 65 75 86 99 113 127 130 143 155 169 185 197 212 223 234 248 263 275 288 295 313 331 344 364 381 388	<p>The anteater is a strange looking animal. A giant anteater’s body is very long. It is about as long as a person’s body. Giant anteaters have long, rough hair and a dark, bushy tail. Some giant anteaters are brown, while others are gray. All giant anteaters have a black stripe. They also have a very long tongue, which they use to catch bugs to eat.</p> <p>Giant anteaters live in grasslands and rain forests. They are mostly from South America. They also live in North America, too. They find their food in wet forest areas. They spend the whole day searching for food. They make their home in a hole at the bottom of a tree or in a hollow log. Giant anteaters can live near people or away from them.</p> <p>Searching on the ground or in logs, giant anteaters find and eat a variety of insects. Their favorite foods are ants and termites. Giant anteaters can eat thousands of insects in just a few minutes! These anteaters can smell their food from far away. Since they do not have any teeth, they use rocks in their mouths to break down their food. Giant anteaters have sticky tongues that allow them to pick up many insects at once. They do not destroy the insects’ habitat so that they can come back again another time.</p> <p>In the autumn season, giant anteaters find mates. After about six months, baby anteaters are born. Giant anteaters only have one baby at a time. For the first year of their lives, baby giant anteaters will ride on their mothers’ backs. Then, after a few months, baby anteaters will start leaving their mothers for short trips. Eventually, after about two years, they will leave their mothers and live on their own.</p> <p>Some anteaters are active in the day while sleeping at night, but others are just the opposite. They are light sleepers and they will wake up at the slightest sound around them. They protect themselves from predators with their powerful claws. One of their worst predators is the jaguar.</p> <p>Humans are by far the biggest threat to the wild giant anteater population. As humans continue to expand their habitat by destroying forests and constructing buildings, the giant anteater population decreases. They are considered vulnerable to extinction.</p>	<p><b>variety</b></p> <p><b>autumn</b></p> <p><b>eventually</b></p> <p><b>vulnerable</b></p>	
	Total Number of Words Read	Total Number of Words Read	
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## “The Elephant” Reading Fluency #15

6	Elephants are the biggest land animals.		
14	They have huge trunks. They use these to	<b>researchers</b>	
22	eat and drink. Under an elephant’s trunk are	<b>compassion</b>	
29	tusks. Tusks look like big, white bananas.	<b>Hannibal</b>	
36	They help elephants dig and fight. An	<b>illegally</b>	
43	elephant’s skin is mostly gray or brown.		
54	They have large floppy ears on the sides of their heads.		
64	Elephants live in Africa and Asia. African elephants have large		
74	ears, while Indian elephants have smaller ears. Elephants live in		
87	places with a lot of grasses, trees, and shrubs. They also live by		
98	ponds and lakes. Sometimes they walk for miles to find food and		
108	water. Many elephants live in zoos throughout the world.		
118	Elephants are herbivores. They spend about sixteen hours every day		
132	finding food! Most of their diet is made up of grasses. Other foods include		
144	leaves, bamboo, twigs, and fruit. They even eat flowers. Elephants use their		
160	trunks to pull food from trees or from the ground. They can eat up to 300		
176	pounds of food in just one day! They usually drink water once or twice a day,		
188	but some elephants will even go three days before taking a drink.		
200	Elephant family groups are made up of females and their babies. The		
214	babies are called <i>calves</i> . The family groups are called <i>herds</i> and can be as		
227	small as three or four or as large as twenty-five. Females without babies		
238	usually follow mother elephants and help them. This prepares the females to be		
252	good mothers. Young males leave the herd between ages ten and thirteen.		
263	Older females in the herd protect young calves from other animals.		
281	Elephants are some of the most intelligent land animals. In fact, they have the largest brains of any		
297	living animal in the world, even whales. According to researchers, elephants are able to express human-like		
314	feelings, such as compassion and grief. Elephants are very similar to humans. They are the only animals		
334	known to have a ceremony when a fellow elephant dies. When an elephant is hurt, others will band together to		
352	help it. Elephants also have excellent memories and they have even been known to use plants to heal		
353	themselves.		
368	Since the beginning of time, elephants have been threatened by humans. Alexander the Great and		
386	Hannibal used them in war to defeat their enemies. In recent years, elephants have been illegally hunted for		
404	their ivory tusks. The elephant population is officially endangered. There are only about half of a million left		
408	in the world today.		
	Total Number of Words Read	Total Number of Words Read	
	- Total Number of Mistakes	- Total Number of Mistakes	
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## “The Iguana” Reading Fluency #16

7 15 21 29 36 44 56 61 71 83 98 110 114 125 139 152 166 176 188 203 219 232 247 261 272 290 309 324 341 344 360 376 394 406	<p>Iguanas are types of lizards. They are about five feet long with their tails. These animals are green or grayish-green. Their skin is rough. They have plenty of bumps on their backs. Green iguanas have long fingers and claws to help them climb. These animals look heavy, but they are not. They are quite fast. Their teeth are sharp and strong.</p> <p>These iguanas are mainly from South America. But, they also can be found in Mexico and Florida. They usually live near water, and they often climb in trees. They can fall from the top of a very tall tree and land without being hurt. Green iguanas use their claws to hook onto trees.</p> <p>Green iguanas are mainly <i>herbivores</i>. They feed on flowers, leaves, and fruits. The plum is one of the favorite foods of the green iguana. Although green iguanas mainly eat plants, they also have been seen eating mice, dead fish, and insects. Some wild green iguanas have even been known to eat bird eggs. Baby iguanas have a different diet than full-grown iguanas.</p> <p>Iguanas usually prefer to live alone. However, they can be found living in groups in sunny areas. Green iguanas lay about fifty eggs at a time. They lay all their eggs in a hole they dig in the ground called a <i>burrow</i>. Sometimes, they dig more burrows than they use to trick animals that may want to eat their eggs. After a female iguana lays her eggs, she never returns to the hole. The eggs hatch by themselves, and the babies will grow up without parents. Only about five iguanas survive each batch of eggs.</p> <p>Many people in the United States and Mexico want to have iguanas for pets, but iguanas are difficult to keep and care for. These animals are considered to be <i>exotic</i> pets, because they are unusual and require special treatment. Because of increasing demand, hunting for iguanas can be very profitable, though some states prohibit iguana hunting altogether. Now, more and more iguanas are being raised on iguana farms to sell as pets.</p> <p>In South America, some people have other uses for iguanas. These people, mostly living in remote rainforest locations, actually eat green iguanas. Those that eat these lizards refer to iguanas as “bamboo chickens” or “chickens of the trees.” However, iguanas are not part of the normal diet in most South American households. The overall green iguana population is healthy and in balance.</p>	<p><b>iguanas</b></p> <p><b>burrows</b></p> <p><b>exotic</b></p> <p><b>altogether</b></p>	
	Total Number of Words Read	Total Number of Words Read	
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## “The Otter” Reading Fluency #17

9	The otter lives on land and in fresh or saltwater. Otters have long, slim bodies.	<p><b>pregnancy</b></p> <p><b>scent</b></p> <p><b>rehabilitated</b></p> <p><b>destruction</b></p>	
16	Their arms and legs are very short. Most		
24	otters have sharp claws on their feet. Their		
32	tails are strong and long. They have two		
40	layers of fur. The top layer is hard and thick.		
50	Under that is a softer, thinner layer. This fur keeps otters warm, even		
63	in cold water. Otters have a lot of hair, making their fur very dense.		
77	There are thirteen different types of otters in the world. They		
88	live almost everywhere. Otters live by rivers, creeks, seas, and		
98	oceans. Some even live in swamps! Fresh water otters spend most of		
110	their time on land. They use small holes in trees or rocks for homes.		
124	But, sea otters do not go on land very much. Sea otters use plants to		
139	sleep on when they are in the water.		
147	Otters eat mostly fish. However, they also eat lobsters, clams, shrimp,		
158	and mice. Some otters have become experts at opening clams and shellfish.		
170	Rarely, otters will eat small land animals or birds. Otters are very active		
183	hunters. The normal otter will hunt for about three to four hours a day.		
197	Nursing mothers will hunt up to eight hours a day! Many otters will catch their		
212	food using their teeth, but some use their claws.		
221	Most otters start having babies at about five years of age. But, otters in		
235	Africa can start having babies at just one year old! Most otters are pregnant for		
250	about two months, except sea otters. For sea otters, pregnancy lasts about six		
263	months. Otters have babies each year. Otters ferociously defend their babies		
274	against any attacks. Female otters feed their babies for about six months		
289	before the babies begin to hunt for themselves.		
294	Otters use their mouths to produce sounds and communicate with each other. Giant otters are the		
303	loudest of all the species. Researchers have identified a wide variety of otter calls. Otters also communicate		
327	by scent. At the bottom of their tails, they have openings that send out their scent.		
343	Although there are still many otters, they are generally considered as vulnerable to extinction. Many		
358	zoo parks have rescued and rehabilitated otters, especially sea otters. Efforts to reintroduce otters into the wild		
375	in Alaska, Washington, and California have been very successful. Still, the otter population remains		
389	threatened by fish shortages, human destruction of habitat, and water pollution.		
400			
	Total Number of Words Read	Total Number of Words Read	
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## “The Umbrella Bird” Reading Fluency #18

