Reading Reconsidered Curriculum Freak the Mighty 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. Now your teacher will call on students to read the sentences aloud.
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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*Freak the Mighty*

Set 1: Lesson 3 212 Total Words

Below are some sentences about how human memory works and how reliable it really is.

1. The “illusion of memory" refers to the disconnect between how we think memory works and how it actually works.
2. The illusion of memory reflects a basic contrast between what we think we remember and what we actually remember.
3. In other words, what we remember is different from what we think we remember.
4. Memory depends both on what actually happened and on how we made sense of what happened.
5. Your mind automatically makes sense of and processes the connections between the things you are trying to remember.
6. When we perceive something, we extract the meaning from what we see, hear, or smell rather than record everything in perfect detail.
7. Memory doesn’t store everything we perceive, but instead takes what we have seen or heard and associates it with what we already know.
8. These associations help us to discern what is important and to recall details about what we’ve seen but they can also lead us astray, because they lead to an inflated sense of the precision of memory.
9. We cannot easily distinguish between what we recall verbatim and what we create based on associations and knowledge.
10. What is stored in memory is not an exact replica of reality, but a re-creation of it.

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Reading Comprehension Questions

Set 1: Lesson 3

Below are some questions from the sentences about how our memory works and how reliable it really is.

1. What is ‘the illusion of memory’?
2. What two things contribute to the formation of a memory?
3. Does our memory record everything in perfect detail?
4. What impact do associations have on our memory?
5. Are people able to tell which of their memories are perfectly stored and which are not?

1. What is one memory you have from when you were very young? Do you have any memories that might not be real but were created from stories adults have told you?

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Words to Practice

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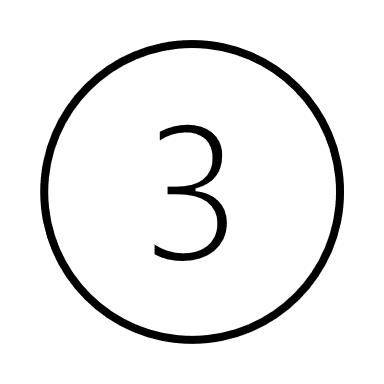
*Freak the Mighty*

Set 2: Lesson 1 306 Total Words

Below is a passage from *Freak the Mighty* where Max shares a memory from preschool when he first met Freak.

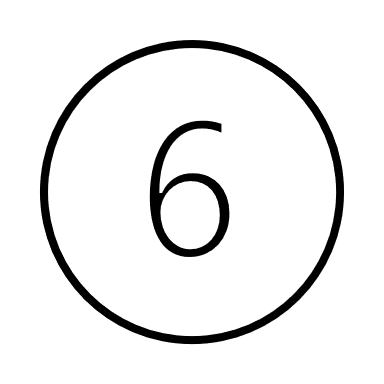
That’s when I got my first look at Freak, that year of the phony hugs. He didn’t look so different back then, we were all of us pretty small, right? But he wasn’t in the playroom with us every day, just now and then he’d show up.

Looking sort of fierce, is how I remember him. Except later it was Freak himself who taught me that remembering is a great invention of the mind, and if you try hard enough you can remember anything, whether it really happened or not.

 So maybe he wasn’t really all that fierce in day care, except I’m pretty sure he did hit a kid with his crutch once, whacked the little brat pretty good. And for some reason little Kicker never got around to kicking little Freak.

Maybe it was those crutches kept me from lashing out at him, man those crutches were cool. I wanted a pair for myself. And when little Freak showed up one day with those shiny braces strapped to his crooked legs, metal tubes right up to his hips, why those were even more cool than crutches.

“I’m Robot Man,” little Freak would go, making these weird robot noises as he humped himself around the playground. Rrrr . . . rrrr . . . rrrr . . .  like he had robot motors inside his legs, going rrrrr . . . rrrr . . . rrrr, and this look, like don’t mess with me, man, maybe I got a laser cannon hidden inside these leg braces, smoke a hole right through you.

No question, Freak was hooked on robots even back then, his little guy, two feet tall, and he already

knew what he wanted. Then for a long time I never saw Freak anymore, one day he just never came back

to day care…

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Reading Comprehension Questions

Set 2: Lesson 1

Below are some questions from the passage you read from pages 2-3 of *Freak the Mighty*.

