*Reading Reconsidered Curriculum Narrative Short Stories Fluency Practice*

Name \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

**What is Fluency?**

Reading fluently means reading words accurately, at a speed that matches normal conversation, and with expression in order to understand the text. Fluent readers pay attention to:

* **Punctuation:** Which punctuation marks appear in the sentence? What clues does punctuation give you about when you should pause or how you should convey emotion?
* **Important words:** Are there any words that require special emphasis or give clues about the emotion of a sentence?
* **Dialogue:** How does the dialogue change what kind of expression you use? How is the person who is speaking feeling? What might they sound like?
* **The tone of the passage:** Are you capturing the intended meaning behind what you are reading? Are you capturing the voice of the narrator in your reading?

**Directions for students:**

1. Write your personal reading goal at the top of the page.
2. Listen to the teacher read aloud the set of sentences. Pay attention to when the teacher’s voice pauses or changes.
3. The teacher will call on students to read aloud the text to the class.
4. Now reread the set of sentences with your partner.
	1. Partner 1 (reader) reads the first sentence.
	2. Partner 2 (listener) listens while following along with a ruler.
	3. Let the reader try to decode the words. If they are stuck, the listener can help after the reader has given it a try.
	4. If neither student can read the word, jot it in your ‘Words to Practice’ box.
5. Switch roles for the next sentence and continue alternating through the set of sentences.
6. Reread the set following the above directions 3-4 times.
7. Listen for your teacher’s directions to see which questions you will be answering on the back of your sheet.

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Words to Practice

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Narrative Short Stories

Set 1: Lesson 4 218 Total Words

Below are some sentences about life for black Americans during the Great Depression to help you understand he historical context of “Marigolds.”

1. The Great Depression lasted from 1929 to 1939 and was the worst economic crisis of the industrialized world.
2. During the Great Depression, many Americans lost their jobs and struggled to pay for their basic everyday needs.
3. While everyone was impacted by the economic devastation of this period, no group was hit harder than black Americans.
4. Prior to the Great Depression, black Americans were frequent targets of discrimination and were forced to take primarily low-paying, unskilled jobs.
5. After the stock market crashed in 1929, those low-paying jobs either disappeared or were filled by whites in need of employment.
6. Unskilled jobs typically require less training and experience, so employers often value them less than skilled jobs.
7. In some cities, whites called for blacks to be fired from any jobs as long as there were still white people out of work.
8. By 1932, approximately half of black Americans were unemployed.
9. One historian writes that in some places, especially in the South, black unemployment rates were double or even triple those of the white population.
10. Even when the government programs and projects began to revive the economy, black Americans still faced discrimination that kept them in conditions of poverty and restricted their access to work and financial assistance.

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Reading Comprehension Questions

Set 1: Lesson 4

Below are some questions about the passage you just read about black Americans during the Great Depression in America.

1. What was the Great Depression?
2. What group in America was affected the most by the Great Depression?
3. What kinds of jobs were many black Americans forced to take before the Great Depression?
4. Why did unemployment among black Americans increase during the Great Depression?
5. How big of a difference was there between white and black unemployment rates?

1. What caused many black Americans to stay in poverty after the economy began to recover?

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Words to Practice

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Narrative Short Stories

Set 2: Lessons 1-3 204 Total Words

Below is a passage from “The Stolen Party” where Rosaura is asked about her relationship to Luciana.

“I’m a friend of Luciana,” said Rosaura.

“No,” said the girl with the bow, “you are not a friend of Luciana because I’m her cousin and I know all her friends. And I don’t know you.”

“So what,” said Rosaura. “I come here every afternoon with my mother and we do our homework together.”

“You and your mother do your homework together?” asked the girl, laughing.

“I and Luciana do our homework together,” said Rosaura, very seriously.

The girl with the bow shrugged her shoulders.

“That’s not being friends,” she said. “Do you go to school together?

“No.”

“So where do you know her from?” said the girl, getting impatient.

Rosaura remembered her mother’s words perfectly. She took a deep breath.

“I’m the daughter of the employee,” she said.

Her mother had said very clearly: “If someone asks, you say you’re the daughter of the employee; that’s all.” She also told her to add: “And proud of it.” But Rosaura thought that never in her life would she dare say something of the sort.