7 15 24 33 40 43 52 64 75 89 100 112 117 129 142 156 171 182 196 211 226 240 241 261 283 304 318 333 351 369 382	<p>The umbrella bird does not carry an umbrella. It does live in the rainforests. This bird gets its name from its head feathers. These feathers face forward and cover its face like an umbrella. Umbrella birds are about twelve to eighteen inches long.</p> <p>They also have a long piece of skin called a <i>wattle</i> that hangs down from their necks. Turkey have wattles like these. But, umbrella birds have even bigger ones. Some of these wattles are as long as the birds. It’s amazing that the birds do not lose their balance when standing on tree branches. The wattles help them chirp very loudly. In fact, umbrella birds are some of the noisiest birds in the rainforests.</p> <p>Most umbrella birds live in Central America and in the northern areas of South America. They stay in the mountains when they are having babies. They live in the tropical rainforest lowlands the rest of the time. They make their homes in the tallest trees. This is where most of the sunlight is found.</p> <p>Umbrella birds are <i>omnivores</i>, so they eat both meat and plants. Umbrella birds move up and down the trees of the rainforest looking for prey. Once they find an animal or large insect, they grab it with their beaks. Then, they knock it out by slamming it against a tree branch. Finally, they eat it. Umbrella birds will eat frogs, lizards, and small rodents. They also like to eat fruit.</p> <p>Males look for female mates in an interesting way. They sit up in a tree all day long. While they sit, they use their wattles to make a loud sound. It sounds like someone banging on a big metal trash can. The females can hear this sound throughout the forest. If they are looking for a mate, they can follow the sound to where the males are sitting. Then, the female picks which male it likes best.</p> <p>Umbrella birds are in danger of extinction because their habitat is rapidly diminishing. Forests are being quickly cleared out in Central America and in northern South America to plant crops or graze livestock. The actions that people take to expand farmland or get more grazing land affect other animals and their habitats. It would certainly be a shame to lose these interesting umbrella birds.</p>	<p><b>umbrella</b> <b>wattle</b> <b>noisiest</b> <b>diminishing</b></p>	
	Total Number of Words Read	Total Number of Words Read	
	- Total Number of Mistakes	- Total Number of Mistakes	
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## “The Bear” Reading Fluency #19

7 13 21 29 38 46 52 64 78 90 103 116 127 139 152 165 178 191 201 213 227 239 253 267 274 291 307 325 339 357 372 389 399	<p>Bears are some of the most powerful wild animals. Different bears have different colors of fur. Brown bears can have brown, blonde, and black fur. Their tails are about as long as their heads. Bears are very strong. Some bears are big, and some are small. Male bears are bigger than females.</p> <p>There are few brown bears left in the world. They mainly live in Russia and in the United States. Brown bears used to live all over, but they were killed where humans settled. Brown bears like to live in the open country where there are mountains. Others like to live in forests. Bears build <i>dens</i> in which to sleep. Dens are large holes that bears dig under trees or sometimes on the sides of hills.</p> <p>Brown bears are omnivores. They eat a variety of different plants and meats. They mainly like to eat leaves, berries, roots, fungi, and sprouts. But they also eat fish, insects, and small mammals like raccoons. Brown bears in Yellowstone have been known to eat up to 40,000 moths in one day! Occasionally, these bears will eat deer or moose. They have been known to break into cars and homes to get food as well.</p> <p>Over the summer months, brown bears look for other brown bears for mates. They remain with the same mates from several days to a few weeks. Males compete with other males for their partners. Each year, females have about one to four babies, called <i>cubs</i>. Cubs are born blind, without teeth, and without hair. They remain with their mothers for two to four years and learn how to hunt, fish, and defend themselves.</p> <p>The California State Flag features a large type of brown bear called a <i>grizzly</i>. Although, since the early 1900s, grizzly bears have been extinct in California. Grizzly bears were wiped out by organized hunting, sponsored and paid for by the California state government, because these bears were such a threat to humans and livestock. The grizzly habitat did not mix well with the human habitat.</p> <p>While the brown bear is not a main concern on the endangered species list, some sub-species of the brown bear are threatened. Specifically, the grizzly bear is facing endangerment. Some organizations want to reintroduce the bears to their previous habitats in the Western United States. One of the largest grizzly reserves in the world is Yellowstone National Park in Wyoming.</p>	<p><b>mammals</b> <b>organized</b> <b>occasionally</b> <b>reintroduced</b></p>	
	Total Number of Words Read	Total Number of Words Read	
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## “The Camel” Reading Fluency #20

7	The camel is a special animal. Camels live in some of the driest places on earth.	<b>Gobi military mid-nineteenth Bactrian</b>	
16	Camels have very long necks and large		
23	nostrils. They are most famous for their		
30	humps on their backs. Most camels have		
37	just one hump, but some have two. They		
45	have long, skinny legs and very large feet.		
53	Camels live in the hottest places on earth. Those with one		
64	hump mostly live in the deserts of Africa, Arabia, and Australia.		
75	Another type of camel with two humps lives only in the Gobi Desert		
87	of Asia. Most camels are cared for by human owners. People ride		
99	their camels on the hot desert sand. They also use camels to carry		
112	things for them. Some people think that camels are mean and kick		
124	and spit. This is not true. Camels are very helpful and smart.		
137	Camels can last an entire week without eating food or drinking water!		
149	Camel owners will feed them grass, grains, wheat, and oats. The camels slowly		
161	digest their food. They spit it up and chew it again. Although many people		
175	think that camels store water in their humps, this is not true. The humps are		
189	made of fatty tissue and this does help camels last longer between meals.		
204	These animals generally live for about thirty to forty years. When		
215	females are about five years of age, they are ready to have babies. Females are		
229	pregnant for about thirteen months before having their babies. They usually		
240	have one baby, but can have twins.		
248	Throughout history, camels have been used in warfare because camels can walk lengthy distances		
262	without growing tired. The first recorded use of camels in battle was in 547 B.C. when Cyrus the Great of		
282	Persia rode camels into battle. But, camels were not only used in the military during the ancient times. In the		
302	mid-nineteenth century, the United States rode camels to patrol the California-Mexico border. And, recently		
316	United Nations peacekeeping troops in Africa have been using camels for transportation.		
328	Most of the world’s camels currently are domesticated. However, there are about 900 Bactrian		
342	(Asian) camels left in the wild. They live in China and Mongolia where they are threatened by illegal mining,		
361	wolves, and hunting. Many efforts to help increase the population of wild Asian camels have been made, but		
379	they have met little success.		
384			
	Total Number of Words Read	Total Number of Words Read	
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## “The Dog” Reading Fluency #21

8	Dogs are kept as pets everywhere in the world. They are known as “man’s best friends.”	<b>poisonous</b> <b>championships</b> <b>agility</b> <b>obstacle</b> <b>neutered</b>	
16	Dogs have different sizes, shapes, and colors. Big		
24	dogs can be as big as wolves. Small dogs can be		
35	as small as house cats. Most dogs have a tail.		
45	Some tails are long and straight, while others are		
54	curly, short, or twisted.		
58	Different kinds of dogs have different		
64	abilities. Humans have used dogs to help rescue		
72	people. Dogs also help the police. Dogs even help to guide the blind.		
85	They can hunt, herd, and guard. Dogs have very good hearing. They		
97	can hear four times as far as people. They can also smell better than		
111	most animals, too. Dogs are very useful and helpful to people.		
122	Unlike most carnivores, dogs don’t just eat meat. Besides meat, they eat		
134	vegetables, grains, eggs, and even milk. Some human food, however, is very		
146	dangerous to dogs. Chocolate, onions, grapes, raisins, and some nuts can hurt		
158	dogs. Some plants and flowers also can be dangerous to dogs. Dog owners		
171	must be very careful not to feed their dogs anything that may be poisonous to		
186	their digestive systems.		
189	Dogs have been featured in contests and in entertainment. Every year,		
200	thousands of dogs compete in dog agility championships. Hard-working dogs		
210	and their trainers practice for months on obstacle courses. Also, dogs compete		
222	in “dog shows.” Dog owners have their dogs judged on beauty, grooming, and		
235	performance in various challenges. Some dogs, such as Lassie, have been the		
247	stars of television shows and movies.		
253	In the United States and some countries, there is a dog overpopulation problem. There are over 73		
270	million dogs in the United States alone. That is almost one dog for every four people! Adult dogs should be		
290	spayed or neutered to avoid having unwanted puppies. Lovable dogs can be adopted from many animal		
306	shelters at little cost.		
310	Most of the world’s dogs are owned by humans as pets, but there are still some wild packs of dogs in		
331	Africa and Asia. Some wild species of dogs, like the African Wild Dog, face some challenges as humans		
349	continue to spread into their habitat.		
355			
	Total Number of Words Read	Total Number of Words Read	
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## “The Fox” Reading Fluency #22

