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Introduction



* **Social Studies is thrilling.**

Think of how a 3,000-year-old mummy was issued a passport with his occupation listed as “King (deceased)” so that he could travel to France.

* **It has changed our world.**

Think of how UNICEF’s campaign to fortify salt has saved millions of babies from developing mental disabilities.

* **It affects our lives daily.**

Think of how because of a lawsuit brought before the Supreme Court a tomato is classified as a vegetable despite its being botanically a fruit.

Reading comprehension can be practiced and improved while coupled with social studies instruction. This book presents short, fascinating stories that focus on social studies topics. The stories were chosen to arouse curiosity, augment basic social studies facts taught at the sixth-grade level, and introduce a world of ideas, people, and events.

A page of questions follows each story. These questions will provide students familiarity with different types of test questions. In addition, the practice they provide will help students develop good testing skills. Questions are written so that they lead students to focus on what was read. They provide practice for finding the main idea, as well as specific details. They provide practice in deciphering new and unknown vocabulary words. In addition, the questions encourage students to think beyond the facts. For example, every question set has an analogy question in which students are expected to think about the relationship between two things and find a pair of words with the same type of relationship. Other questions provide an opportunity for students to extrapolate and consider possible consequences relevant to the information provided in the story.

The book is designed so that writing can be incorporated into every lesson. The level of writing will depend on what the teacher desires, as well as the needs of the students.

Lessons in *Nonfiction Reading Comprehension: Social Studies, Grade 6* meet and are correlated to the Mid-continent Research for Education and Learning (McREL) standards. They are listed on page 8.

A place for *Nonfiction Reading Comprehension: Social Studies, Grade 6* can be found in every classroom or home. It can be a part of daily instruction in time designated for both reading and social studies. It can be used for both group and individual instruction. Stories can be read with someone or on one’s own. *Nonfiction Reading Comprehension: Social Studies, Grade 6* can help students improve in a multitude of areas, including reading, social studies, critical thinking, writing, and test taking.

Meeting Standards



Listed below are the McREL standards for Language Arts Level 2 (Grades 3–5).

Copyright 2004 McREL
Mid-Continent Research for Education and Learning
2250 S. Parker Rd, Suite 500
Aurora, CO 80014
Telephone: 303-337-0990
Website: www.mcrel.org/standards-benchmarks

McRel Standards are in **bold**. Benchmarks are in regular print. All lessons meet the following standards and benchmarks unless noted.

Uses the general skills and strategies of the writing process

- Uses a variety of strategies to edit and publish written work (*All lessons where writing or typing a complete sentence option is followed.*)

Uses the stylistic and rhetorical aspects of writing

- Uses a variety of sentence structures to expand and embed ideas (*All lessons where writing or typing a complete sentence option is followed.*)

Uses grammatical and mechanical conventions in written compositions

- Uses simple and compound sentences in written compositions
- Uses pronouns, nouns, verbs, adverbs, and adjectives
- Uses conventions of spelling, capitalization, and punctuation (*All lessons where writing or typing a complete sentence option is followed.*)

Uses the general skills and strategies of the reading process

- Establishes and adjusts purposes for reading
- Uses a variety of strategies to extend reading vocabulary
- Uses specific strategies to clear up confusing parts of a text
- Reflects on what has been learned after reading and formulates ideas, opinions, and personal responses to texts

Uses reading skills and strategies to understand a variety of informational texts

- Summarizes and paraphrases information in texts
- Uses new information to adjust and extend personal knowledge base
- Draws conclusions and makes inferences based on explicit and implicit information in texts

When Frida Kahlo Began to Paint



**These are new words to practice.
Say each word 10 times.**

* contracted

* traumatic

* recover

* bedridden

* recuperating

* easel

* vivid

* exhibit

**Before or after reading the story, write one sentence
that contains at least one new word.**

When Frida Kahlo Began to Paint



Frida Kahlo was born on July 6, 1907. She was born in Coyoacán, a small town in Mexico. When Kahlo was only six years old, she contracted polio. Polio is a disease that damages the nervous system. Kahlo was ill for a long time. It took her nine months to recover. Kahlo spent many hours alone while recuperating. To pass the time, she used her vivid, or lively and detailed, imagination to create another world.

Kahlo would fog a window with her breath. Then, she would draw a door on the fogged window. With her vivid imagination, she would pass through the door. In her make-believe world, she would visit a special friend. Kahlo recovered from polio, but she was left with one leg thinner and shorter than the other.

When Kahlo was 15, she was selected for a special school. She was one of only 35 girls among the 2,000 students. She took art classes, but she did not intend on becoming a serious artist. Then, on September 17, 1925, a terrible accident happened. Kahlo was riding on a bus, and a streetcar smashed into it. Kahlo suffered traumatic and painful injuries. Kahlo was only 18 years old.



Frida Kahlo

Kahlo was bedridden for many months after the traumatic accident. To help pass the time while she recuperated, or healed, Kahlo painted. Kahlo could not use a regular artist's easel, as she was bedridden, but her mother ordered her a special lap easel. Kahlo said later that it was her imagination that she developed when she contracted polio that helped her paint. Using her imagination, she pictured lively scenes in her head. Then, she transferred them to paper.

Despite never fully recuperating, Kahlo went on to become a serious artist. She did not allow her ill health to interfere. For example, during one exhibit, or show, when she was too ill to rise, she had her bed carried into the gallery where the exhibit was being held. Kahlo died on July 13, 1954. She was only 47 years old. Despite Kahlo's short life, her art has earned long-lasting fame.

When Frida Kahlo Began to Paint



After reading the story, answer the questions.
Fill in the circle next to the correct answer.

1. Kahlo suffered traumatic and painful injuries
 - (a) when she contracted polio.
 - (b) when she was riding a bus.
 - (c) when she was too ill to rise.
 - (d) when she passed through a door on a fogged window.
2. This story is mainly about
 - (a) an artist from Mexico.
 - (b) one of Kahlo's exhibits.
 - (c) a terrible and traumatic accident.
 - (d) how Kahlo developed her imagination.
3. Which statement is false?
 - (a) Kahlo was born in a small town.
 - (b) Kahlo had a make-believe friend.
 - (c) Kahlo's father ordered her a special lap easel.
 - (d) Kahlo went to a school where most students were boys.

4. Think about how the word *special* relates to *ordinary*. Which words relate in the same way?

special : ordinary

- (a) vivid : dull
 - (b) terrible : awful
 - (c) serious : solemn
 - (d) traumatic : painful
5. From the story, one can tell that Kahlo's imagination
 - (a) contracted polio.
 - (b) helped her from feeling lonely.
 - (c) interfered with the gallery exhibit.
 - (d) first developed after the traumatic accident.