1. When did Max first meet Freak?
2. What does Max remember about Freak from those early interactions with him?
3. What does Max remember thinking about Freak and why?
4. What did Freak like to play when he was out on the playground?
5. Why didn’t Max stay friends with Freak after daycare?
6. What does this passage foreshadow? (Foreshadow means to give a hint about something that will happen later in the story.)

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Words to Practice

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*Freak the Mighty*

Set 3: Lesson 9 204 Total Words

Below are some sentences about bionic advancement in the modern world.

1. Bionic bodies—and what they may be capable of—have captivated the human mind for centuries.
2. From the bumbling Inspector Gadget to the near‐indestructible Terminator, the idea of using technology to build a ‘better human’ has resulted in continuous technological advances.
3. The term ‘bionics’ was first used in the 1960s. It combines the prefix ‘bio’—meaning life—with the ‘nics’ of electronics.
4. Bionics is the study of mechanical systems that function like living organisms or parts of living organisms.
5. Bionics can be highly advanced pieces of technology, able to be integrated with various parts of the human body to replace or assist damaged limbs or organs.
6. Recently, progress in both materials science and technology has resulted in significant advancements in prosthetic limbs.
7. A man used a thought-controlled bionic leg to climb all 103 floors of a tower in Chicago.
8. The i-limb Ultra is an artificial hand with five independently moving artificial fingers.
9. Those limbs don't just react mechanically to pressure, they actually respond to the thoughts and intentions of their owners, flexing, extending, gripping, and releasing on mental command.
10. The age when prostheses were largely inert pieces of wood, metal, and plastic is passing.

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Reading Comprehension Questions

Set 3: Lesson 9

Below are some questions from the sentences you just read about bionics and the advancements of prosthetics.

1. What does the word bionics mean?
2. What are some famous examples of bionics being used in movies or TV shows?
3. What is a common way that bionics are used now?
4. How have bionics improved in recent years?
5. What is one example of a remarkable fear made possible by prosthetics?
6. How do prostheses compare to what they once were?

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Words to Practice

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*Freak the Mighty*

Set 4: Lesson 10, pp. 60-61 285 Total Words

Below is a passage from Freak the Mighty where Freak and Max are trying to get ‘treasure’ out of the sewer.



“I devised a special retrieval device,” Freak says.

“Looks like a bent paper clip on a string,” I say, and Freak tells me to shut up and follow orders.

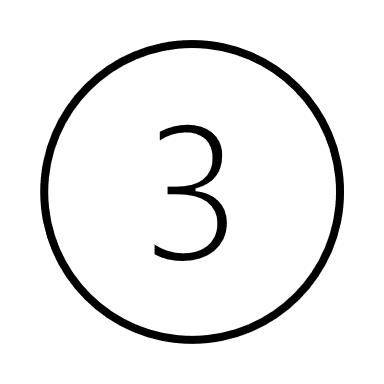
“You hold the string,” he says, and then he gets down on his knees and shines the little flashlight through the grate. “Can you see it?” he asks. “Can you?”



I look, but it’s hard to see anything and it smells like something died in the storm drain, which come to think of it, it probably did. Rats or worse.

“Down there,” Freak says. “The beam is hitting it right now.”

“That? That’s just a piece of junk.”



“Wrong,” Freak says, real fierce. “It looks like a piece of junk. It may very well contain fabulous wealth. Drop the line down and see if you can hook it.”

I’m thinking, boy what a butthead, rolling in the dirt for this little Darth Vader so he can play pretend games in the middle of the night, but I do what he asks, I drop the hook down, and much to my surprise, it actually hooks into something and when I pull on the kite string I can see what it is. “A purse,” I say. “Looks like a grotty old purse.”



“Careful,” Freak says. “Pull it up to the grate so I can grab the strap.”

I bring it up an inch at a time, and Darth - excuse me, Freak - manages to get his small hand down through the grate and grab hold of the soggy old purse and then he almost drops it. I yank up on the kite string and we both manage to squeeze the slimy purse up through the bars.

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Reading Comprehension Questions

Set 4: Lesson 10

Below are some questions from the passage you read in *Freak the Mighty* pages 60-61.

1. What are Freak and Max doing in this scene?
2. What does Freak create to assist with their getting the treasure?
3. What does Max think about what Freak is doing?
4. What does Max notice about the sewer?
5. What does Freak claim the treasure may contain?
6. What does the object in the sewer turn out to be?