<p>9 19 29 41 51 59 69 76 84 95 108 120 131 142 153 167 183 197 210 220 233 247 262 275 290 309 327 346 358 374 392 408 419</p>	<p>There are over twenty types of foxes in the wild. Red foxes are one type of fox. They have black ears and feet. Their tails are bushy and white at the tip. Some red foxes are not red, but most of them are. Red foxes can see, smell, and hear better than humans. Even though they have short legs, they can run very fast. In winter, red foxes grow extra fur to help keep them warm.</p> <p>Red foxes are found in many different places. They can be found in North America, Europe, Australia, and Asia. They mostly live in open grassy areas. Red foxes try to hide from humans as much as they can. Some red foxes live in forests. Wherever they live, red foxes each have their own territories. There, they can raise their families and make homes for their babies.</p> <p>Foxes are omnivores. Their diet ranges from small mammals to birds and fruit. Red foxes’ favorite foods are rodents. They like to eat small mice and rats. Once they find their prey, it is hard for their prey to escape. Red foxes are too fast for most of their victims. Sometimes, red foxes will even eat leftover food from humans like orange or banana peels. Red foxes hunt alone. Once they find food, they do not share it.</p> <p>Female red foxes will have about five to six babies. The babies are called <i>cubs</i>. Cubs are born blind. The red foxes make special homes for their babies called <i>dens</i>. Red foxes help their cubs along for the first five weeks of their lives. After the cubs are five weeks old, they leave their dens.</p> <p>Unlike wolves, red foxes do not form packs. They mainly stay to themselves. Sometimes, territories that are next to each other may overlap, but red foxes often fight each other over their territories. Each territory has only one male, his mate (or sometimes mates), and their cubs. Throughout their territory, red fox families build multiple dens. Often, they will take over other animals’ dens. The same dens are used by each generation of foxes. Red foxes stay in their home territories for life.</p> <p>The most significant predators of foxes are humans, coyotes, and wolves. Humans kill red foxes for their furs. Red foxes are important to the ecosystems in their habitats, because they control the rodent and rabbit populations. Although the red fox population may soon decrease due to overhunting in their habitats, as of now red foxes are not in danger of extinction.</p>	<p><b>territories</b> <b>multiple</b> <b>significant</b> <b>ecosystems</b></p>	
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## “The Goose” Reading Fluency #23

<p>8 16 25 32 39 47 51 61 74 87 100 115 124 139 155 169 182 185 198 214 230 244 258 260 277 295 312 327 344 362 363 381 402 419 437</p>	<p>The goose is a medium to large bird.</p> <p>The plural of <i>goose</i> is <i>geese</i>. There are many kinds of geese in the world. One kind is the Canadian goose. Canadian geese are beautiful birds. They have a gray body with a white chest and chin. Their heads and necks are black.</p> <p>Canadian geese like to live close to water. Sometimes they move from one place to another. When they decide to move, they fly together. They fly in a V-shape called a <i>wedge</i>. On long flights, the birds change places. They do this because the birds in front get tired from flying into the wind. It’s easier to fly at the rear of the wedge. When they fly, the geese like to honk loudly.</p> <p>Canadian geese eat a lot of grass. When they eat, they grab the grass in their bills and then jerk their heads to tear out the grass. Geese will eat most any plant that grows near water, even seaweed! The geese also eat wheat, rice, and corn. Of course, this means that farmers usually don’t like Canadian geese to visit often.</p> <p>When geese are two years old, they look for mates. The partners usually stay together all their lives. The female lays about six eggs at a time. Both the mother and the father guard the nest. Lots of animals like to eat their eggs, so they have to watch the eggs carefully. The female has to be especially careful, because she loses some of her feathers before the eggs are hatched, so she can’t fly.</p> <p>These geese are generally <i>migratory</i>. This means that they lay eggs and hatch their chicks in cold climates, but fly south to warmer areas to spend the winter. However, for reasons that scientists don’t fully understand, many Canadian geese are now remaining in the warmer climates all year long. This has created problems for some communities because these geese have permanently settled anywhere where there is water. Golf courses and housing developments with small lakes now have the geese as unwanted guests. These geese can be very messy and because they aggressively defend their territories, they can injure people who come too close.</p> <p>They used to live only in North America. Now they are in Europe, too. Their numbers are growing due to the fact that many of their natural predators, such as the bald eagle, red fox, and gray wolf are declining. When the balance of animals changes in nature, some animal populations can grow larger than their habitats will allow. This seems to be the case with the overpopulation of Canadian geese in some areas.</p>	<p><b>Canadian especially migratory communities</b></p>	
	Total Number of Words Read	Total Number of Words Read	
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## “The Horse” Reading Fluency #24

7 16 24 31 39 49 60 71 83 95 106 118 131 142 155 167 183 185 197 213 229 236 253 273 290 294 313 331 347 367 385 389	<p>Horses are some of the most important animals. At the bottom of their four long legs, they have <i>hooves</i>. Hooves are like human nails, but stronger and thicker. Horses have long necks and long heads. Their necks have special hair called a <i>mane</i>. Their eyes are big, so they can see all around them. Horses come in many different colors.</p> <p>People ride horses. They ride them to work on cattle ranches. They race them at racetracks. They also ride them for fun. Farmers use them to work on farms. Better fed horses serve their owners best. Horse owners feed their horses freshly cut hay. Some owners feed their horses grains such as corn and oats. Riding or working horses drink a lot of water. They need clean water at all times.</p> <p>Wild horses, also called <i>mustangs</i>, live in the Western United States, Western Canada, and parts of Southern China. Most wild horses live on wide, open grasslands and eat grass, flowers, and other plants. Other wild horses live in forests. In the winter, when grass is not available, they will eat the bark off trees.</p> <p>Female horses are pregnant for almost a full year. Usually, they have only one baby, called a <i>foal</i>, at a time. Horses reach full growth at about four to five years of age. In the wild, horses live in groups, under the control of one head male and one head female.</p> <p>Wild horses are designed to live in rough habitats. They usually have shorter backs, fuller manes, and lower set tails than horses raised on farms. The average horse lives for about twenty years in the wild. Since wolves have been eliminated in most areas where wild horses live, wild horses face few predators. Mountain lions are the exception.</p> <p>In 1978, a new federal law in the United States required that lands be improved to allow the wild horse population to survive. Since then, the wild horse population has seen a steady increase of about 15-20% more than the previous numbers. In addition, since the 1970s, over 175,000 wild horses have been tamed and adopted by people. At this time, the wild horses in the United States and Southern China face no threat of extinction. These beautiful animals continue to thrive on the farm, on ranches, in riding stables, and now in the wild.</p>	<p><b>hooves</b></p> <p><b>designed</b></p> <p><b>exception</b></p> <p><b>previous</b></p>	
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## “The Jackrabbit” Reading Fluency #25