“What employee?” said the girl with the boy. “Employee in a shop?”

“No,” said Rosaura angrily. “My mother doesn’t sell anything in any shop, so there.”

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Reading Comprehension Questions

Set 2: Lessons 1-3

Below are some questions from the passage you read from “The Stolen Party.”

1. Why does the girl with the bow not believe that Rosaura is Luciana’s friend?
2. What does Rosaura say to convince the girl that she is Luciana’s friend?
3. How does the girl with the bow respond to this?
4. Why does Rosaura take a deep breath before telling the girl with the bow who she is?
5. Why would Rosaura’s mother tell her to “be proud of it” when saying she’s the daughter of the employee?
6. Why does Rosaura get angry when the girl with the bow asks what kind of employee her mother is?

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Words to Practice

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 Narrative Short Stories

Set 3: Lesson 13 184 Total Words

Below are some sentences about clothing in 19th-century France to help you better visualize the story in “The Necklace.”

1. In late 19th-century France, a person’s social position was firmly established at birth.
2. A person was born into one of these classes: lower (poor, uneducated), middle (educated professionals from clerks to doctors), or upper (wealthy businessmen and aristocrats, people who don’t have to work.)
3. Women might advance in this class structure by marrying someone from a higher class, but if a man married a woman above his class, she was more likely to lose her position than he was to improve his.
4. A woman’s clothing reflected her class in French society.
5. Poor women made their own clothes using inexpensive materials.
6. A middle-class woman might buy patterns and make her own clothes using somewhat more expensive materials, but she usually had her clothes made by a dressmaker, usually using the same patterns (who would be considered a member of the lower class).
7. A wealthy Frenchwoman wore one-of-a-kind clothes that were made from expensive fabrics and ordered from a fashionable designer.
8. The most famous of these designers was known as House of Worth.
9. The designer, Charles Worth, created unique and costly pieces that were often worn only once.

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Reading Comprehension Questions

Set 3: Lesson 13

Below are some questions from the sentences you just read about clothing in 19th-century France.

1. In 19th-century France, at what point in life was someone’s social class first established?
2. What kind of work might a person from each class have done in 19th-century France?
3. How could marriage affect someone’s social class in 19th-century France?
4. How would a middle-class Frenchwoman get her clothing items?
5. Why could clothing be used to identify someone’s social class in 19th-century France?
6. Why might an upper-class Frenchwoman wear an outfit only once?

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Words to Practice

My Goal: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

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Narrative Short Stories

Set 4: Lesson 12 259 Total Words

Below is a passage from “The Sky is Gray” where James sees Monsieur Bayonne about a toothache.



So Auntie told Monsieur Bayonne, and Monsieur Bayonne came over to the house and told me to kneel down ‘side him on the fireplace. He put his finger in his mouth and made the Sign of the Cross on my jaw.



The tip of Monsieur Bayonne’s finger is some hard, ‘cause he’s always playing on that guitar. If we sit outside at night we can always hear Monsieur Bayonne playing on his guitar. Sometimes we leave him out there playing on the guitar.



Monsieur Bayonne made the Sign of the Cross over and over on my jaw, but that didn’t do no good. Even when he prayed and told me to pray some, too, that tooth still hurt me.

“How you feeling?” he say.

“Same,” I say.

He kept on praying and making the Sign of the Cross and I kept on praying, too.



“Still hurting?” he say.

“Yes, sir.”

Monsieur Bayonne mashed harder and harder on my jaw. He mashed so hard he almost pushed me over on Ty. But then he stopped.

“What kind of prayers you praying, boy?” he say.”

“Baptist,” I say.

“Well I’ll be–no wonder that tooth still killing him. I’m going one way and he pulling the other. Boy, don’t you know any Catholic prayers?

“I know ‘Hail Mary,’” I say.

“Then you better start saying it.”

“Yes, sir.”

He started mashing on my jaw again, and I could hear him praying at the same time. And, sure enough, after a while it stopped hurting me.

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Reading Comprehension Questions

Set 4: Lesson 12

Below are some questions from the passage you read from “The Sky is Gray.”