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Words to Practice

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*Freak the Mighty*

Set 5: Lesson 18 247 Total Words

Below are some sentences about the process in which our memories are stored.

1. Whenever you witness an event, learn a fact, or experience something you want to remember, the memory network of your brain starts the memory-making process.
2. Here’s how scientists think it works: First, your brain consciously registers the memory, a process called encoding.
3. Not all incoming information gets encoded. For example, if you’re not paying attention when someone new introduces himself, you may not encode his name and then realize you don’t remember it moments later.
4. Scientists call the next step consolidation, which means building a record of the encoded information and creating a pathway to recall the memory again.
5. Replaying the experience makes the connections between cells stronger and strengthens this pathway.
6. However, this system isn’t foolproof because the mental replay of something we only imagined can feel as vivid as a real experience.
7. If you picture the sights and sounds of a scene based on a description, you activate similar brain networks as if you had really been there and the more you mentally replay the scene, the more it feels like a real memory, even if it never really happened.
8. The final step is known as retrieval.
9. Every time you remember something, the neural path to that memory gets stronger, making it even easier to recall again and again.
10. There’s no one location in the brain that serves as our memory bank, instead, many brain cells and several regions work together to make one memory.

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Reading Comprehension Questions

Set 5: Lesson 18

Below are some questions from the sentences you just read about the memory making process.

1. According to the passage, what is the first step in the memory-making process?
2. Does all incoming information get encoded and become a permanent memory?
3. What happens during the consolidation step of memory-making?
4. Are our memories always perfect replicas of exactly what happened?
5. What happens in the final step of the memory making process?
6. List the steps of the memory-making process in order.

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Words to Practice

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*Freak the Mighty*

Set 6: Lesson 17, pgs. 136-137 343 Total Words

Below is the passage from *Freak the Mighty* where Max and Freak are having a conversation after Killer Kane has been caught.



It turns out to be a pretty weird Christmas vacation, as you might imagine, and Gram keeps fussing at me and won’t let me sleep in the cellar.

“I don’t care if he is under lock and key,” she says.

Grim, he says, please humor the woman, she’s worried about you to death, and so I sleep upstairs on the foldout and at night, Gram keeps checking to see I’m there. Which is a pain, but she can’t help herself, and anyhow I’m just glad not to be alone in the down under.

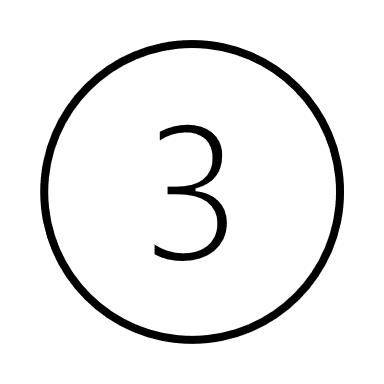


Freak**,** well**,** the Fair Gwen just about threw a fit when she got him home**,** because of him obeying a direct order and sneaking away to rescue me**,** but after a while she calms down and all she does is look at him and shake her head.

“What am I going to do with you?” she asks.

“Put me up for adoption,” he says. “I want to go live with the Waltons.”

He meant the tv show that keeps repeating, and of course he’s teasing her, but the Fair Gwen is not amused.



“No more crazy adventures or dangerous quests, young man. You have to be careful,” she keeps saying. “Extra careful.”

She means the trouble he sometimes has catching his breath, because of the way his insides keep growing faster than his outside, which hasn’t really grown at all.

Freak goes into the medical research place every few months now, which he says is a real pain, not that it actually hurts.

“Dr. Spivak says my unique status as a marvel of genetic aberration makes me an object of intense curiosity,” he says in that lofty way of his. “Specialists from around the world over are familiar with my case.

“What about the secret operation?” I ask when the Fair Gwen can’t hear us. ”The one where you’ll get a robot body?”

Freak gets this very cool scientific look on his face, and he always says the same thing: “The bionic research continues, my friend. The work goes on.”

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Reading Comprehension Questions

Set 6: Lesson 17

Below are some questions from the passage you read in *Freak the Mighty* pages 136-137.

1. Where is Max sleeping during Christmas vacation?
2. Why is Fair Gwen so upset with Freak?
3. Why does Fair Gwen want Freak to be extra careful?
4. Where does Freak go every few months? Why?
5. How does the doctor describe Freak’s condition according to Freak? How does Freak feel about this?
6. Who says, “What about the secret operation?” Why are they whispering?