<p>9 The jackrabbit is not really a rabbit. It is  17 a <i>hare</i>. Jackrabbits don’t make good pets. They  25 are wild animals. Rabbits make very good pets.  33 Both do look alike. Usually, jackrabbits are a  40 little larger than rabbits. Jackrabbits are famous  49 for their large, floppy ears. They can be brown  57 or white with some black color. They are  60 covered in fur.  63 Jackrabbits can move very quickly. They run very fast. They  70 can run up to 45 miles per hour. They also leap very high and far.  85 Their speed and leaping help jackrabbits get away from danger  95 sometimes. Foxes, coyotes, owls, snakes, hawks, and people like to  105 hunt them. They can be a very tasty dinner.  114 Jackrabbits live most everywhere in the world. They make their homes  125 above ground in simple nests. Rabbits live underground in tunnels called  136 <i>burrows</i>. Jackrabbits don’t build nests for their babies, but rabbits do  147 build nests. Jackrabbit babies are born with complete fur and with their eyes  160 open, while rabbit babies have no fur and their eyes are closed.  172 Jackrabbits are <i>herbivores</i>. This means that they only eat plants. They  183 especially enjoy lettuce and other vegetables. Jackrabbits can be unwelcome  193 visitors to a vegetable garden because they eat so much. Farmers keep dogs  206 and cats to scare away the jackrabbits. Jackrabbits are most active at night.  219 They look for food when it’s dark. During the day, they rest in shady, grassy  234 areas. They keep their long ears flat against their backs and they crouch low to  249 the ground to avoid being seen.  255 Many cultures have interesting stories and myths about jackrabbits. In some African cultures,  268 jackrabbits are considered to be <i>tricksters</i>. This means that people think that these hares are smart trouble-  285 makers that have special powers. Some Africans believe that jackrabbits are bad luck. Americans believe that  300 a rabbit’s foot is good luck. From the Arabian culture, <i>The Tortoise and the Hare</i> is one of Aesop’s most  313 famous fables.  332 In Eastern cultures, jackrabbits play a huge role in literature and myths. The hare is a key animal in  341 the Chinese calendar. The “Year of the Rabbit” is actually the “Year of the Hare.” The Chinese also see the  361 imprint of the jackrabbit in the moon. The shadows of the seas on the moon surface do produce an image that  382 looks like a jackrabbit. The image certainly looks more like a jackrabbit than the “man in the moon.”  400</p>	<p><b>coyotes</b>  <b>vegetable</b>  <b>tortoise</b>  <b>Aesop</b>  <b>literature</b></p>	
Total Number of Words Read	Total Number of Words Read	
- Total Number of Mistakes	- Total Number of Mistakes	
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## “The Kangaroo” Reading Fluency #26

<p>9 19 26 35 44 51 59 67 77 87 99 110 113 128 141 155 171 183 197 212 225 238 251 264 275 291 309 329 348 361 376 389</p>	<p>Kangaroos are one of few animals in the wild that jump more than they run. Their ears are long and pointed. But, kangaroos stand like humans. And, they hop like frogs! Their coat is mostly brown with white on the bottom. Some even have gray coats. They have long, powerful tails. Kangaroos are famous for the <i>pouches</i> on their bellies. They carry their babies in these pouches.</p> <p>In the wild, kangaroos are only found on one continent—Australia. Different types of kangaroos live in different areas, but mostly they live in grasslands near water. Some live in forests and still others live right outside of the city! Recently, the kangaroo habitat has increased.</p> <p>Like cows, kangaroos must eat their food, spit it back up, and then eat it again before they can store it. Some kangaroos graze at night, while others graze during the middle of the day. Kangaroos mostly eat grass and leaves. If they can find green plants that are not dead, they do not need to drink water. Kangaroos have special teeth that are designed for eating grasses. After they wear out, their back teeth fall out and new teeth grow in their place.</p> <p>Most kangaroos have only one baby, called a <i>joey</i>, at a time. The joey is warmed in its mother’s pouch and rides comfortably as she hops. At about nine months, the joey leaves his mother’s pouch for short periods. It stays with its mother for a total of eighteen months before fully leaving her. Kangaroos move in groups. The groups are made up of one male, several females, and their young. Groups can consist of hundreds of kangaroos.</p> <p>When kangaroos hop around, they use their powerful hind legs to push themselves off the ground. Their upper legs are strong, too. In fact, there have even been boxing events between kangaroos and men. The kangaroos always win. Kangaroos are very fast and can reach speeds of up to forty miles per hour! Also, when kangaroos are moving slowly, they often use their tail as an extra leg to help move themselves along.</p> <p>Before European settlement in Australia, kangaroos were endangered. But, as the Europeans prepared lands for farming with added irrigation, the kangaroo population grew. Since the massive extermination of the kangaroo’s main predator, the Tasmanian wolf, kangaroos have even overpopulated some areas.</p>	<p><b>European settlement irrigation extermination Tasmanian</b></p>	
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## “The Lion” Reading Fluency #27

7	Lions are the second biggest cats in the wild. Mostly, lions are light brown.	<b>savannahs</b>
14	But, they also come in darker colors. Male	<b>buffaloes</b>
22	lions have very large <i>manes</i> . The mane is	<b>hyenas</b>
30	made up of many small dark hairs on the side	<b>leopards</b>
40	and back of the head. Lions are heavier than	
49	two people put together, but as fast as cars over short distances!	
61	In Africa, lions can be found on the <i>savannahs</i> . These are the	
73	grassy areas with shady trees. Central and southern Africa have	
83	many savannahs. Lions also live in India. Of course, they are very	
95	popular zoo animals. In America alone, there are hundreds of lions in	
107	zoos.	
108	In the wild, lions eat mainly large animals. They like to eat zebras,	
121	buffaloes, and even elephants. Sometimes, they eat smaller animals or reptiles	
132	as well. They even might attack livestock (cows) in villages for food. Often,	
145	lions will steal food from hyenas and leopards, after those animals kill their	
158	prey. Lions hunt in packs and use strategic attacks to kill their food. All female	
172	lions hunt, but only some male lions will hunt. If a male has a mate, he will not	
189	hunt. In the zoo, keepers give lions beef and horse tails to eat.	
204	Female lions usually give birth every two years. When they give birth,	
216	they usually have about one to five babies, called <i>cubs</i> . Only one out of five	
231	cubs survives the first two years of life. After two years of age, lions are taught	
246	to hunt. Lions live in large groups of females with few males. Groups, called	
260	<i>prides</i> , may even grow to forty lions.	
268	When a male enters a new pride, it is not uncommon for him to kill all the cubs in the pride that are	
291	unable to run from him. He kills the cubs to ensure that all the future cubs in the pride will share his blood.	
315	Although the adult lion has no natural predators, the main job of male lions is to protect the pride and its	
336	territory. Both males and females defend against outside lions that try to join their pride. In the wild, lions live	
356	about fifteen years.	
360	Lions are vulnerable to extinction. Massive efforts to expand the habitat of lions and provide them	
376	with sufficient prey have been somewhat successful. Thousands of years ago, lions used to roam the lands in	
394	North and South America, as well as in Europe and Asia. Scientists believe they died off in these areas due to	
415	human territorial expansion and disease.	
420		
	Total Number of Words Read	Total Number of Words Read
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## “The Mouse” Reading Fluency #28

<p>9 21 30 39 47 56 64 72 84 97 109 116 129 143 161 176 189 199 214 227 239 258 279 299 309 324 343 360 377 386</p>	<p>The mouse is a very small animal. A mouse is one kind of <i>rodent</i>. It is not a little rat. Two or more are called <i>mice</i>. Mice are only about six inches long. That includes a very long, thin tail. They are white, brown, or gray. Their whiskers are also long. They have pink, round ears. Most mice run along the ground. Some can hop.</p> <p>Mice can be found everywhere in the world. They live in grassy fields or forests. They live in mountain areas. They may also live in the walls of your home or apartment! Some live in science labs. There, they serve as <i>subjects</i> for study. Mice have helped scientists make many important discoveries.</p> <p>Mice have babies year-round. Their average litter size is a dozen. Their babies are called <i>pups</i>. They are born without hair and their eyes are closed. Although mice may live up to two years in a science lab or as a pet, most mice live only about six months in the wild. They are favorite meals for cats, foxes, hawks, and snakes. Mice eat grains, rodent pellets, and of course they love cheese. The cartoon character <i>mice</i> have always loved their cheese.</p> <p>In the wild, mice can be real pests. They eat farmer’s crops and they can also spread diseases. Some of the diseases are very serious. Mice are carriers of the deadly <i>hantavirus</i>, so it’s best to not handle wild mice.</p> <p>At home, mice can be wonderful pets. They are intelligent and very clean. They like to play and are fun to watch. Mice will allow people to hold them and some will even do tricks. They live up to the expression, “as quiet as a mouse.” To properly care for pet mice, you need a special cage or aquarium. They sleep on a nest of shredded wood or clean paper.</p> <p>Mice have always been popular subjects of literature. Mice are usually featured as intelligent and clever. They are also considered to be very <i>resourceful</i>. This means that mice are seen to be good problem-solvers and use their resources to their benefit. They also have starred in animated movies and cartoons. Of course, the most famous mouse would have to be Walt Disney’s “Mickey Mouse.” “Mickey Mouse” has appeared in thousands of movies, cartoons, television shows, and stories.</p>	<p><b>discoveries</b> <b>character</b> <b>hantavirus</b> <b>resourceful</b></p>	
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## “The Newt” Reading Fluency #29