1. Who is Monsieur Bayonne and what is he trying to do in this passage?
2. How does James seem to feel about Monsieur Bayonne’s methods? How does the author show James’ feelings?
3. Describe Monsieur Bayonne’s voice after he realizes James is saying a Baptist prayer.
4. What does Monsieur Bayonne mean by “I’m going one way and he pulling the other?”
5. Why does Monsieur Bayonne think the treatment is not working yet?
6. What does Monsieur Bayonne mean when he tells James, “Then you better start saying it?”

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Words to Practice

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Narrative Short Stories

Set 5: Lesson 19 224 Total Words

Below are some sentences about Shirley Jackson, the author of “The Lottery.”

1. Most modern readers are familiar with Shirley Jackson primarily because of “The Lottery,” but Jackson was a prolific author, writing many other notable works of fiction that place her squarely within an American Gothic tradition that dates back to Edgar Allan Poe.
2. Jackson’s biographer, Ruth Franklin, argues that Jackson is “a genius of literary suspense and psychological horror” and that she “plumbed the cultural anxiety of postwar America more deeply than anyone.”
3. “Postwar cultural anxiety” refers to the widespread fear of another war in the future, as well as uneasiness with societal changes that occurred after World War II.
4. Jackson was fascinated by all things ghoulish and frightening, and her novel *The Haunting of Hill House* has been made (and remade) into a successful horror film.
5. In 2018, *The Haunting of Hill House* received an eight-episode miniseries adaptation on Netflix.
6. Franklin notes that Jackson focused on “domestic horror;” that is, Jackson was fascinated with the ways in which people, especially women, were literally and figuratively haunted by the strict expectations of American society.
7. Franklin writes, “The relationship between a person’s surroundings and his or her mental state was one [Jackson] understood well.”
8. Indeed, by bringing social and psychological “demons” into familiar household spaces, Jackson explored the ways in which social pressures could impact seemingly normal characters.

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Reading Comprehension Questions

Set 5: Lesson 19

Below are some questions from the sentences you just read about American author Shirley Jackson.

1. Why are Shirley Jackson and Edgar Allan Poe considered to be part of the same tradition?
2. What does the author mean by “the cultural anxiety of postwar America?”
3. What do you think the “psychological horror” genre is about?
4. What does the author mean by “domestic horror?”
5. Why might domestic horror be considered a kind of psychological horror?
6. What does the metaphor “social and psychological demons” in sentence 7 refer to?

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Words to Practice

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Narrative Short Stories

Set 6: Lesson 16 278 Total Words

Below is the passage from “The Tell-Tale Heart,” in which the narrator confronts the old man.

But even yet I refrained and kept still. I scarcely breathed. I held the lantern motionless. I tried how steadily I could maintain the ray upon the eve. Meantime the hellish tattoo of the heart increased. It grew quicker and quicker, louder and louder every instant. The old man’s terror must have been extreme!

It grew louder, I say, louder ever moment! – do you mark me well I have told you that I am nervous: so I am. And now at the dead hour of the night, amid the dreadful silence of that old house, so strange a noise as this excited me to uncontrollable terror.



Yet, for some minutes longer I refrained and stood still. But the beating grew louder, louder! I thought the heart must burst. And now a new anxiety seized me – the sound would be heard by a neighbour! The old man’s hour had come!

With a loud yell, I threw open the lantern and leaped into the room. He shrieked once – once only. In an instant I dragged him to the floor, and pulled the heavy bed over him. I then smiled gaily, to find the deed so far done.

But, for many minutes, the heart beat on with a muffled sound. This, however, did not vex me; it would not be heard through the wall. At length it ceased. The old man was dead. I removed the bed and examined the corpse. Yes, he was stone, stone dead.

I placed my hand upon the heart and held it there many minutes. There was no pulsation. He was stone dead. His eye would trouble me no more.

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Reading Comprehension Questions

Set 6: Lesson 16

Below are some questions from the passage you read from “The Tell-Tale Heart.”

1. What do you think “tattoo of the heart” means in the context of this passage?
2. What does the narrator mean by “excited” when he says “this excited me to uncontrollable terror?”
3. Why do you think the heart begins beating faster the closer the narrator gets to the old man?
4. The narrator doubts the reader believes his story. Find 2 lines in the text that show his doubt.
5. What kind of body language did the narrator have when he entered the old man’s room?
6. What does it mean to smile “gaily,” based on the context of the passage?