7 15 23 32 39 45 56 66 73 84 97 111 123 125 139 154 166 179 194 198 211 223 236 245 262 279 298 302 316 333 348 367 379	<p>The newt looks like a cross between a lizard and a frog. Newts are <i>amphibians</i>. They spend some of their lives in water and some out of water. Newts are part of the salamander family. They are dry and bumpy. Other salamanders are wet and smooth. Newts live mostly on land. Other salamanders live in water. Newts have four legs. Other salamanders have just two. Most salamanders are less than six inches long.</p> <p>Newts are some of the oldest creatures on earth. They live most everywhere in the world. They like to live in shady areas under rocks, in hollow trees, or in holes that they dig. The holes are called burrows. Newts stay close to water because this is where they have their babies.</p> <p>Newts hatch their babies from eggs. They lay their eggs on top of plants in streams, ponds, or lakes. The newt mothers fold the plants over the eggs to protect them. The mothers lay about twenty eggs, twice per year. The newborns are called <i>tadpoles</i>. Just like frogs, they look more like fish when they are born. They grow legs and their gills turn into lungs that breath air after they are born.</p> <p>All newts are <i>carnivores</i>, so they eat meat. They eat worms, snails, fish, crayfish, and mice. They stalk their prey slowly and then pounce quickly. Sometimes newts wait until the prey walks close by them. Newts have long tongues that they use to snatch their unsuspecting meals.</p> <p>Newts have a special ability to avoid being eaten by predators. Their skin produces a poison that animals have learned to avoid. Native Americans in the Northwest used to harvest this poison from newts. They tipped their arrows with this poison to kill their enemies. The poison is deadly to humans, so you probably shouldn't taste test!</p> <p>Newt populations have declined throughout the world, due to destruction of their habitats. Water pollution has contributed greatly to the decline of the salamander population. The use of pesticides by farmers has increased water pollution because they eventually wash into streams, lakes, and rivers. Some countries, such as the United States and Great Britain, have passed laws to protect salamander habitats. It is even against the law to own a salamander as a pet in Great Britain.</p>	<p><b>amphibians</b> <b>salamander</b> <b>contributed</b> <b>pesticides</b></p>	
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## “The Pig” Reading Fluency #30

<p>11 The pig is also called a <i>hog</i> or a <i>swine</i>. Pigs  20 have short legs and fat bodies. Their bodies have  30 hair all over. Their heads are big and they have  39 noses called <i>snouts</i>. Pigs have sharp teeth. Two of  49 the teeth are called <i>tusks</i>. Pigs have four toes on  59 each of their four feet. Pigs can be pink, brown,  62 white, or black.  74 Pigs are found in all areas of the world. Pigs are <i>omnivores</i>,  85 which means that they eat both animals and plants. Farm-raised pigs  97 are well known for eating just about anything. They will eat insects,  107 worms, garbage, leaves, grass, fruit, and flowers. Most pigs are  118 raised by farmers for food. Pigs provide ham, bacon, pork chops,  129 and sausage. Pig meat is called <i>pork</i>. Some religions have rules  140 against eating pork. Farmers also raise pigs for their tough skins,  151 which are dried into leather. Footballs are called “pig skins” because  165 many are made from pigs. Pig hair is used to make hair brushes.  178 Female pigs are called <i>sows</i>. They have a litter of between six and  190 twelve babies. The babies are called <i>piglets</i>. Many children and teenagers raise  204 these piglets and “show” them in county fairs. The pigs are judged upon their  216 beauty, grooming, size, and weight. Young people earn medals or ribbons for  230 winning pigs and can even sell their pigs to the highest bidders at auction.  243 Pigs can’t cool themselves because they can’t sweat, so they roll in cool  258 mud during hot weather. The mud also protects them from flies and acts as a  272 sunscreen. Wild pigs are just as messy as farm pigs. Wild pigs can destroy  285 farm crops and gardens. They also can be aggressive and have even attacked  286 people.  302 Pigs are some of the smartest animals. Pot-bellied pigs have recently become very popular pets. They  322 can be walked like dogs, and they can even be trained to perform tricks. Pigs are used in medical research,  332 because many of their organs closely resemble those of humans.  347 Pigs are important cultural characters in countries throughout the world. Pigs have long been favorite  364 subjects of literature and cartoons. “Porky the Pig” is one of the most popular animal television characters.  384 “Babe” has starred in movies by the same name. The pig is even one of the animals on the twelve-year  398 Chinese cycle of animals. The “Year of the Pig” is part of their calendar.</p>	<p><b>religions</b>  <b>sausage</b>  <b>auction</b>  <b>aggressive</b></p>	
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## “The Quail” Reading Fluency #31

10 17 25 34 42 50 62 74 88 102 104 117 131 144 159 174 189 203 213 227 241 256 269 285 302 319 339 351 369 389 410 428 447 464 472	<p>The quail is a bird that is part of the pheasant family. These birds all have six feathers on top of their heads. These feathers look like a hat. Quail are mostly gray. They have black faces. They also have big bellies. The quail is the state bird of California.</p> <p>Quail live in many parts of the world. In fact, quail were brought into many countries. Most types of quail live in the same place all year. They walk more than they fly. Some quail, such as the quail in Japan, do fly to warmer places in the winter. These quail fly long distances.</p> <p>Quail like stay in small flocks called <i>coveys</i>. They like to look for food with other quail. Quail mostly eat seeds, but sometimes they will eat insects, berries, and leaves. The birds scratch the ground like chickens to find their food. The quail also like to take baths together. But, they use dirt, not water, to clean themselves. A group of quail picks a sunny place with soft dirt. The quail dig down 1-2 inches into soft dirt. They then flap their wings until the surrounding dirt and dust showers them all. Then, they leave the hole and flap their wings until the dirt and dust come off.</p> <p>Female quail lay many eggs each year, but about a dozen at one time. The group of eggs is called a <i>clutch</i>. Families combine so that there is always at least one mother quail to watch the baby chicks. They hide their nests under bushes or sometimes rocks because many other animals like to eat quail eggs. Quail warn each other with a variety of calls if there is danger to the clutch.</p> <p>Animals aren't the only ones that like quail eggs. Many people prefer quail eggs instead of chicken eggs. Some people even enjoy pickled quail eggs. In fact, quail eggs are becoming more popular. Quail farmers now raise quails for their eggs and their meat. Quail is served at some of the finest restaurants and some of the best chefs prepare these birds in many different ways.</p> <p>Quail hunting is also very popular. Hunters look for quail and when they find them, they “flush” the birds into flight. The quail fly up from the ground very fast, and then they re-settle somewhere else just as fast. The hunters must be ready to shoot and react quickly. Hunters must be good shots in order to get these game birds. Some ranchers invite groups of hunters to hunt quail on their land. These ranchers encourage the growth of the quail population on their land because the ranchers charge the hunters to hunt these game birds. Because of the increasing popularity of the quail, the population is certainly growing in some areas. However, the population is diminishing in expanding urban areas.</p>	<p><b>pheasant</b> <b>coveys</b> <b>surrounding</b></p>	
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## “The Raccoon” Reading Fluency #32

7 14 24 31 39 44 51 62 72 84 98 103 115 128 143 155 167 180 186 199 215 230 244 261 274 295 314 334 348 363 382 399 418 429	<p>A raccoon looks like a masked robber.</p> <p>Raccoons are mostly gray. But, around their eyes they have a black mask of fur. They are medium-sized and furry. They have long, bushy tails. Raccoons have short legs and soft paws. Their claws are very sharp.</p> <p>Raccoons live in North America and in Europe. They are mainly forest animals. They climb trees with their sharp claws. Climbing helps them escape from other animals. Other raccoons live close to people near towns. Raccoons like to eat the same food as people. You might find one looking for food in a trash can or in a landfill.</p> <p>Instead of sleeping at night and hunting in the daylight like most animals, raccoons sleep during the day and find food at night. Some raccoons are active in the day, but most are not. Raccoons are <i>omnivores</i>, so they eat both plants and animals. They eat mostly insects, bugs, worms, birds, and lizards. Sometimes, raccoons can be found sitting on rocks in a stream, fishing with their claws. They are also <i>scavengers</i>. That means that they will eat the dead bodies of animals.</p> <p>Female raccoons will usually have two to five babies at a time. Babies, called <i>kits</i>, are born blind and deaf. The father has no part in raising the kits. After only six to nine weeks, male kits will leave their homes. By that time, they are ready to find their own food and live by themselves. Most raccoons live only a few years in the wild. Most of them end up dying by disease or sickness. They usually don't live long in the wild because of their diet.</p> <p>In the wild, raccoons may be able to weigh up to sixty pounds! This is because they store up fat in their bodies to keep warm during the winter. In the winter months, they stay mostly inactive. Raccoons sleep a lot when it is cold outside. Although they sleep a lot, raccoons do not hibernate like some animals such as bears. They remain alert and can wake up quickly if predators come to attack.</p> <p>Raccoons are not threatened or endangered. At different points in history, the raccoon population has neared extinction due to hunting. Their thick fur is prized for coats and hats. But, the population has slowly made a comeback in recent history. Still today, professional trappers catch raccoons for their fur. In most places, it is illegal to keep raccoons as pets, although some people still keep them. They are dangerous to have as pets, because they may act aggressively in some situations.</p>	<p><b>scavengers</b></p> <p><b>inactive</b></p> <p><b>situations</b></p>	
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## “The Seagull” Reading Fluency #33

<p>10 The seagull is one type of gull. A gull is  19 just one kind of bird. There are over 1,000  29 kinds of birds in the world. The seagull is a  38 bird that we often see at the beach. Seagulls  46 are medium to large birds. They are usually  54 gray or white with some black color. They  64 have curved yellow bills. They squawk and screech loudly. Seagulls  68 are also very smart.</p> <p>77 Seagulls are found throughout Canada and the United States.  89 They usually live in coastal areas. Some live inland near lakes and  101 rivers. Seagulls can drink both fresh and saltwater. They can fly long  113 distances. Some gulls live on islands far from the coast. They travel  124 many miles from their island homes each day. They visit beaches  and coastal areas to get food.</p> <p>131 Mothers lay two to three eggs at a time. Seagulls are very protective of  145 their babies. They take care of them for up to six months after they are born,  161 providing food and protection. Some of the babies will remain close to their  174 mothers even after they have grown up. Seagull families form expanded  185 family units called <i>colonies</i>. All birds in the colonies work together to protect  198 their territories by attacking predators as large groups. Some seagulls have  209 been known to attack people, but this is rare.</p> <p>218 Seagulls are <i>carnivores</i>, so they eat meat. They mostly eat fish,  229 shellfish, and small rodents. However, seagulls will eat anything that people  240 leave behind. They will eat rotting meat and garbage at landfills. They will  253 even eat left-over candy, cigarette butts, and french fries at the beach.</p> <p>265 The better their diet, the longer seagulls live. The average seagull lives 10 to 12 years. However,  282 some have been known to live much longer. Their life spans also depend upon the type and number of  301 predators in the seagulls' habitats. Some individual gulls have been known to live over 25 years.</p> <p>317 Because seagulls can live in many places, they have become problem pests in some areas. They  333 gather in farming areas, in landfills, or even on school grounds, looking for food to eat. Their droppings are  352 smelly and hard to clean. Half of the birds that crash into airplanes are seagulls. Seagulls have been known to  372 crack airplane windows and cause much damage if they fly into the engines.  385</p>	<p><b>protective</b></p> <p><b>colonies</b></p> <p><b>cigarette</b></p> <p><b>individual</b></p>	
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## “The Tiger” Reading Fluency #34

8	Tigers are the largest cats in the wild.	<b>Vietnam crocodiles challenge reintroducing</b>
15	Most tigers have orange and brown coats.	
22	Their stripes are black. Some very rare	
29	tigers are mostly white. Males are longer	
37	than females. Tiger teeth are sharp and very	
38	long.	
46	In the wild, tigers live mostly in forests.	
60	But, they also live in the jungle. In the forest or jungle, tigers can	
72	blend in with their stripes. Tigers must live next to water. Unlike	
84	other cats, which avoid water, tigers seek it out. They are excellent	
97	swimmers and can swim up to four miles. Wild tigers can only be	
108	found in Asia. Most of them live in Vietnam and India.	
119	Different types of tigers hunt different animals, but all tigers are	
128	carnivores. Mostly, tigers eat medium-sized animals. Common prey includes	
138	boars, pythons, leopards, crocodiles, and monkeys. Tigers hunt alone. They	
150	stalk their prey before attacking and overpowering it. Mostly, tigers kill their	
163	prey by strangling the prey with their jaws. But, sometimes they will strike	
177	their prey with their paws. After taking their prey, tigers often carry their prey	
189	to other places. Tigers have been known to carry heavy livestock while	
196	running and jumping over fences or rocks!	
208	Female tigers have baby <i>cubs</i> after months of pregnancy. At eight weeks	
223	of age, baby cubs are ready to leave the den with their mother. The mother	
240	trains the cubs for about two and a half years. The father is not involved in this	
251	training. After training, female cubs find territory near their mothers, while	
260	males find another male’s territory to challenge and control.	
279	Tigers breed very well in zoos. Due to this, the tiger population in zoos may soon equal the entire	
297	world’s population of wild tigers! An estimated 12,000 tigers are being kept as private pets. In Texas alone,	
314	there are an estimated 4,000 pet tigers! Only nineteen states have banned private ownership of tigers. Fifteen	
328	states require a license to own one, and sixteen have no rules at all!	
346	Illegal hunting, called <i>poaching</i> , has led to the decrease of the tiger population in the wild. An illegal	
363	tiger fur trade has encouraged illegal hunting. Efforts to restore natural habitat to tigers have been successful in	
379	India, China, and Russia. Projects involving reintroducing tigers into the wild have been largely unsuccessful	
381	in India.	
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## “The Vulture” Reading Fluency #35

7 15 23 30 37 44 54 65 76 88 97 112 126 136 152 168 184 185 199 211 223 235 246 265 284 300 319 336 351 371 391 408 411	<p>The vulture is not the most beautiful bird. But, other vultures like the way they look. They are largely black or brown birds with white under their wings. Their heads and necks have no feathers. Their powerful beaks are curved. Vulture wings are huge.</p> <p>These birds are found on every continent, except for Antarctica and Australia. Vultures are <i>scavengers</i>. That means that they eat the dead bodies of animals. Dead bodies are called <i>corpses</i>. Vultures in Africa, Asia, and Europe look for corpses by sight. Those in North and South America find their corpses mostly by smell.</p> <p>When vultures find an animal that is hurt, they will circle high in the sky above the animal. They wait until the animal dies to land and begin eating. Sometimes vultures will kill the weakened animal. Vultures feed individually or in groups. They will eat until full and then rest to digest the food before leaving. If the hide of an animal is too thick for vultures to tear, the vultures will wait for other animals to begin the meal, and then they will clean up what remains.</p> <p>Vultures are very important to the web of life. They are part of nature’s recycling. Vultures eat all but the smallest pieces and bone. The smallest pieces are then eaten by decomposers, such as bugs. The remaining chemicals can then be used again by plants and animals. Without decomposers and scavengers, the world would be covered with dead plants and animals.</p> <p>Even though vultures have an important part to play in the web of life, many people fear these birds. Vultures are, of course, closely related to death. In the Western world, the image of the vulture is very negative. Vultures frequently serve as metaphors for cowardly behavior in literature, in poetry, or in speech. In the Eastern world, the image of the vulture is more positive. Vultures are seen as necessary contributors to the cycle of life. In fact, some Buddhist death ceremonies encourage vultures to eat dead human corpses.</p> <p>The vulture population in agricultural India, Nepal, and Pakistan has seriously declined in the past decade. This decline is due to the fact that medicine used to treat farm animals has poisoned vultures as they eat the medicated animal corpses. As a result, other scavengers such as dogs and rats have taken over for the vultures. These animals are more likely than vultures to carry disease, such as rabies, and create health problems for people.</p>	<p><b>Antarctica</b> <b>corpses</b> <b>chemicals</b> <b>ceremonies</b></p>	
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## “The Wolf” Reading Fluency #36

9 17 26 35 44 52 61 63 75 88 98 103 117 130 143 158 172 186 201 214 229 242 256 269 283 296 301 315 331 352 362 378 396 407	<p>Wolves are a lot like dogs. But, they are bigger and stronger than most dogs. Wolves have strong legs and bodies. They run very fast. They also run for a long time without being tired.</p> <p>Wolves have strong paws. They can run on ice and rocks. Wolves have very furry coats. Their coats can have shades of gray, white, brown, red, or black.</p> <p>Wolves live in almost all parts of the world. They like colder areas, but they can live in warm areas, too. Some wolves live in forests. Others live in the mountains. Wolves live almost anywhere except the rainforest and desert.</p> <p>Wolves like to eat sheep, goats, and deer. Since they are fast and strong, wolves are able to hunt prey much larger than they are. Sometimes, wolves will eat small prey, too. Wolf packs use strategic hunting to surround their prey and strike at the perfect time. Wolves do not chase their prey. If they cannot catch it at first, they will usually let it go. Wolves also practice “surplus killing,” in which they kill many animals at once and save them for meals later. But, wolves do not need to eat even for long periods of time. They have been known to go up to seventeen days without a meal!</p> <p>A group of wolves is called a <i>pack</i>. A mother and father pair leads each wolf pack. This pair solves any problems within the group and they control the food. Most of these pairs stay together for their entire lives. They have babies, called <i>pups</i>, and raise them within the pack. Wolves are ranked within a pack by fighting each other. In large packs, the ranking of different wolves may change often. Packs can contain up to twenty wolves, but they most commonly consist of just eight.</p> <p>Wolves often howl to communicate with each other. Howling allows packs of wolves to communicate with each other, because they can hear each other even through very thick forests. Sometimes, wolves howl for no apparent reason. Scientists think that they may howl to bond with each other in a form of friendship. Scientists compare this type of howling to human singing.</p> <p>For years, wolves were hunted to protect farmers’ livestock. Laws were passed to protect wolves and these animals were reintroduced in some areas. There are now over 9,000 wolves in the United States alone. Recently, wolves were officially taken off the U.S. Endangered Species List.</p>	<p><b>strategic</b></p> <p><b>surplus</b></p> <p><b>entire</b></p> <p><b>apparent</b></p> <p><b>friendship</b></p>	
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## “The X-ray Fish” Reading Fluency #37

<p>8 16 25 34 44 53 62 72 86 99 110 121 136 150 161 173 188 202 216 217 231 245 261 275 279 297 316 336 352 374 388 408 429 431</p>	<p>The x-ray fish is a fish you can see through. These fish have very little skin. It just covers their bellies. The rest of the body is covered in a thin silver <i>sac</i>. You can see the bones of these fish! That is why they are called x-ray fish. There are a few spots of color on these fish, but not many.</p> <p>These fish come from South America. The tropical river areas have a lot of these little fish. They are freshwater fish, not salt-water fish. Although, the x-ray fish can live in almost any type of water. Now many of them live in homes called <i>aquariums</i>. Aquariums are homes that people make for fish and other water animals. Aquariums can be as small as a tiny fishbowl or as large as a football field.</p> <p>X-ray fish don't like to swim at the top or bottom of rivers and aquariums. They like swimming in the middle depths. These fish establish their own territories in aquariums. They mark out certain spots between plants and they tend to stay much of their time in these spots. Male and female partners usually swim in groups, but they rest close to one another. Males are thinner than females. The females lay eggs and can have lots of baby x-ray fish.</p> <p>X-ray fish are very popular aquarium fish and can be found in most all tropical fish stores. They do well with flake fish food, but they are <i>omnivores</i>. This means that they eat not only plants, but also other fish. Any fish they eat have to be small enough, because both male and female x-ray fish are only about one-inch long.</p> <p>Fish can be wonderful pets. However, they do require a lot of care. For freshwater fish, their water must be kept fresh. This means that fish owners have to change water often. Usually, people buy filters for larger fish tanks if they keep more than a few fish. The filter keeps the water fresh by circulating it continuously. The chemical balance and temperature of the water must be appropriate. Otherwise, the fish can get sick and die. X-ray fish are some of the easiest fish to care for because they survive well in non-moving water, in hard water (with few minerals), and in soft water (with more minerals).</p> <p>Fish owners do have to be careful about their mix of fish. Some types of fish get along better than others. The fish habitat needs to be planned well to provide the right features for the types of fish that the owners collect.</p>	<p><b>aquariums</b> <b>circulating</b> <b>continuously</b> <b>temperature</b></p>	
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## “The Yak” Reading Fluency #38

<p>9 17 25 33 42 50 56 66 78 91 101 118 130 143 155 167 181 193 209 226 230 248 265 281 298 310 327 346 363</p>	<p>The yak is a large animal that lives in the mountains of Asia. Yaks are strong, heavy cattle. They are white, brown, or black. Their hearts and lungs are very large. This helps them live in the mountains, where the air is thin. They have long, shaggy hair. The shaggy hair keeps them from the cold.</p> <p>Yaks live in the Himalaya Mountains of Central Asia. Mount Everest, the highest mountain in the world, is located there. They also live in Mongolia, which is north of China. Yaks do not live in lowland areas. They like high grasslands that have no trees.</p> <p>Yaks like to stay in a group, called a <i>herd</i>. A yak herd has from ten to thirty animals. Yaks will huddle together on cold winter nights or during snowstorms to keep warm. Yak females are pregnant for nine months, just like human mothers. The average lifespan of a yak is about twenty years.</p> <p>Farmers have many uses for yaks. Yaks produce milk and farmers make cheese and butter from that milk. Yaks also have very tasty meat. Yaks are often used as pack animals. They carry burdens across high mountain passes for farmers. Yaks pull plows to dig up the farm soil for planting. Yak hairs are spun into yarn for knitting. The hair is used to make rope and rugs. Yak hide is used to make shoes.</p> <p>In parts of the Himalayan region of Tibet, yak racing is a part of special celebrations. Tibetans enjoy seeing these large cattle race against each other. Business people are also using yaks to promote tourism. Some Tibetans have recently begun using yaks to pull cross-country skiers. For years, yaks have been employed to carry hiking gear for hikers and climbers. As hiking and climbing in the Himalayas become increasingly popular, yaks may have a greater role in the near future.</p> <p>The once large wild yak population of Central Asia is now threatened by extinction. Yak hunting has not been controlled by governments. The profit motive for yak hunting is high. Hunters have killed too many of these animals to maintain a healthy population. The future of wild yaks in Central Asia remains uncertain.</p>	<p><b>Himalaya Tibetans tourism uncertain</b></p>	
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## “The Zebra” Reading Fluency #39

7 15 24 33 42 51 55 66 78 90 102 113 123 134 147 161 173 188 190 201 214 225 238 253 267 275 290 308 323 334 349 367 385 393	<p>Zebras are black or dark animals with white stripes and bellies. Zebras look and act like horses. On the tops of their heads, they have short manes of hair. Their eyes are on the sides of their heads. They can see and hear very well. Zebras are about the size of small horses and donkeys.</p> <p>In Africa, zebras live in grassy areas. They mostly live away from trees. But, some types of zebras like trees. Others live in grassy hills or mountains near the ocean or sea. Every rainy season, zebras leave their homes and move. They depend on water in the dry season and they never live too far away from water holes. Zebras can be found in zoos across the world.</p> <p>Zebras are omnivores and grazing animals, like cows and horses. They search out grassy areas and slowly eat away the grass. Sometimes, they eat small bushes, leaves, twigs, or bark as well. They spend most of their day eating and finding food. Without rain, zebras cannot survive. They depend on the rain to make the grasses grow and to provide them with water for drinking and bathing.</p> <p>As highly social animals, zebras live in large groups. Males without female partners live alone or with groups of other bachelors until they are strong enough to challenge another male for his mate. Zebras make permanent bonds with each other. Females give birth to one baby, called a <i>foal</i>, about once a year. Foals are brown and white instead of black and white at birth. Babies can stand and walk by themselves soon after they are born. Their mothers nurse them for about one year.</p> <p>Many people have attempted to domesticate zebras for riding or doing work. These attempts have been largely unsuccessful over the years. Unlike horses and donkeys, zebras tend to panic when they are put into stressful situations. However, some successful attempts at taming zebras have occurred. A few zebras have been trained to pull wagons and even perform in circuses.</p> <p>Human contact with zebras has always decreased the zebra habitat, but mostly since the Nineteenth Century. Zebras were, and still are, hunted for their shiny black and white coats. Different species of zebras are more threatened than others. The chief natural predators of zebras are lions. As the lion population rises or declines, the zebra population rises or declines.</p>	<p><b>social</b></p> <p><b>bachelors</b></p> <p><b>domesticate</b></p>	
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## “The Sheep” Reading Fluency #40

7 17 26 34 42 52 60 70 83 93 105 113 125 140 154 167 181 187 200 214 229 242 244 261 280 297 319 334 349 368 384 402 419 424	<p>Sheep are animals with thick, curly fur.</p> <p>They are about as big as most large dogs. Sheep look a lot like goats. Different types of sheep come in different colors. Most sheep are white or brown. Some sheep have long fur. Others have short fur. Still others have no fur at all!</p> <p>Sheep are raised on farms or ranches. They are raised for their fur, called <i>wool</i>. They are also raised for their meat. Sheep can be found all over the world. China, Australia, India, and Iran have the largest amounts of sheep.</p> <p>Different types of sheep live better in different areas. They can live in open grassy areas, deserts, and in valleys.</p> <p>Sheep are herbivores. This means that they only eat plants. They usually eat grass, leaves, and stems. Often, when sheep eat their food, they will spit it out and re-chew it like cows. Sheep spend most of their day grazing (finding food). They prefer shorter grasses to longer ones. The best land for sheep grazing is land with many different types of grasses. Sheep also need to have lots of clean water to drink.</p> <p>Sheep live in groups called <i>flocks</i>. Most sheep find mates about once a year. Males fight each other to become the most powerful male of the group. If males, called <i>rams</i>, are left alone together, they might hurt or even kill each other! Baby sheep are called <i>lambs</i>. Usually, sheep live for about ten to twenty years.</p> <p>Since female sheep are slow moving and have no horns, they have no way of protecting themselves. Their chief predator is the coyote. But, occasionally they will become the victim of a dog, mountain lion, or bear. To protect their sheep, farmers often use guard dogs, guard llamas, or even guard donkeys. Guard animals are raised in the same habitat as the sheep to allow them to form a personal bond with the sheep. The guard animals are also effective shepherders. They can gather a flock of sheep very quickly.</p> <p>Although sheep have the reputation for being unintelligent animals, sheep are very smart and clever in their own ways. Sheep are excellent at remembering faces. They can remember up to fifty faces of other sheep or even humans. According to researchers, sheep even form friendships with certain other sheep. Some sheep have even been known to self-medicate themselves. If they are sick, they choose to eat certain plants that have healing abilities. These human-like qualities prove that sheep are not as dumb as people sometimes make them out to be.</p>	<p><b>occasionally</b></p> <p><b>effective</b></p> <p><b>shepherders</b></p> <p><b>medicate</b></p> <p><b>qualities</b></p>	
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## “The Whale” Reading Fluency #41

7 13 9 15 28 42 55 66 78 90 100 112 125 136 149 162 173 186 199 212 226 229 251 266 281 290 305 322 339 355 368 386 407 417	<p>The whale is the largest animal on earth. Many whales are bigger than elephants, but some are smaller. There are many types of whales. One of the largest whales is the humpback whale. Humpback whales are usually about 50 feet long. They weigh as much as 44 big trucks. The largest one ever measured was 88 feet long. Humpback whales have large humps on their backs. Their fins are very long. Their tail is wavy-shaped and very large.</p> <p>Humpback whales live in all the major oceans. They move a lot. Every summer, most humpbacks swim to cooler ocean waters. Some swim as many as 16,000 miles. Then, they swim back to tropical waters in the winter. There they have babies and eat a lot. Humpback whales are mammals, so they have live births. The baby whales are called <i>calves</i>. Mother whales are very protective of their calves and will sometimes attack boats that get too close to their babies. Once calves leave their mothers, they like stay by themselves. Humpback whales will group for feeding or play, but they spend most of their time alone.</p> <p>They eat in a variety of ways. Since humpbacks are <i>baleen</i> whales, they open their mouths wide and swim into groups of fish and plankton. The whales have a strainer in their throats that separates the water from their meal. Humpback whales will quickly lunge into an area to surprise fish. They will also slap the ocean surface to “shock” fish into staying still. Sometimes, groups of humpback whales will gather together and stir the water up so that it produces a wall of bubbles, which traps the fish. They only eat in the summer and live off fat reserves during the winter months.</p> <p>The whaling industry reduced the world population of humpback whales to dangerously low levels in the last century. Since the 1960s, most countries have agreed to ban hunting humpback whales. Also, poisons have killed many whales. Sometimes the whales get trapped in fishing nets or rammed by ships. Fortunately, the humpback whales have increased in numbers recently, but they will remain on protected species lists.</p> <p>Whale-watching tours have become very popular since the 1990s. Humpback whales are most frequently the main attractions. They are very curious animals and will come very close to boats. They also enjoy leaping into the air and splashing, which is known as <i>breeching</i>. They can also blow water 10 to 15 feet in the air. They also sing very loud “whale songs.”</p>	<p><b>protective</b></p> <p><b>baleen</b></p> <p><b>frequently</b></p>	
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## “The Python” Reading Fluency #42

6 12 21 28 35 42 47 60 71 83 93 106 109 119 132 143 155 167 181 187 198 212 226 242 255 267 283 300 321 326 341 358 373 382	<p>Pythons are snakes that are not poisonous. Adult pythons are all different sizes. They can be from one foot long to thirty feet long! Different types of pythons have different colors. Some are bright and green. Others are dark and brown. Pythons blend in with their surroundings.</p> <p>In the wild, pythons are found all over the East. They can be found in Africa, India, Vietnam, and Australia. They mostly live in wet areas, like rain forests or swamps. But, some live in grasslands or woodlands. Brown pythons live mostly in areas covered by brown trees or dirt. Green pythons tend to stay in areas with green leaves or trees.</p> <p>Unlike many snakes, pythons kill their prey without poison. Instead, pythons hunt down their prey and wrap themselves around it until it cannot breathe. Different types of pythons eat different animals. Large pythons may even eat deer or gazelles! Smaller pythons mostly eat smaller animals like rodents or reptiles. Pythons swallow their prey whole. It may even take several days or weeks to digest the food. Although they are big and strong, pythons do not usually threaten humans.</p> <p>Female pythons lay eggs, unlike some snakes which have live babies. After they lay their eggs, females will sit on them until they hatch. While sitting on the eggs, pythons move their muscles to provide heat for the eggs. They only leave their eggs to rest in the sun to get warmer for the eggs. Females will not eat until their eggs are hatched. Females only have babies once every two to four years, because the process is so difficult.</p> <p>Pythons are some of the biggest predators in their habitats. However, small, young pythons are in danger from attacks from other animals. Often, birds, other mammals, frogs, and even other snakes will hunt down baby pythons. Adult pythons are also at risk to large birds of prey, like eagles or hawks, and to large carnivores like lions and leopards.</p> <p>At least two known species of pythons are currently endangered. Other python species are also declining due to deforestation of the rain forests, other habitat destruction, and the snakeskin trade. Snake skins have been used for clothing, shoes, purses, and decoration. However, designers have not included snake skins in their fashion lines for many years.</p>	<p><b>poisonous</b> <b>several</b> <b>decoration</b> <b>fashion</b></p>	
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## “The Sheep” Reading Fluency #43

6 15 22 29 38 47 61 72 83 96 106 117 120 129 140 153 166 181 197 208 220 234 249 262 273 286 303 321 338 348 365 381 388	<p>The cheetah is the fastest animal on land. Cheetahs can run as fast as most cars over short distances. Unlike many cats, cheetahs have a narrow waist, making them smaller and less heavy than a lion or tiger. Their fur is rough and short. Their color is light brown and white with spots of black. Their tails have a ball of fur at the end. Unlike most big cats, cheetahs cannot roar.</p> <p>In Africa, cheetahs mainly live in the hot grassy areas. These areas are called the savannah. It can get very warm on the African savannah. Less frequently, cheetahs live in the mountains or in forests. They are mostly found in Africa, but some cheetahs also live in Asia.</p> <p>Cheetahs are carnivores. They eat mostly medium-sized animals like gazelles. Sometimes, they will hunt for zebras or wildebeests, too. While other big cats (like lions) hunt only at night, cheetahs hunt during the daytime. Also, while many animals use their sense of smell to hunt, cheetahs hunt with their excellent eye-sight. Once they have found their prey, they slowly follow until there is an open field. Cheetahs then use a burst of speed to catch their prey.</p> <p>Male cheetahs live in groups, while females live alone. Males are territorial. Females do not have territories; instead, they share land with other females. Females have about three to five babies at a time. The mothers raise these baby <i>cubs</i> for 18 months. During this time, the cubs learn how to hunt and avoid predators. After this time, the mothers leave their babies. The cubs stay together for another six months. After that, the females separate themselves from the group of their siblings. The males live together for life.</p> <p>As the smallest and least powerful predators in their habitat, cheetahs try to avoid contact with lions, leopards, hyenas, and wild dogs. Since cheetahs are designed for extreme bursts of speed and not for power, baby cubs are often targeted by these large predators. Mother cheetahs will defend their young and are sometimes successful. Males will form groups to chase off predators.</p> <p>Cheetah cubs have an unusually high death rate due to their predators. About 13,000 cheetahs still live in the wild today. Cheetah conservation efforts have been somewhat successful in South Africa and Iran. However, cheetahs are generally vulnerable to extinction.</p>	<p><b>cheetah</b> <b>gazelles</b> <b>generally</b> <b>vulnerable</b></p>	
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